

**PTO Council Meeting
December 6, 2016**

7:30 pm - regular meeting

Education Center, Room 210

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Executive Board

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Betsy Blagdon, Co-President

Emily Prenner, Co-President

Lisa Hansen, Secretary

Equity Representative, Jen Abbott*

Maureen Oats, Elementary Rep.

Karen Manning, Ex-Officio

* Also in attendance as school PTO Co-President

Other Attendees:

David Fleishman, Superintendent

Maricel Sheets, METCO Director

PTO Presidents by School:

Elizabeth Navisky, Angier

Jessica Rhein, Angier

Chris Smith, Bowen

Jen Abbot, Cabot

Liz Flaig, Countryside

Kerry Prasad, Countryside
Dana Hanson, Day
Lindsay Pike, Day
Nora Horick, Franklin
Karen Hite, Lincoln Eliot
Will Adams, Mason Rice
Sally Brickell, Newton North
Helen Haley, Newton South
Matthew Miller, Oak Hill
Sarah Kish, Pierce
Cathy Amos, Underwood
Rachel Stavis, Underwood
Diana Cohen, Ward
Hagit Abraham, Williams

Next Meeting Date

February 7, 2017

Introductions ~ All

Budget Overview/ Gift Policy Review

Financial status of PTOC was reviewed, along with status of PTOC dues payments.

In 2015, the NPS Gift Policy changed, dues to needed compliance with state ethics laws, plus some NPS specific additions to the policy. Group gifts to class specifics were discussed, along with a handout/presentation. Overview of Teacher reporting requirements, and Equity Policy obligations was provided. There are monetary value limitations, which make donations to non-equity PTO funds or to the Newton Schools Foundation available alternatives for monetary donations.

Questions?

Comment: PTOs should send the gift policy around to their community, so each school parent community is aware.

Q: Not heard of a PTO donation as alternative to a monetary gift option, do schools do this? A: Yes, Cabot has done it. Angier - library books have been donated by specific person, but must keep Equity Policy limitations in check.

Request from Jenn Abbott, Equity Chair: For Equity tracking purposes, please add your Treasurer's name/e-mail to the sheet being sent around.

Answer to Mason Rice question on use of PTOC umbrella e-mail list for feedback: PTO presidents should feel encouraged to use the umbrella list for PTOC ask questions of other PTOs, get advice,

compare processes, and experiences. Overview was provided about how to use PTOC e-mail list containing all president list to answer questions.

Superintendent's Remarks ~ Dr. David Fleishman

Welcome. We will review some highlights from the enrollment report, as well as provide comment on current enrollment issues vs. planning for future enrollment trends. As for planning, elementary schools enrollment analysis is ongoing, and we will begin looking at middle school enrollment issues. In 2016, there were 149 new students in the district (not counting new K), Total high school enrollment is getting close to 1,000 per class.

Elementary: Starting to stabilize, but still mindful to provide "breathing room" for sporadic larger classes (years).

Middle: Day and Brown to grow most significantly in numbers, mostly over next 5 years. (as per slide presentation data). Difficulties with facilities crowding at middle schools is that saving space may fall on the World Lang. Teachers, since their classes are meant to be mobile.

High School: Regarding the North South split of students, the more significant enrollment increase came at South in 2016.

K Projections: Are based on birth projections. K student survival rates are tracked as to who remains in the district vs. number that moves to private school, or out of city.

Student Assignment Working Group: Summary of past work was given. Now SAWG is looking at additional buffer zones and permanent district lines for specific schools (Burr, Horace Mann, Franklin, Mason Rice and Bowen). Franklin is a space concern, looking at the long term plan. K enrollment numbers were unexpected at Burr. Countryside, Mason Rice buffers will be impacted/shifted, and Bowen enrollment will increase as a result. Per buffer shifts, new larger Zervas facility will start to fill up.

Q: About the bump in South student numbers, what is reason? A: Not sure why, many of these families may be new to Newton.

Election: Quite a time in school since the election. There have been many ugly incidents in school, and many emotions. Should consider the opportunities - to determine what behavior won't we tolerate, and how to respect different perspectives. Discussion of current obstacles, ways to deal with them.

Comment: Possibly prep a program for parents to deal with questions about race. Would there be an interest in that program?

METCO Presentation ~ Maricel Sheets, Director of METCO/ Newton

Maricel Sheets is Newton Public Schools METCO Program Director, and she's also a leader in educational realm. It is her third year in the Newton METCO role. She is glad to be at NPS, she has grown as a leader, and has grown the staff. Fact Q/A, as provided in the presentation:

What does METCO stand for? Metropolitan Council for Ed Opportunity, started 1966, 430 students from Boston. Not income based. Not ability based. Formed to correct racial imbalance in suburban schools. Product of Racial Imbalance Law, and as a response to Brown vs. Board of Ed. ruling. Newton was first of seven communities to start program and is different from the 1974 bussing efforts. It is not strictly an African American program, and the numbers of minority students who are enrolled in the Newton program is parallel to the percentages of those specific minority groups residing in the City of Boston. Where over enrollment is a factor, numbers are restrained. Schools have METCO counselors to make sure students feel connected. Three percent of student at NPS are METCO. Middle/ High Schools have lower percentages of students of color overall. Goals presented- Support Student Success, Staff support, Engage Family. Transportation issues are on the table this year -trying to be creative to also help resident families with bussing, middle school students access to athletics.

Overview of staffing. 6 Counselors, 1 intern, presence at all 21 schools is desired. Enrollment is only in K-2 grade. This policy is established by School Committee, by a vote. Details on staffing at all schools is provided (6 Counselors) Responsibilities include support groups at schools.

Staffing at Elem. schools tries to also follow the feeder patterns to the middle schools.

Program addressing underperforming student numbers in this group. Professional development programs (Race Discussions) have been expanded to staff and social training programs.

“Courageous Conversations About Race” is a program currently underway to deal with these issues. It is a 5 year plan.

Family and Community Engagement - Important to have a point person at the school. Support METCO Liaisons with PTOs. Ease requirements for families, meeting requirement (6 to 3 required, emphasis on in-school engagement)

Challenges/ Opportunities - Host family idea was explained to learn best practices. Boston family programs in the elementary schools opportunity for families to meet up, build community. Goal is to draft a PTO liaison description for the elementary schools.

Trying to have a range of 11-23 kids at each school who are part of the METCO program.

Q: Mem Spaulding prepped a host family, then got no METCO students to host. Is there anyway to know how many kids a school will get, if any? A: Sometimes with sibling applications, regular distribution is altered, of enrollment may be deferred. Buddy program - most students will enter in 1st grade, in case of elem PTOs interested in Buddy Program.

Idea from the METCO Parent Board -for 5th Anniversary of plan - visit each school to review METCO.

Equity Presentation

Jenn Abbott, Equity Chair. There is an Equity Committee meeting tomorrow, 12/ 7.

Elem schools: We are trying to confirm the actual Tech Inventory, so we know what can be purchased. Communication re: status of allowed purchases should be coming in the next month.

A lot of devices are going to be aging out (much inventory is purchased at same time) Should there be adjustments to the standards based on developments/time passage. Will be discussing options for either fundraising to get the remaining devices.

Secondary: Require a reporting system to identify imbalances. May not be as imbalanced as Elem. due to neighborhoods equaling out. Question is should secondary have an Equity policy, too.

Q: Where can we find the current standard? That's uniform to each school? A: There was information contained within the Equity Spreadsheet sent last year. Jen will send it around again.

Q: Can you also email the gift policy?

Comment: Needs to be better communication from IT regarding Equity and inventory, due to staffing changes.

Q: Raffle Questions- Can PTOC send around guidelines for schools holding raffles? Yes.

Q: Lexia issue? Is anyone else missing this program at your school? A: School Dept should make the decision about this purchase, since it is curricular.

Adjourned 9:01 pm