

**Newton PTO Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 5, 2017 @ 7:30pm
Newton Ed Center, Room 210**

Attendees

Christine Dutt, Emily Prenner, Cristal Balis, Amy Horsman, Caroline Wilson, Betsy Blagdon, Rebika Shaw, Rebecca Anderson, Will Adams, Jas Rai, Liz Flaig, Adam Howes, Sally Brickell, Teri Ginsburg, Jenn Martin, Colleen Nolan, Hagit Abraham, Karen Hite, Liz Hiser, Andrea Steenstrup, Jen Abbott, Lindsay Pike, Gabriela Kroszynski

Introductions

Social and Emotional Learning District Overview

Amy Kelley, District Leader of Social & Emotional Learning

Fall 2014 NPS won a multi-million-dollar grant from the US Dept Ed + US Office of Civil Rights to develop a multi-tiered system of support for social and emotional learning goals.

Social Emotional (SEL) & Academic **competencies** (aka life skills)

Do consistently across all schools. "By the time kids graduate from NPS we have collaborated to help them build these skills."

Social & Emotional Competencies

- Cooperation**: Students' ability to establish new relationships, maintain positive relationships and friendships, avoid social isolation, resolve conflicts, accept differences, be a contributing member of the classroom and school community, and work productively and creatively with others.
- Assertiveness**: Students' ability to take initiative, stand up for their ideas without hurting or negating others, seek help, succeed at a challenging task, and recognize their individual self as separate from the circumstances or conditions they're in.
- Responsibility**: Students' ability to motivate themselves to take action and follow through on expectations; to define a problem, consider the consequences, and choose a positive solution.
- Empathy**: Students' ability to "see into" (recognize, understand) another's state of mind or emotions and be receptive to new ideas and perspectives; to appreciate and value differences and diversity in others; to have concern for others' welfare, even when it doesn't benefit or may come at a cost to oneself.
- Self-Control**: Students' ability to recognize and regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to be successful in the moment and remain on a successful trajectory.

Academic Competencies

- Academic Mindset**: Four self-perceptions influence a student's academic mindset:
 1. I belong in this academic community;
 2. my effort improves my performance;
 3. I can succeed at this work; and
 4. I see the value in this work.
- Perseverance**: Perseverance is a student's tendency to complete assignments in a timely and thorough manner and to the best of their ability, despite distractions, obstacles, or level of challenge.
- Learning Strategies**: Learning strategies are techniques, processes, and tactics a student uses to
 1. learn, think, remember, and recall;
 2. monitor their own comprehension and growth;
 3. self-correct when they are confused or have an error in thinking; and
 4. set and achieve goals and manage their time effectively.
- Academic Behaviors**: Academic behaviors are the ways in which students conduct themselves that support their success in school, including such things as regular attendance, arriving ready to work, paying attention, participating in instructional activities and class discussions, and devoting out-of-school time to studying and completing assignments and projects.

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Amy's job is to work with educators and families to build these life skills. Takes many years to develop them.

SEL ideas vs academic vs behavior: a multi-tiered approach

Educational equity – all students entitled to access the curriculum

Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, Special Ed

Responsive Classroom practices threaded throughout

Q from PTOC: What does this look like in secondary schools?

- 60% of middle school (MS) Unit A staff are trained in Responsive Classroom
- Newton was a pilot district for MS
- High School? Hope is to intro in HS in the same way it happened with MS teachers (i.e., they realized that their students came to them in 6th grade having done this work K-5, should learn about it and continue)
ex: NSHS Librarians sought out training – starting that way. Best if organic.

Takes 5-7 years for a professional to change their practices; school communities even longer

How to measure?

Newton has a fidelity measurement, assess whether the teachers/schools are implementing the practices. Newton all K-8 schools are at least at 50% implementation levels.

Implementation = educators are using the practices to build the skills in kids.

What does implementation look like?

Supporting adults to create the conditions for students to develop the key skills; not measuring student outcomes.

For example:

- All 15 elementary & 4 middle schools have a Responsive School Team (1 admin, 10-15 educators) + 1 Responsive Classroom liaison (an adult from that building to lead PD, rep to district SEL group)
- 2 schools are focusing on Advisory as a key practice
- Others are focusing on the foundational pieces – setting expectations in the school for behavior, competencies.

Too early to measure student outcomes.

If additional questions, email them to Emily & Christine at

co-presidents@newtonptocouncil.org

They will share w Teri Ginsburg (PTOC SEL Rep) and Amy, feed back to PTOC.

Equity Policy Guidelines Brainstorming

All present broke up into 4 teams to brainstorm on the question: What things should be equal (equitable) among schools?

Prior to breakouts, Christine gave background, where are we in creating new equity policy.

Note: Until more specific guidelines for the new equity policy are developed, PTOs are operating under the current equity policy.

Purpose of brainstorm is to get feedback from schools/PTOs about what equity means to them.

In the process of developing new guidelines under the policy, it's PTOC's job to bring parent perspectives to the table as we work with the School Committee and district.

All present reconvened and shared two key ideas from each breakout group. Notes from each group follow.

Brainstorming Exercise

What things should be equal (equitable) among schools?

** = topics shared with all meeting attendees during debrief

Group 1

Facilitator: Liz Hiser

**Access to Technology

Is it equitably deployed?

Do PTOs have consistent levels of funding responsibility?

Principals: What pools of \$ do they have access to?

What about tech at home? Lower income, do they have equal access after school?

High schools: in class use of personal devices for research (what if don't have them?)

Personal calculators – what if you can't afford them?

At North – covered via the Principal/Student Assistance Fund

Which schools have pilots and how get decided?

North: Center for Civic Engagement

South: DaVinci

Equality of opportunity for kids to pursue their extra-curricular interests

• Ability to funnel parent \$ (and volunteer energy) into areas where kids participate (sports, theater, etc...)

• Inequality of activities across schools

• ex: Day student paper – equity issue/teacher retired, so eliminated (or vice versa...)

Big question: why did one school experience a cut just to make equal with others?

Can't "equity out" all the differences

• Other middle schools: drama inconsistently funded

In general, our (middle school) guidelines: what does the Principal want?

Field Trips

Equipment

What problem are we solving for re: equity guidelines in the high schools and middle schools? PTO \$ at secondary level is not that much.

What if PTO budget capped at X% of the individual school's budget?

Group 2

Facilitator: Betsy Blagdon

Age of building ->

Discretionary

Tech

Mic system

Playground

Burr: holes in building

Ward: water fountain broke

Current philosophy – NPS should handle. Actual – PTOs could take up slack.

Wealthier: how could share wealth?

Does NPS make up difference?

Transparency

Especially technology
3D Printers

Principal support for fundraising/PTO?

Loosen tech prohibition for...

School Pass?
Fixing laptops

Field Trips limited – would like standards.

Professional Development via Principal's Discretionary

Group 3

Facilitator: Emily Prenner

**Take Creative Arts & Sciences (CASC) out of equity.

Costs don't scale with enrollment #'s
Not equitable across schools

Playgrounds

Field Trips

- Who is vetting?
- #'s each school can fund
- Field Trip costs of buses (enrollment growth)

Group 4

Facilitator: Christine Dutt

Software apps at district cost – approved by tech?

**Equalize physical conditions of schools (e.g., water fountains, desks, PE equipment).

Staff Development/conferences – Should be prohibited PTO spending? Open issue in this group.

Principal Discretionary Fund - \$ limit to fund

Election of New Equity Representatives

PTOC unanimously elected Christine Dutt and Emily Prenner as the Equity Representatives. They will join Jen Abbott (current PTOC Board Equity Rep) as PTOC's representatives on the Equity Committee.