

ESPO Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2017

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Anja Lehmann

- 2. Introduction of the 2017-2018 ESPO Coordinating Committee:** Anja Lehmann

- 3. Coordinating Committee Reports**
 - a. *Budget Review:* Annie Bruienne
This year's budget is similar to last year, which worked out well. During the 2016/17 fiscal year, ESPO fulfilled its pledge of \$100,000 towards the creation of the AIC by paying the last of five (5) \$20,000 installments. Now it is time to build up the kitty and develop new plans for supporting the school and giving back to teachers. We are planning a \$3,000 teacher gift this year which includes a roll-over of \$1,500 from last year. We are also planning for \$1,500 in Academic Grants again, based on their success last year. We have budgeted \$1,500 for enrichment activities. Presently we have total assets of almost \$40,000. Please email any budget questions to Annie.
 - b. *Pizza Lunch Report:* Diana Rooks, Maria Bichakjian, Dana DeBord
Everything is going well so far on pizza lunch orders and volunteers.

- 4. Event Chair Reports**
 - a. *Welcome Coffee:* Michele Thompson
The Welcome Coffee went very well. We have ideas for small changes, but plan to hold the coffee again next year.
 - b. *Back to School Picnic:* Jennifer Nemecek
The picnic was a success. We used the same caterer as in 2016. Highlights included better addressing allergy policies, wonderful weather and amazing flowers! Thanks to the many volunteers! We were under budget this year. One challenge is getting an accurate count for food. Please give any suggestions to Jennifer.
 - c. *Teacher Conference Dinners:* Lori Pearson
A Signup Genius will be going out soon. Looking for volunteers and food donations.
 - d. *Halloween:* Jamie Sinha
Please step up and help. We need a co-chair and someone to help with decorations. Volunteers shouldn't be intimidated by the size of the event. There are excellent notes from past years and support from experienced leaders. It's easy to take on a small piece.

- e. *Book Fair*: Elaine Mar & Terry Chang
The Book Fair will be held on Sunday, November 12 at Nicola's Books. Planning is in progress.
- f. *Bake Sale*: Elizabeth Caswell & Janine Huber
The Bake Sale is held the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. The school community comes together for Grandfriends and Special Friends Day, hosted by the school. ESPO offers a bake sale. Students as well as their visitors will have a chance to visit the bake sale. We will need help with volunteers and bake sale items. We will make accommodations for students with food allergies or other food related needs.

5. Committee Chair Reports

- a. *Art Music Night*: Dana DeBord
Will need volunteers to help display art prior to Art Music Night, held in the spring. It is a fun evening and wonderful to see all of the children's art displayed.
- b. *Teacher Appreciation*: Ali Sly and Floor Williams-Walenkamp
Luncheon hosted by ESPO to show appreciation to teachers and staff.
- c. *Field Day*: Hasan Shanawani
This is a day of play and games at end of the school year.
- d. *Emerson Cares*: Abbie Lawrence-Jacobson
Emerson Cares supports Emerson family and staff community in times of joy and grief (e.g. weddings, new babies, illness). Last year, we gave gifts for 14 new hires, 2 marriages, 4 new babies, 1 death in the family, and 7 goodbye and retirement gifts.
- e. *ESPO Communications*: Kelly Richardson
Last year, we saw a need for greater communications about the good work ESPO is doing. Kelly has created a new Communications Board for ESPO, located in the fishbowl. This will include a detailed calendar of events. We are also working on an ESPO newsletter. Please give Kelly any communications ideas you may have.
- f. *Box Tops*: Jodi Wilkins
The Box Tops are adding up. We have raised \$195 from box tops collected in the spring and have many more to tally. Annually we raise \$600 to \$1,000 in Box Tops. Please donate your Box Tops in the box located in the fishbowl.
- g. *Anti-idling*: Caroline Begola
Caroline encourages everyone to turn off your vehicles whenever you can. She hopes to plan a contest with some catchy slogans to get people talking about anti-idling.

- h. *Green Initiative:*
We are still looking for a chair for the Green Initiative. Please let Anja know of anyone who may be interested.

6. Emerson Development Update

- a. *Annual Fund:* Julie Seagraves
Julie thanked everyone for their support of Emerson. She shared that we will be doing an Annual Fund drive in the fall. Our goal is 75% participation from parents.
- b. *Auction:* Lorna Hildebrandt
Please let Lorna know if you are interested in being involved in the Auction. It will be held at Barton Hills Country Club on Friday, March 9. Watch for more information and signups.

7. New Business

- a. *Teacher Gift:* We are planning a teacher lounge beautification project. Elizabeth Caswell will help. We are looking for others to participate. Please let Anja or Elizabeth know if you have creative or interior design talents and would like to help.
- b. *Angst Movie Screening:* ESPO will support screening of the movie Angst, about student anxiety. Tentatively scheduled for October 17.
- c. *Disaster Relief:* Emerson community (ESPO and school) working together to identify ways that we can help with disaster relief and include the student body. Jen Kime shared that some 5th graders came to her with an idea to help kids who have lost books. To support this idea, we will be doing a gently used book drive in October.

ESPO Speaker: John Huber, “State of the School”

John thanked Anja and the other Emerson parents for their active involvement and participation. John shared several slides on the “State of the School”, which are summarized below.

6 Quick Facts:

1. Summer camp attendance was the highest in the past five years. Over 80% of attendees were non-Emerson students.
2. For new students coming this year our #2 feeder was “out of state”. In total, 61 new enrollments, up from last year.
3. The average IQ of Emerson students is 124.
4. The average class size this year is 15.3 students.
5. Attrition (non-graduates leaving Emerson) was the lowest in the past 5 years (about 7.5%).

6. 90% of the class of 2017 is attending a local public school.

John reminded the audience that “Looking Ahead to High School Night” with Andy Zimmer is coming up on October 3. This will be a chance to learn about the high school selection process and get more information about high school options.

What else is going on?

- Bus transportation now being provided by both Trinity and AAPS
- Shar string scholarships available
- K-1 afternoon childcare offered for weeks 1-2 of the school year
- Jen Kime is our new Lower School Director
- Flextime included in Middle School schedule, allowing for study hall and flextime activities
- Our first harvests from the permaculture garden are starting
- Parent volunteer driver form—please fill it out if you want to be a parent driver
- *Angst* documentary screening will be held on October 17
- New curbside traffic pattern
- Changes to our Emerson Board of Trustees. We said farewell to Dave McDowell, who is taking on the Interim Head position at Greenhills. We are excited to welcome Steve Strauss to our board. Our board looks at the long-term interests of the school.
- ISACS Accreditation survey—please fill it in. Kelly Vohland leading our efforts.

John’s Goals:

- Strategic planning
- Diversity
- Endowment
- Programmatic innovation
- Enrollment innovation

Conclusion: It’s going to be a great year!

Questions:

- What are the plans to discourage people from parking in the fire lane during curbside pickup? John will talk to the health and safety committee about possible communications.
- Is there a new procedure if you are taking your child out of school? No, it’s not new. But there is a different procedure for middle and lower school. Please see Beth Muszkiewicz or Christy Loewen for the details.

Next ESPO Meeting will be held Wednesday, November 8 at 8:30 a.m. Speakers will be Roger Spurgeon and Lisa Wilson. Please send Roger and Lisa any feedback regarding technology concerns beforehand.