

Helen I. Smith School PTO
Committee Chairperson

Tips and Hints For Success

2014-2015

Thank you for volunteering to lead a committee in our PTO. The information in this packet includes common-sense reminders, basic training, and insider tips to help you in your role.

With the help of volunteers like you, our school will be the best it can be, our students will enjoy the benefits, and we adults will have the satisfaction of knowing our involvement can make a difference. Thanks and welcome back!

The Smith School PTO Executive Board
2014-15

Contact and Use Your Committee

If you have been given a list of volunteers for your committee, **please contact every single one of them**. You can use e-mail, telephone, or a note home with the child. Even if your event is in the distant future (e.g., Field Day) please contact the volunteers now, at the start of school, just to let them all know they haven't been forgotten and to introduce yourself as committee chair/team leader.

Try to find some way to **use every volunteer**. You may need to delegate more of the work than you had planned or think of new ways to use the committee/team. Never tell an eager volunteer, "No, thanks, we don't need your help." Every year, volunteers are turned off because no one called them. If your committee's job really isn't big enough for all of your volunteers, please at least have the courtesy to call everyone and explain the situation.

Committees are empowered to make decisions within the scope and budget of their project

The PTO Vice President, Jennifer Wien 201-463-0359, Jennifer_wien@yahoo.com) is the liaison between the PTO committees and the Executive Board. You can call or email her with any questions or if you need help in any way.

Rooms must be scheduled through the district's online reservation system. Please email any dates (with back-ups), and rooms you would like for your event, to Jennifer at least 30-60 days in advance so we can submit all room requests and add your events to our annual calendar (if not already done).

When you have a decision that must be debated or discussed in detail, do that during a committee, not at a general monthly PTO meeting. Use your committee to hash out issues, consider alternatives, and come to a decision. If the decision is potentially controversial or needs approval from PTO leadership, call the Vice President and set up a time for everyone to meet to discuss the issue. Also, if your committee is very small and you want advice from outside the committee, you can call the Vice President.

Your presentation at a monthly PTO meeting is to announce your committee's decisions, plans, and need for additional help, if necessary. You do not need to introduce or debate on committee issues at a monthly meeting. If discussion at a monthly meeting gets too detailed or bogged down in debate, the President will table the discussion and send the issue back to the committee for follow-up. In the interest of time, we will not do committee work at general meetings.

We really want the members to hear a report directly from each committee each month, preferably **no more than 5 minutes per committee**. If you, the chairperson, are not

available to attend a general meeting, please enlist one of your committee members to give your report. As a last resort, you can ask the PTO Vice President to give your report.

School Resources are Available to PTO Committees/Teams

Copying and More

At this time, we do not have designated volunteers to do photocopying for the PTO. If you have a photocopying job to submit, complete a Certificate for Document approval form (see Certificate of Approval for Distribution Tip Sheet). Email the job to the PTO President, Kelly Mahoney (freckel710@yahoo.com) The PTO President and Principal approve the document or ask for edit. Once approval is complete, you can either go to school to copy it, or ask for help getting it copied to distribute. We also have access to getting the job emailed out to families through the school secretary. Once the document has been copied and distributed the original should be kept in your committee folder. If you need the job by a certain deadline, be sure to specify that. Just make your instructions as clear as possible, especially if someone else is copying/ distributing for you. It might be beneficial to leave your phone number, too, just in case.

The PTO is allowed to use the copiers in the teachers' workroom. If there happens to be a problem with the copy machine, please tell Ms. Chalarka, school secretary, immediately so it can be fixed for further usage. Please consider the teachers/staff when they come in to make copies. They are on a timed schedule and will need to use the copy machine when they enter the room. Kindly move your papers and let them in. Also, they do a lot of their copying before school and during lunch hours so that would be a time to avoid the machines. The school has always been very gracious to the PTO and has never made it difficult for volunteers to use the resources. Let's keep that relationship intact.

There are approximately 300 students at our school.

School Newsletter and other Communication Tools

The School Newsletter comes home weekly.

If you want to send home a flyer as an attachment to the newsletter, you must through the previously mentioned approval process (see certificate of document approval tip sheet) and the original will be submitted to Jess.

The PTO President, Kelly Mahoney (freckel710@yahoo.com) or Vice President, Jennifer Wien (Jennifer_wien@yahoo.com) can assist you with other forms of communication as well. You are encouraged to take advantage of the following methods to publicize your committee and its accomplishments and to thank your volunteers:

- PTO website, accessible from the school's website (personal phone numbers will NOT be posted on the website or website addresses with www in front)
- School Newsletter Attachments
- PTO Facebook Page
- Individual flyers
- Communication at general meetings

Please consider using e-mail or phone to communicate with your committee and the PTO Executive Board.

Kelly Mahoney	President	freckel710@yahoo.com	201-615-8373
Jennifer Wien	Vice-President	Jennifer_wien@yahoo.com	201-463-0359
Diana Pilz	Treasurer	dpilz98@gmail.com	551-486-7436
Kathy Lau	Corresponding Sec.	lauboy3@verizon.net	201-693-8398
Jess Kern	Recording Secretary	kernj626@yahoo.com	201-562-4296

Please keep good records for the next chairperson!

- Notes from your committee meetings
- Copies of flyers, announcements, signs, etc.
- Lessons learned
- Advice for next time
- Phone numbers of contact people
- Copies of invoices, contracts, etc.
- Photographs of the layout of the event, the event itself
- "End-of-Year Checklist" form (in this folder)

Turn your files over to the Vice Presidents in May or June, or as soon as you conclude your role as chairperson. Thank you for all your time and effort in helping make Smith a great place to be.