



Committee Leader Manual

Fall, 2007

This is a collection of documents, information, and important forms for how we make things happen at Sequoia. It is a work-in-progress, and is meant to be a tool we can all use to keep things running smoothly. Please read this and give me your corrections, comments, and ideas!

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Communications

THE OFFICE

Parent groups and committees have **in-boxes** in the front office behind the copy machine. Notes, reimbursement forms, etc. may be left for members in these boxes. There are “**pockets**” on the inside wall where newsletters, flyers, and meeting minutes may be left. There are **bulletin boards** in the front hallway that can be used by parent groups.

FACE TO FACE

Committee leaders should plan to attend FOSS or Dads’ Club meetings, especially before and after your event. The support you get is often equal to the support you give. If you cannot attend a meeting, send your report in to be read by someone else, and be sure to read minutes of meetings you miss (they’re there for you!). Whether attending or planning meetings, be respectful of other peoples’ time by showing up on time and keeping focused on the agenda.

EMAIL

Email is a wonderful, powerful tool for getting things done, but has a downside of being overwhelming (when everyone is cc’d in a heated discussion) and often intense (when people are stressed). It can be difficult to interpret tone in an email as well, and misunderstandings can take place. Email is best for minutes, agendas, news, and general information. Discussions should take place at meetings as much as possible. Those replying to emails should consider carefully whether the whole group needs to hear the conversation or if your reply should be directed to one person. Committee leaders should select “FOSS email” and/or “Dads’ Club email” as interests in the PTO manager, and use this tool to be sure to include everyone. The Yahoo! group is also very effective. But “*know when to pick up a phone.*” ☺

WHO’S WHO PHONE LIST

Speaking of picking up phones, a list of volunteer leaders with contact information should be put together at the beginning of each school year and given to all committee leaders, as well as published in the school directory. It’s nice to be able to find a number when you need it!

PTO MANAGER

In lieu of a phone list, committee leaders can look each other up on PTO Manager. Our online volunteer database can be accessed from any computer with internet access. (Start at sequoiaschool.net or go straight to sequoia.ptomanager.com). Volunteers enter their contact information, interests, and children’s names, teachers, and interests. Committee leaders are given permission to search for volunteers, create events, and assign volunteers to specific tasks. (Go to “Find Volunteers”, then search by name, interest, class, etc.)

TRANSLATION

There are dozens of languages spoken at Sequoia homes, and many community members who do not speak English well may not feel welcome to participate. Make an effort to reach out to others when you can. Consider getting your written materials translated, or hiring an

interpreter for your event. Simultaneous Interpretation equipment (where a translator speaks into a microphone, and listeners hear it on headsets) is available on loan from the School District. (Contact Gary Yee - Gary.Yee@ousd.k12.ca.us)

Events

HOW DO I RUN AN EVENT?

Talk to someone who's done it before. Apprentice for a year. Kelly McGrath has kept records on many events, coordinated by many people, and may be able to provide you with helpful information.

EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

There is a detailed checklist at the back of this manual that can help keep track of every aspect of an event.

USING PTO MANGER FOR EVENTS

Sign in and click "Events." You can select an event or click "Create New Events." (Down at the bottom there is a box for "include events from previous years" that's very helpful!)

Fill in the information, or edit the information that is already there. Copy information in the "event description" or "timeline/to-do/notes" to use in your planning. Hit "save."

Next, click "Assign" in the right column next to your event. In the next screen, you can fill in volunteer names and tasks. (You can also keep track of hours, but we don't do that yet.) You can also email the whole list. And YES, you can attach files.

If you hit the "recruit volunteers" button, you will get a search screen where you can search by interest. Select the ones you want, then click "assign selected."

It's pretty self-explanatory. Read the buttons, read the fine print, and click the "help" button for more information.

YOU CAN ALSO USE THE EVENT MANAGER FOR MEETINGS AND ONGOING TASKS!

CHILDCARE

Providing childcare can help increase attendance at meetings. Please consult our Childcare Manual for suggestions/protocols for hiring and paying sitters.

Meetings

The Sequoia Community has a HUGE amount of energy for making things happen. Coordinating everyone's ideas is the biggest challenge; that's why meetings are so important. Monthly meetings are needed to synchronize calendars, give and get support, and keep our finances straight. Many of our parents/volunteers are not able to come to

meetings at the school, but this does not mean they do not care or want to be involved. Here are some guidelines to use when planning or facilitating a meeting.

CREATING AN AGENDA

Start your meeting with an agenda. You can get agenda ideas via email a week or 2 before the meeting. There is a Standard Agenda at the back of this packet.

CHOOSING A DATE AND TIME

When scheduling meetings, be sure to consult with the school calendar, checking with Wendy/Kyla as well.

CHOOSING A PLACE

Meetings can take place on or off campus. When scheduling a meeting at the school, a facility use form must be filled out a minimum of 2 weeks before the event. (One is included at the back of this packet; more can be obtained from Wendy.)

RUNNING A MEETING

Whether attending or planning meetings, be respectful of other peoples' time by showing up on time and keeping focused on the agenda. A meeting opener used by the FOSS steering committee is at the end of this manual, which shares this sentiment and outlines voting procedures. This sheet can be passed around the group so each member can read a paragraph. Create an agenda before the meeting starts, and poll for childcare needs. It can be helpful to choose a timekeeper and a minute-taker. Take note of who attends. A sign-in form can also be very useful.

TAKING MINUTES

Minutes or meeting reports should be made available at Volunteer Meetings on Tuesday nights, on the Yahoo! group, and/or via PTO Manager or email to your committee and to FOSS/Dads' Club. One good practice is for the minute-taker to email the first draft to meeting attendees for approval (or review at end of meeting), then share the corrected minutes with the public. Send a summary of the meeting to the Newsletter Editor for publication.

INCLUDING EVERYONE

We are committed to inclusivity at Sequoia, therefore it is our policy that all meetings are open to the community, and the community should be given ample notice of meetings. Exceptions to this are when committees/task forces have already formed and things are moving quickly. Even in this case, all efforts should be made to keep interested parties in the loop.

Money

The Dads' Club is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 corporation. Any time tax-deductible donations are to be made, they should go to the Dads' Club. The Dads' Club Tax ID is 946108398. Friends of Sequoia School has its own account, inherited from the now-defunct PTA. One treasurer handles both accounts. A Reimbursement form is included at the end of this

manual. Expenses should be approved at meetings before they are made, especially if they're over \$50.

Publicity

There are many ways to publicize your meeting, event, task, or idea – the more you use, the better your attendance!

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter is sent home Mondays to each family. It contains a calendar of “this week,” upcoming events, blurbs and “ads” for things. Newsletter submissions must be sent to the editor (kellyandkids@earthlink.net) and principal (kyla@sequoiaschool.net) for approval, *at least* one week prior to Monday publication date. Put “for newsletter-(subject)” in the subject line.

FLYERS

All flyers go home on Mondays with the newsletter, except occasional “mini flyers” which go home 2-4 days prior to event. Get Principal Approval for the flyer one week prior to the week of dissemination. When possible, copies of the flyer should be done by an event volunteer. (OK to use school materials & copier.) The Newsletter Copier will attach flyer to newsletter.

MACARTHUR METRO

The deadline for each month’s calendar in our local, neighborhood newspaper is around the 13th of the previous month. Pick one up from the office to see format, and submit event details to: Marilynmetro@aol.com.

SIGNS/POSTERS/BANNERS

Hang them in school, outside of school, store windows, telephone poles...

PHONE TREE

Ask your room parent or use PTO manager to get phone lists. We may be implementing a voice message system later this year.

JEAN QUAN'S WEEKLY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Submit items to Sue Piper - spiper@oaklandnet.com. Include small graphics!

SCHOOL PA

Announcements can be made at 8:45 a.m. Be creative! Involve children! This is very effective for getting kids excited. They will tell their parents! Ask Wendy to show you how.

EMAIL

Post a message to our Yahoo! Group (sequoiacommunity@yahoogroups.com) or other groups, such as the Dimond message board (dimond@mailman.lmi.net) or Berkeley Parents’ Network. Note: only members can send messages to listservs. To become a member of ours, send an email to: sequoiacommunity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To join the Dimond group, go to www.dimondnews.org, click “forums,” and follow instructions.

You can also ask other Yahoo! group members to forward to other groups to which they belong.

“BACK-PACK EXPRESS”

Talk to your child’s teacher about sending a flyer home for the class. Other creative ways to get kids to carry information: tape or staple a “bracelet” flyer around their hands as they leave; write information on paper plates or sticks, make flags for them to carry, etc.

MARQUEE

Events in Newsletter will be put on Marquee each week.

SCHOOL WEBSITE

Events in Newsletter will be put on the website each month. Please send Kristen any additional items or information you’d like to post, as well.

Volunteers

Volunteers make things happen, and there are many ways to get volunteers for your committee or event. The best way is to ask! Person-to-person.

You can also ask the volunteer coordinator, search on PTO manager, put up a poster, or run an ad in the newsletter. Our policy at Sequoia is to make every meeting inclusive. There are articles in the appendices that give other good strategies for getting and managing volunteers.

USING PTO MANAGER TO GET VOLUNTEERS

First, make sure you’re signed up at sequoia.ptomanager.com. Next, let the volunteer coordinator know you are a committee leader, and s/he will give you the correct permissions to search for volunteers. Click on “Volunteers” and then “Find Volunteers.” Enter the criteria you are looking for and hit “Search.” You can print the list out and call people, or click “Email this List” to send them all an email. Read the fine print to personalize. **It may be helpful to let your volunteers know which Tuesday night meetings they should attend.**

You can assign volunteers to specific events. See “Planning an Event” section for more how-to about that.

Where Things Are

Important things to know about where parents stash things at Sequoia:

THE KITCHEN

Halfway down the main hallway, there is a small faculty kitchen on the left where frozen fruit bars are kept. In the cabinet on the right are napkins, coffee, cleaning supplies. In the back room are the coffee makers. This is where extra juices, waters, etc. are stored.

THE CONTAINER

Dads' club supplies for the Welcome Back Picnic, Pancake Breakfast, etc., as well as Earthquake supplies for 350 students are in the large gray container near the playground.

THE CLOSET

Upstairs in the inclusion office at the front of the school there is a closet where FOSS supplies are kept. Banners, t-shirts, storage buckets, cash boxes (always empty) and the button maker are in there, as well as a filing cabinet with envelopes & office supplies.

THE STAGE

Games and other equipment for the Harvest Festival/Carnival and other events are kept above the wings of the stage.

THE KEYS

Keys to the garden, the yard gate, the container, computer lab, and the closet are kept in the office (ask Wendy), or on Kyla's key ring.