

Sands Montessori Parent Organization

# SMPO General Parent Meeting & August Rudder Meeting Minutes

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August 31, 2021 / 7 PM / Zoom Meeting

## SMPO LEADERSHIP ATTENDEES:

Heather Gerker – President

Courtney Ryan - Vice President

Dave Rolfes – Executive Secretary

Becky Economou – Business Manager

Michelle Durban – Business Manager in Training

Allyse Sonngea – Parent At Large

Sarah Lord - Principal

Caitlin Levine – 3-6 Teacher Representative

Sarah Fullen – 6-9 Teacher Representative

Lisa Boweden – 9-12 Teacher Representative

Robyn Appino – Specials Teacher Rep

Kris Spurgeon – Intervention Specialist

Nikki Marksberry – Community Coordinator

Rachel Danhires – SEP Coordinator

Amy Hueneman – Volunteer Coordinator

Holly Fritz – Fundraising Coordinator

Brittany Able – Communications Coordinator

LeAnn Gardner – Co-Technology Coordinator

Chris Vockell - Athletics

## AGENDA

### **SMPO General Parent Meeting, August 31st, 7pm via Zoom**

- I. Welcome, explain two meetings tonight, and brief rudder introductions
- II. Zoom "speed dating"
  - A. Introduce yourself, age of kids, and answer What is something you are hoping for this school year?
- II. Principal's Report
- III. Old Business
  - A. Outdoor classroom updates - trees are the next step (Courtney)
- II. New Business
  - A. Share 2021-22 SMPO Calendar - Heather
  - B. Garden updates/plans - Courtney
  - C. Book Club - Heather
  - D. 2021-22 Budget presentation and vote to approve - Becky and Michelle
  - E. Other business from the group?
- II. Adjourn

### **SMPO Rudder Meeting, August 31st, 7:30pm via Zoom**

- I. Welcome and call the meeting to order
- II. Reports:
  - A. Principal
  - B. Community Resource Coordinator
  - C. Business Manager
  - D. Communications
  - E. Fundraising
    - 1. Spring Event/Food Truck Rally Chair needed (needs to be planned for outdoors possibility)
    - 2. Monthly restaurant fundraisers
  - F. Parent at large
  - G. Parent liaison
  - H. Volunteer Coordinator
    - 1. Room Parent Volunteer Liaisons
  - I. SEP
  - J. Athletics

- K. Technology
- L. 3-6 teacher rep
- M. 6-9 teacher rep
- N. 9-12 teacher rep
- O. LSDMC
- P. ILT

## II.Old Business

- A. Decision on next steps for Mini-grant process
  1. Proposal 1: Two mini-grant cycles - (\$5k each) one in the Fall and one in the Spring
  2. Proposal 2: One mini-grant cycle in Spring, with double the amount available (\$10k)
  3. Are there any other proposals?

## II.New Business

- A. Discussion/decision on how to disperse funds to teachers and Principal Lord
  1. Proposal 1: Give staff \$500 upfront (as a “gift”) and they do not have to submit receipts
  2. Proposal 2: Give staff \$250 upfront, once receipts are submitted then give the next \$250 (receipts must be submitted)
  3. Are there any other proposals?
- B. Air purifier purchase/reimbursement for classrooms - Courtney
- C. Montessori materials purchase from capital savings - this discussion will be on agenda for next month

## II.Adjourn

## GENERAL PARENT MEETING NOTES

- **President Heather Gerker welcomes everyone at 7:07pm** and outlines the reason for two different meetings and provides context on what will be covered. The main goal is to have the budget approved during this first session.
- Reminder that the Rudder meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm, on Zoom for now. The list of the leadership is available on Sands Parents website - <http://sandsparents.org/leadership-rudder/>
- **President Heather Gerker** provided a copy of the agenda in the chat window and invites Sarah Lord to speak the meeting.
- **Principal Sarah Lord** says thanks for being involved, and states that the start of the school year has been smooth thus far. High appreciation for student & teacher efforts to get the school year off right.
  - o She encourages everyone to say to the new assistant principal Ms. Brown.

- She's happy to announce the return of Sands Enrichment Program & Fall Sports.
- Fall assessments are starting soon, including new staff members helping with reading. The second ILT starts tomorrow and will help the teachers focus on where to spend their time and efforts in a variety of subjects. Meeting notes from the ILT are kept and available as needed.
- Next week is "Say Something" week and there will be activities all week including a shirt for each child and an event assembly next Friday.
- **President Heather Gerker** states that the SMPO calendar is complete & approved. The link is available for review.  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Cmj218ehXJplEJTFn5t6rCTPUN68lCLXOYW0I0vkOmc/edit#gid=0>
- **Vice President Courtney Ryan** talks about the outdoor classroom and encourages brainstorming on ideas for shade, both immediate (ex: sails or cloth coverings) and then long terms (ex: trees). **Heather Gerker** states it will be discussed further in the future but ideas are welcome and installing items that will provide shade would have a great impact long term for the outdoor class space.
- **Vice President Courtney Ryan** brings up the outdoor gardens and how they are producing and mentions that there was an adoption process last year. Reach out to Courtney if you're interested in helping or if you are actively using the gardens right now. Courtney will be leading the charge and it will be communicated out to the school community through the SMPO newsletter.
- **President Heather Gerker** brings up the 2020-2021 Parent Book Club. The books were focused on Diversity & Inclusion. The leader has moved to a new school and if someone would like to lead the parent book club, the spot is open. This can also be communicated in the newsletter.
- **Business Manager Becky Economou & Business Manager in Training Michelle Durban** present 2021-2022 budget to the meeting. Becky walks everyone through the idea of the budget and how to review the file.
  - She mentions the idea of hosting a carnival in Spring 2022. Another key point is around Incremental Fundraising to be discussed/added later.
  - Key items left off include dances, sanitizer fundraiser, etc.
  - The biggest fundraiser for the year are Read-a-Thon. Discussion of other income items including Kroger, Amazon Smile, Box Tops, etc.

- Open for questions; no questions from the attendees. **President Heather Gerker** highlights the requirement for a balanced budget per the by-laws.
  - Discussion of expenses such as virtual events like a possible Grandparents Day or International Night. A larger expense is direct classroom support. Other budgeted money includes principal fund, field trips, etc. Each teacher is budgeted to receive \$500. Additional new expense is Community Building. **President Heather Gerker** adds context to the principal fund and Community Building lines of the budget. The Community Fund would allow for extra items for teachers or other events that can be put on that are not fundraisers.
  - **Krystan Krailer** asks about a social media expense in case there are public events that we would like to promote to our followers and/or others in the community. We've had it in the past, but haven't needed it in COVID times. Suggestion to having a small monthly budget for this type of event and using money from fundraisers. There is an agreement to adjust \$100 from another line and add to communications.
  - **Krystan Krailer** asks about mini-grants as well since it was doubled over years in the past. There is confirmation that a vote is happening in the Rudder meeting on how to allocate that.
  - **Krystan Krailer** makes a motion to approve the budget. **Chris Vockell** seconds it. **Heather Gerker** asks if there are any dissenters. There are not & therefore the budget is approved.
- General Parent Meeting adjourns at 744pm.

## RUDDER MEETING NOTES

- **Heather Gerker** kicks off Rudder Meeting at 744pm.
- **Sarah Lord** asks for feedback on the Open House tonight. Nearly overwhelmingly positive reviews from both teachers & parents. There was some feedback about confusion for families with multiple children and how many slots they were able to sign up for.
- **Report Outs from Leadership Team**
  - **Nikki Marksberry** - Reviews her role and how she connects families and parents with resources both in & out of the building; updates come through SMPO email, Facebook. No real updates, but if attendees know families that needs help encourage them to connect with Nikki. Nikki also mentions

that there will be a Mt. Washington Pumpkin Chuck this year! Details are unfolding.

- **Michelle Durban & Becky Economou** for Budget - Approx. \$81,000 in checking and \$36,000 in savings. Various restaurant donations came in recently from the end of the school year, as did a nice thank you note from the school nurse for a wedding present that SMPO purchased for her.
- **Holly Fritz** - Fundraising - Will be working on restaurant fundraising in coming weeks. The goal is to have one per month. Suggestion for Big Ash from Heather Gerker. Courtney Ryan suggests having a person or group of people step up for Spring 2022 event. Emily McNicholas says she can talk to Erin Wood about working on it.
- **Brittany Able** - Communications Coordinator - Look for solicitations for the SMPO newsletter
- **Allyse Sonnega** - Parent at Large - Quick reminder that Field Day is planned for Spring 2022; confirmed that it is on the SMPO calendar.
- **Amy Hueneman** - Volunteer Coordinator - Met up with prior leader Priya Rolfes & will utilize calendar to try to get volunteers for events that are scheduled. Amy is also planning on reaching out to teachers to get a Room Parent for each room and their responsibility would be to own trying to get volunteers engaged in case they missed other communications. Amy is open to feedback on the idea and also requested to be made aware when volunteers are needed.
- **Caitlin Lavine** 3-6 Rep - Appreciation for Panera breakfast. The 3-6 teachers have been working on reconfiguring schedules to accommodate lunches for all preschoolers, which was recently mandated.
- **Sarah Fullen** - 6-9 Rep - Confirms that she is sharing this role with Vanessa Barth; appreciation for breakfast. 6-9 getting ready for MAP testing and iReady testing. The 6-9 teachers are getting to know 1<sup>st</sup> graders and were especially happy to welcome 2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents at the open house.
- **Lisa Bowden** - 9-12 Rep - Most testing and diagnostics are complete. The 9-12 team was also grateful for breakfast & headphones for testing. All binders are tracked down & are in use. They are so glad to have the kids back in the classroom.
- **Kris Spurgeon** - Intervention Specialist - Also grateful for the recent Panera breakfast.
- **Robbyn Appino** - Gym teacher Ms. Toebbe has a partnership with a dance group; likely from Cincinnati Ballet and the students will be learning a performance. Shout out to Erin Dean for staff wide PD and it was a very meaningful exercise to go through together. The Fall Book Fair is confirmed for week leading up to Halloween.
- **Rachel Danhires** - SEP Coordinator - Big props to LeAnn for communication. Aside from Book Club (cancelled) enrollment has been very strong. Hard copy solicitations went home with the kids.
- **Chris Vockell** - Athletics - 120 kids in soccer; 1<sup>st</sup> games start weekend of September 11. Basketball registration opens

this Saturday and we plan to play in the league and host games at Sands as well as travel to other communities. Athletics will be relying on health guidelines & mandates related to COVID as they come along. The current plan will be to Facebook Live 1-2 games of each team because we do expect to have limits on crowds.

- **LeAnn Gardner** - Technology - Working on cleaning up the website & learning Wordpress. She is also making sure calendar is up to date with events.
- LSDMC - No updates; first meeting is scheduled for September 14
- ILT - Kim Fulbright - first meeting occurred a few weeks ago and next meeting is morning of September 1. They will have a report out next week.

- **Mini Grant Process**

- **Heather Gerker** reviews the process where teachers submit ideas; the ideas are scored and grants are awarded. Two proposals on the table:
  - Fall Cycle and Spring Cycle for \$5,000 for each award
  - Spring Cycle for full \$10,000
- Question about what the teachers may prefer; no strong feeling at this point and many teachers have disconnected from the call as it has been a long day.
- **Kristin Krailer** points out the by-laws state that it is \$5,000 a year and that SMPO, LSDMC, and ILT would need to approve. That is agreed upon and Heather mentions that is the path forward if SMPO passes the idea.
- Open question about what has been used in the past. Examples include:
  - Specific materials for enrichment
  - More expensive than usual field trips
  - Toys for 3-6 recess
- Request to add decision making rubric to notes - Heather will provide and Dave will include
- Question about coordination amongst teachers to try to attain fairness amongst classes & resources are used wisely
- Principal Lord will take back to the teachers the question of two \$5,000 cycles or one \$10,000 cycle
- Dave Rolfes motions to vote for the \$10,000 school year amount. SMPO approves and Heather will follow up with LSDMC & ILT to ensure they follow the process.

- **Teacher Direct Support & Principal Fund**

- Two proposals on the table: provide \$500 & trust the teachers to handle it appropriately; give them \$250 & wait for them to provide receipts back to provide the next \$250; another choice would be to give them \$500 and have them provide the receipts
- Lots of caution from the attendees on tax impact for teachers & impact to SMPO to ensure it is okay for a non-profit to proceed in this manner.
- Reinforcement for idea of gift if possible to give the teachers a break.

- Heather proposes holding a vote to give the teachers money in advance; Kristin proposes moving forward with business managers checking with accountant on tax implications.
- It was decided to have the conversation with the accountant before a decision was made on the process.

- **Air Purifiers**

- Courtney Ryan brings up SMPO purchasing air purifiers at \$300-\$400 a room. There would be large up front charge & a quarterly cost to replace filters. Total cost about \$15,000.
- Working with teacher reps on this & would come from capital improvement fund and not general fund.
- Courtney will continue to explore with the teachers and Principal Lord.
- Kristin Krailer asks Principal Lord if there were any upgrades made from CPS due to COVID. Based on conversations last year the HVAC at Sands was above average and the school would not be receiving funds for upgrades from the district.

- **Montessori Materials**

- Many discussions already about this topic, but we can table for the next SMPO meeting.

- MEETING ADJORNED AT 8:47PM