

PTO Council Meeting
October 4, 2016
7:00 pm - regular meeting
Education Center, Room 210
MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Executive Board

Betsy Blagdon, Co-President
Emily Prenner, Co-President
Lisa Hansen, Secretary
Equity Representative, Jen Abbott
Health and Safety Representative, Doreen Rachal
Social and Emotional Wellness, Teri Ginsburg
METCO, Monica Yancey
Elementary School Representative, Maureen Oates
Jo-Louise Allen, Special Education Representative
Caroline Wilson, Website Manager
Frieda Dweck, Ex-Officio
Marcia Tabanken, Ex Officio

Other attendees

David Fleishman, Superintendent
Ellen Gibson, School Committee, Ward 1

PTO Presidents by School

Elizabeth Navisky, Angier
Valerie Pontiff, Bigelow
Chris Smith, Bowen
Liz Hiser, Brown
Chris Dutt, Burr
Terry Ginsburg, Countryside
Dana Hanson, Day
Lindsay Pike, Day
Carol Ann Delmonico, Mason Rice
Joanna Mitri, Memorial Spaulding
Rebika Shaw, Memorial Spaulding
Maria Yunis , Memorial Spaulding
Helen Haley, Newton South
Matthew Miller, Oak Hill
Sarah Kish, Pierce
Cathy Amos, Underwood
Rachel Stavis, Underwood
Lisa Schwarzberg, Ward

Next Meeting Dates

December

Introductions ~

All Council members were introduced.

Voting in the Slate

Motion: That the PTOC vote to approve the slate of 2016-2017 PTO Council Executive Board nominees. Motion seconded. Motion passes, all in favor, no objections.

Slate

Co-President	Emily Prenner
Co-President	Betsy Blagdon
Vice President	
Secretary	Lisa Hansen
Treasurer	
Equity Representative	Jen Abbott
Green Schools Representative	
Health and Safety Representative	Doreen Rachal
Social and Emotional Wellness	Teri Ginsburg
METCO	Monica Yancey
Political Action/Education	
Pre-School Representative	Nancy Ferrari
Elementary Schools Representative	Maureen Oates
Secondary Schools Representative	May Chiu
SPED-PAC Liaison	Jo Louise Allen
Technology	
Website Manager	Caroline Wilson

Superintendent's Remarks ~ Dr. David Fleishman

Dr. Fleishman Summary: Welcome to your new roles, you will offer council, judgement, and wisdom. The big picture role of Newton Public Schools (NPS) Central office consists of the Educational part -

curriculum, technology and professional development. The central NPS team works on changes to writing, math and areas to improve and bring the system in line with Common Core standards. The elementary school curriculum is becoming more uniform, and Social and Emotional learning has taken a larger role at this level in all schools. NPS has a federal grant to do this work. Students in certain areas are moving to new facilities as construction on schools continues, and NPS will be undertaking renovations to the newly obtained Aquinas property. Discussing issues like school start times will be central. New hiring of Principals, and staff diversity, will also be central. NPS now has use of Skyward, the general technology program for all schools. Communications changes will take place internally, plus there are also external communication needs. The Central office supports all of our schools. Comments presented on confederate flag incident at Newton North HS, summarizing the actions following and noting the Principal handled the issue well, including written communication to staff outlining issues surrounding flag incident, plus details of ways to help students heal, address issues, and to outline future plans regarding this issue.

Q: Role of PTO co's, that of supporting our Principal. How can PTO support new Principals, and identify these community issues - how do we work that dynamic?

A: Great question, that's asking how to do the job better. If you hear themes from many people in community, this is very helpful to know. Sometimes a Principal does not have this info. so it's helpful to know the greater community concerns. Good idea to ask Principal what is helpful. Q: PTO's sometimes not sure how much to push concerns/ issues? Should PTO's use social media to correct the record in cases?

A: Share that you are a confidant, and help advise.

High School Start Times - Ellen Gibson, School Committee

Ellen: Community is looking for feedback on the issue of High School start times.

Rational - why are we undertaking this? What have we done to date? A lot of research has been done. Community Engagement and feedback: Why - Later start time has impt. health and wellness benefits. Research on sleep is presented. Teens need 8-9 hours, and have/require different sleep patterns, the hormones needed for sleep develop later.

Work done - Analyzed surveys from 8,000 students, families, high school staff. Updates, info., feedback from School Committee, district website, and email lists. Published and end of year report, and scenarios were developed. Looked at a lot of other districts in MA. Hosted forum of 80 plus, provided feedback to Newton SC on process. Needed to include staff, and be thoughtful.

Findings- Best scenarios evolve when morning time pushed back with keeping end times close to same/consistent due to student involvement in activities, work, impact on teachers, traffic, etc.

Guiding principles - 1. Get NET gains in health, wellness: 2. Increase number of students able to sleep more starting at 11 pm; 3. Want to impact in equitable manner (Impact on Boston students commuting, we are a diverse school community; 4. Financial impact, and HR impact.

Takeaways/Impacts - All scenarios will provide greater sleep opportunity. Some impact high school, some all schools, HS end time will be no later than 3:45. Bus pick ups K-5 could be much earlier. Before/Aftercare will need to be changed.

We will make presented handouts available via links. (Emily)

Results/options - Overview of A, B and C, and combinations - Times, details, pros/cons, feasibility timeline - Sept. 2017 - (links)

Basically shift all school start times 20 min later, HS start 50 min later. (options available via link)

What are the trade-offs in terms of value for each?

Min. bus cost increase of 700K/yr.

Q: How did you create the chart showing the increased percentages of HS kids getting the needed sleep?

Q: How does this impact Brown? Brown will shift to Oak Hill's schedule, basically.

Q: Bus fee questions, reasons for the increase? Who takes the additional cost burden? Fee implementation? Would this change number of kids using the bus? A: All good questions, unresolved so far.

Comment: Consider how this impacts sports, end of school day blocks (X block?). Pushes out the sports start times.

Ellen: Please write down questions and hand them to me.

Comment: Costs will change, this will be a tax on parents for aftercare if the early scenario is in effect. Most reviewed issues - Bus costs, aftercare/early care issue, sports time start, fees to families,

Q: Can we get the overall school budget? Are these rounding error figures? A: If we look at costs as percentage, we have fixed pie, if we take from one piece, it comes from somewhere such as programming, teachers, etc.

Q: If we start later, would we need to add school days? A: Yes, we could pull 5 min back for each day added.

Q: Preschool is not listed, is that right? A: Yes, won't be impacted.

Comparison of Benefits, and impact charts - review of sleep benefits, Cost, HS sched., Afternoon activities, Yearly Schedule, K-5 impact, 6-8 impact, and timing.

Q: Will these be recurring costs each year? Yes, it is.

Feedback Encouraged!! Community Forum at Angier, 10/19 at 7 pm - Need PTOs to help advertise, and have meetings on this. North/South public forum.

Email: laterstart@newton.k12.ma.us

More info: www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/2553

Q: How and when will the final decision be made? A: SC will decide, gets regular updates, will have multiple discussions, on the docket for Feb. 2017.

Q: Should PTO co-presidents bring this to the communities? A: Yes. Definitely, let parents know this is coming.

Question 2 discussion/possible vote

Emily: Who is familiar with Question 2? Most, but not all. Quick review on the issue. Taking stance on political candidates is not allowed as a PTO. Ballot question positions are permitted. Last year, there were votes on the Newton snow shoveling ordinance, Tax issue, and Charter review.

As an individual, you can endorse a candidate, just not as a PTO or group of Co-Presidents.

Summary of Ques. 2 is provided.

Q: What is the current law/cap number?

Emily: Received the ballot item language. Presents reasons for "No" support as relevant to NPS. Is it appropriate for whole council to vote? Would like feedback of the Council. Letter to Tab, and other announcements are forthcoming based on Executive Board vote.

Comment (Exec.): How do Co-Presidents want to proceed? Take own/individual vote as PTO? Or, vote as whole council?

Comment: In past votes, council supported exec. board in past.

Comment: Reason why PTOC Board initiative worded as such is because the issue is about public

system funding. Not about whether charters are good or bad.

Comment: Council should go along with Exec. board vote

Comment: Funding question isn't clear, though. But, already 65K going out of budget right now.

Different from line item for Out of District tuition.

Q: On 65k, is there a cost per student directive? A: No hard caps on teachers.

Comment: We are currently underfunding the State funds on educating students.

Comment (Council): There is a racial overtone to the question, we need to address how "Yes" vote is considered and the impact on the community. Will the divisiveness be problematic as far as personal issues/overtone.

Comment: Even without understanding Charters, it's clear more funds taken away will have a detrimental impact on public schools across the state.

Q: How do Co-presidents communicate this issue? Reach out to your community in unbiased fashion.

Exec. Board would not be part of the vote. Just co-presidents, each school one vote.

Comment: Tax and other votes were contentious,

Motion: Whether PTOC should vote, to see if a vote should be taken to determine a stance on Question 2 by the PTOC. Motion seconded.

Yea - 5, Nay - 6, Abstentions - 3. Motion fails.

Comment: The costs are fixed in the system, so even with loss of a child in the system, we still have a lot of retained costs.

Q: Would it be a good idea for PTOs to encourage parents to learn about this? A: Yes. Can PTO's take an individual position. A; Yes, comparisons with override vote.

Comment: In PTOC by-laws, Exec. board has to discuss it first, then brings to greater council to support or not support.

Open Discussion

New Business:

Topics for the future- Role of the PTOs and Principal.

Comment (Equity): Did everyone see the Equity e-mail re: projections? You can use projections (whichever is higher)

Comment: Discuss aftercare - problems at Ward, and other schools.

METCO, ELL and Sp.Ed. and other topics

Q: Will PTOC take a vote on start times? PTOC Exec. board needs to talk about that.

Meeting adjourned, 8:42 pm.

