

THOREAU ELEMENTARY PTO GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission Statement: *Thoreau Elementary PTO exists to foster a greater sense of community by increasing access to the school in an all-inclusive approach for families and specifically the children in our community.*

Key Points:

- 1) Increasing *access* to the school
- 2) All-*inclusive* approach

Budget Priorities:

- 1) 35% = *community building* (all events except yearbook and directory take place outside of school hours)
- 2) 33% = *increasing access to school* (endowment, scholarships, student groups, meals to children in transition)
- 3) 28% = *supporting teachers* (staff support, academic programs)

Guiding Principles:

- ⇒ The PTO is an all-volunteer organization that exists primarily to build a community of parents and children outside of school hours.
 - The PTO's budget and expenditures reflect the PTO's priorities and align with this core mission.
 - With the PTO's limited budget, the PTO can only support events (*i.e.*, financially and with volunteer support) that align with the PTO's core mission and unite the PTO's members.
- ⇒ Because the PTO organization also includes teachers, part of the PTO's mission is to support those teachers and increase children's access to the school.
- ⇒ During the school day, PTO members are guests of the school, and must abide by the school's wishes and requests, as well as the district's policies and procedures.
 - All PTO events that take place during the year are scheduled with the principal *before* the school year starts.
 - In addition, any PTO event that takes place during the school day must be first approved by the School Based Leadership Team (SBLT), and must not undermine academics or serve as a distraction to teachers and students.

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Policies and Procedures: *Thoreau Elementary PTO is also a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. As such, the organization is run by a Board of Directors.*

Key Points:

- 1) All PTO members must abide by the PTO's bylaws, policies, and procedures which exist to protect the organization as a whole.
- 2) At the beginning of the school year, the PTO general membership passes the PTO's annual budget.
- 3) All additional fundraising and financial expenditures not contained in the annual budget must be approved in advance by the PTO Board, and must align with the PTO's core mission.

Guiding Principles:

- ⇒ Individual members and committees cannot operate as their own entities. They are part of the organization as a whole, and as such, are subject to oversight from the PTO Board.
 - Requiring individual members and committees to abide by the PTO's bylaws, policies, and procedures is not a "technicality," but an ethical, transparent, and principled way to do business.
 - Individual members and committees that fail to abide by or intentionally circumvent the PTO's bylaws, policies, and procedures cannot be said to be acting on behalf of the PTO.
 - Individual members and committees that use the PTO's resources, name, and non-profit status to seek funds on behalf of the PTO without the PTO Board's knowledge or consent hurt the PTO as a whole and put the PTO in an untenable position.
- ⇒ To avoid the appearance of impropriety and favoritism, the PTO prohibits individual members and committees from fundraising, directly soliciting funds (including grants), and "earmarking" funds for specific projects.
 - All funds raised by the PTO go toward the general fund, and are allocated and spent according to the priorities set forth in the PTO's annual budget.
 - After the annual budget is passed, the PTO Board is willing to entertain additional requests for funds and/or requests for additional fundraising opportunities, but only when the individual member or committee first submits a proposal and a budget for the proposed project or event to the PTO Board for consideration.