

## PTO Meeting – 4/2 (Zoom)

### Karly Grifasi's Opening Remarks

- District has been purchasing books/tablets, first going to high schools (seniors on down)
- IT is backlogged to get tablets out the door
- Karly talking to Barber and Rob DiFlorio 4/3 to talk about it and share concerns around online learning situation in general
- Last meeting, Ed Smith PTO talked about releasing money and a number of different ways to allocate it; discussion was inconclusive; questions have come in asking how people can help/donate to ensure access to technology
- Public vote is necessary to free up money to take action
- We don't know if we can purchase Chromebooks – school might not want to go that direction, logistical challenges/ownership/IT support
- Proposal to release funding to be used for technology during home schooling or other direct relief to families at the discretion of social workers or put the money back in the account for the fall
- Funding amount under discussion is \$10K

### DISCUSSION

- Karen Cordano asks for clarification – three separate votes on each potential use or one inclusive vote – discussion of aligning mission and likely impact of released funds
- Possibility of asking corporations for matching funds (eg, Terakeet) and asking people to send donations to the PTO for this relief effort
- Erika Hegland asks to clarify – would the Chromebooks be given back to the district? Preference is for them to be a loan but not sure
- Moira McDermott asks about priority for eighth-grade students – how many people need them overall? The school has a spreadsheet tracking access issues – we don't know number/percentage at this time
- Kari Zhe-Heimerman asks about internet broadband access – students have devices but they don't have wifi/data/internet plans – opportunity to make an impact there?
  - Spectrum is only if you don't have outstanding bills (new customers or if you've never had billing issues)
  - Kari says there is a delay just for upgrading service; Moira says Verizon is also giving people more data
- Julie Gozan – question that needs to be answered by Barber et al. is, “if the district is keeping a list of students who need laptops, would/could Ed Smith PTO funds fast-track relief for Ed Smith students?”
- Kate Saufley – support for families with children with special needs?; Karly advises PTO should avoid deciding who gets support – defer to school for that
- Maribel Arce asks about flexibility when money goes to the district; Karly says preference would be to buy devices and then have the district/school distribute
- Group-wide concern about tension between Ed Smith PTO mission and district-wide need for support

- Karly re-centers: releasing money for Chromebooks or other needs at the discretion of our social workers/school leadership?
- Erika asks how we would notify families this money is available? Karly suggests teachers/social workers sharing the info ... not up to PTO to decide
- Jen Kelly suggests idea of a Chromebook lending library; Karly requests additional information
- Karly clarifies \$10K represents 20% of our budget
- Kari suggests voting by chat
- Moira suggests John Kaftan in SCSD IT as a resource for buying technology

#### **VOTE**

- Karly motions to release \$10K in PTO general funds to assist with COVID relief efforts based on continuing conversations with SCSD to include technology assistance or other financial assistance as deemed necessary by school staff
  - Motion carries unanimously
- Motion to adjourn – seconded – motion carries