

## McCarthy-Towne School PTSO Meeting Minutes Tuesday, October 18, 2016

Chris Hanlon, PTSO Sr. Chair  
Julie Maranian, PTSO Treasurer  
David Krane, Principal  
Heidi Holt

Judy Bourdon, PTSO Jr. Chair  
Kerry Lewis, PTSO Secretary  
Jen Pratt, PTSO faculty representative

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04P.M. The Sept. Minutes were approved with one revision.

### **View Into the School**

Jen Pratt shared an important component of Responsive Classroom, the daily Morning Meeting. Each classroom starts the day with a 15-20min. Morning Meeting at the same time. Specialists also attend these meetings and rotate through the grade levels. The Morning Meeting contributes to the school culture in a big way and is usually done in a circle on the rug. Jen walked us through a Morning Meeting where we participated as the students do. There are four components:

1. **Message:** Each teacher writes a morning message for the students to read as they enter the classroom. In the early grades, it is done as a shared reading experience. This is written on chart paper or sometimes on the Smart Board in the upper grades. The message can take many forms and may include what will happen that day, give the students a task, ask the students to vote, include an interactive writing component, etc. The message builds community as students are often asked to share and defend their opinions. The message can bring in content material too.
2. **Greeting:** Students greet one another a different way every day according to the teacher's directive. This sets a positive tone for the day and provides each student with a sense of belonging. These greetings can be simple (such as "Good Morning, Bobby" with a handshake which continues around the circle) or they can be more involved (such as toss a ball to a classmate of your choice and say hello).
3. **Share:** Each student is asked to share something about a given topic. The dialogue can happen as a whole group or in partners. Examples may include share your favorite color, what you had for breakfast, where you are with your current writing assignment, etc.
4. **Activity:** This often incorporates movement and/or is seen as an energizer just before the kids begin the day's first lesson. The Activity is a brief game that sometimes incorporates academic skills. One example is when every student takes off a shoe and throws it in a pile. When the teacher says, the students grab a shoe and try to find its owner as fast as they can.

David shared that McT tries to start each school year with new Responsive Classroom training. Additionally, new hires are sent for foundational training in the summer and learn from their mentor teachers all throughout the school year.

### **Principal's Report**

David shared that the last few weeks have been really great, despite the choppy schedule of days off and early releases. The three-day break seemed to be a welcome thing for many students and teachers as they reflected on the first few weeks of school. The new teachers are happy and mesh well with the rest of the faculty.

Eileen Zhang is McT's assigned School Committee member. David hopes to invite her to a PTSO meeting as well as a School Council meeting.

Budget discussions are starting. The first leadership meeting is tomorrow.

Valerie from Teachers College was at McT last week working with the primary teachers on the workshop model. The workshop model is not a rigid process that has to be followed, but can be used in math, science, and social studies. It's not just for literacy and writing. Valerie and the teachers studied the inquiry model where students brainstorm questions about a topic and then investigate through guided activities and by using their resources, acting as scientists.

On Thursday, the 2016-2017 School Improvement Plan will be presented to the School Committee by David. It will be a fifteen minute presentation that gives the School Committee members an idea of McT's focus areas and what we're doing with Challenge Success. We want students who are happy and challenged, along with being mentally capable of dealing with the many academic and social pressures that may present themselves.

There have been some security changes to the Parker Damon Building and all of the schools as of October 4<sup>th</sup>. All of the doors are now kept locked. Visitors now have to use the intercom at the front door to be let in by the office staff. This is all in the name of safety but it does present some challenges to our unique twin school set-up. Kids are outside playing in the front circle for a large portion of the day. The constant buzzing of the intercom and in/out of the students for the restroom, nurse, etc. is a bit much for the office staff. When students are outside in the back, assistants are buzzing the students in with their passes. David questions if having a locked front door is practical and sustainable. There are kinks that have to be worked out.

The first ALICE drill is coming. The students will be taught that these drills are not as orderly and predictable as fire drills.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Julie shared that our total funds available equal \$97,846.21. There's negative \$2,324.30 (cash liabilities) due to the money we put down to hold the Merrowvista trip.

#### Income:

- 29 families have contributed to the Annual Appeal totaling \$3,754. This is \$700 less than we had at this time last year.
- made \$1,190 from the McT t-shirt fundraiser, surpassing our goal by \$515.
- received a \$254 check from Citizens Bank for deposit discrepancies that were noticed.

#### Expenses:

- \$28 to Martha Brandt to reimburse her for stamps (directory solicitation)
- \$100 to Carlson Orchards for kindergarten trip
- \$750 to Doherty's Garage for buses for 1<sup>st</sup> grade Good Harbor field trip
- \$1,441.74 to Plimoth Plantation for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade trip.
- \$1,200 to Kimberly Connors-Hughes for 6<sup>th</sup> grade in-school archaeological dig.

There's still \$1,385.43 in the Parker Damon Fund. We all agree this money needs to finally be spent. David will talk to the faculty at their November meeting to come up with a plan.

### **Looking Back**

We discussed a retirement gift for Astrid. Chris and Tracey have spoken about a book donation for the library and possibly a table and checkers for outdoor recess.

Christine Hanley is the new office administrator. Parents are encouraged to introduce themselves and be patient as she learns.

Our Fall fundraising seems to be lagging. Both catalogue orders and direct appeal donations are down from last year. We will continue to take donations. Remember you can use it as a tax write-off. Chris said he'd remind parents of this in the next Howler and/or on the Facebook page.

Shelley Cole's ten family portrait slots are filled. Therefore, she will donate \$400 to the PTSO.

Tracey Smith had the Auction Kick-Off Party last week for parent volunteers. A lot of new people and good energy were present. She gave an overview of the Auction timelines, committees' jobs, and time commitment.

### **Looking Ahead**

Chris shared that the PTSO chairs from each school meet regularly. He and Judy learned that there is no longer a three hour minimum for hiring custodial staff.

The Fall Social is November 4<sup>th</sup>. Bibianna Knell and Julia Epperson are still in need of parent volunteers, even for just a bit of time. This year some new additions include a photo booth and pumpkin toss.

The Scholastic Book Fair will take place from Oct. 31-Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. It will be open at the Fall Social and classes will visit during the week.

Chris shared that our contract with the Coffee Pond photographer is up. Should we stick with them or change to Geskus, which has a cheaper base package? Chris and Tracey will look into the numbers and also negotiate. Another question was if all the schools would save money if we all used the same photographer? Would they give AB a deal?

Tracey is gathering names for a trial parent copy crew. David suggested they pilot it with 1 or 2 teams. Will this save money and free up classroom assistants to work with students instead of doing clerical work? It was shared that Blanchard classrooms have a "copy parent" for each class.

### **District Issues**

Chris shared that two School Committee members attended the joint PTSO district meeting. It was clear they want to make information accessible to the public. A School Committee tab will be added to our PTSO website with bullet point summaries of latest happenings.

Chris shared the Parent Communication Map, which indicates whom parents should speak with when various questions or issues arise.

A lot of time is being spent on the District Master Plan . What will be done in a capital sense? There are 2-3 buildings in poor shape. A long list of possible solutions was given to the town but no decisions have been made yet. At November 9<sup>th</sup>'s School Committee Meeting, some of the consultant's findings will be explained.

School start time is still an ongoing discussion and is directly tied to our focus on mental health and well-being. These talks could bring changes but no earlier than the 2018-2019 school year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry Lewis  
PTSO Secretary