

## McCarthy-Towne School PTSO Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Julie Weir, PTSO Sr. Chair  
Julie Hobbs, PTSO Jr. Chair  
Julie Maranian, PTSO Treasurer  
Tracey Smith, Parent Involvement Coordinator  
Judy Bourdon  
Mike Majors, Acton Finance Committee Chair

David Krane, Principal  
Jen Pratt, PTSO Faculty Representative  
Mary Brolin, AB School Committee Liaison  
Carol Chytil, McT InterSchool Council Representative  
Mr. and Mrs. Satyendra Tomar  
Margaret Busse, Acton Finance Committee Vice-Chair

### Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM followed by the welcome address and attendee introductions.

### February Meeting Minutes

The February 2016 meeting minutes were approved with minor edits to the 2016-2017 district calendar updates located in the "Other Updates" section.

### Principal's Report

#### *Kindergarten Night*

David reported the McCarthy-Towne Kindergarten Night held on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 was a tremendous success. The evening was well attended by prospective parents that were excited to learn about McCarthy-Towne and our differentiating qualities. The full McCarthy-Towne staff was in attendance and available to answer questions. The Student Council comprised of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students was also present. The Student Council did a fantastic job speaking about their classes and experiences at McCarthy-Towne. The Student Councils' presence was requested at the Kindergarten Night to help prospective parents get a broader picture of our school and enable them to think about their child's experience beyond kindergarten.

The video used at Kindergarten Night was a huge success. Megan Bowhens, the new Education Technology teacher was instrumental in helping update the video for the presentation. Next year a new video will be created with Megan's help. The project will start in September and be designed to make it easier to edit for future versions.

On Friday, March 4 the last kindergarten tour was held. This tour was sparsely attended, however, the prospective parents involved were extremely interested in learning more about McCarthy-Towne. The low attendance rate was thought to be a function of having six schools alternating tours and this particular tour being late in the process.

#### *MCAS Testing*

MCAS testing is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, March 29. Grades 5 and 6 will have English Language Arts Comprehension (ELA) tests on Tuesday, March 29 and Wednesday, March 30. Grades 3 and 4 will have ELA tests on Monday, April 4 and Tuesday, April 5. The math tests will be conducted in May. Teachers and students will do some prep work in advance to help students feel comfortable with the testing, however curriculum will not be altered to cater to the tests. David and Mary Brolin both stressed that everyone would like the school and district to do their best but the MCAS tests are not ABs focus for learning.

#### *Columbia University Teacher's College Literacy Program*

Representatives from the Teacher's College program recently spent time with the upper grade level teachers observing instruction and providing coaching and feedback. Teacher's College is schedule to return later in March to observe, coach and provide feedback to the lower grade level teachers. An additional session will be held in May to reflect on the progress made this year and plan for next year. We are fortune to have a reflective staff that takes time to review current work and plan adjustments to make improvements in the future.

### *CPAC African Drumming Assembly*

On Thursday, March 10 the entire school enjoyed a special assembly featuring the CPAC, African Art, Music and Culture residence program. The group performed an African drumming show. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades also attended breakout sessions run by the group. The performances were well received by faculty, staff and students. The students demonstrated their ability to be a respectful audience, a skill that is continuously worked on during all-school assemblies.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The PTSO reported \$96,548.27 in available funds. Recent income and fundraising changes included:

- McT recently received a check from the Target "Take Charge of Education Program" for \$286.09. This is a last expected check from this program. Target is ending this program on May 14, 2016.
- The "Bus Yellow School Bus" grant paid \$200 toward the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Museum of Fine Arts field trip. The grant funds were applied to the Bedford Charter Service invoice.
- The McT Movie Night run by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade raised \$861 for the Thompson Island field trip.

Recent expense activity reported included:

- Payment made to Crocodile River Music in the amount of \$750 for the African Art, Music and Culture Residence Program (all-school assembly and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade breakout sessions held on March 10). This was the final payment for this program.
- Payment made to Cura Pfefferkorn in the amount of \$1,117 for the frames and mattes for the auction class art projects.
- Fieldtrip payments continue to be processed on an on-going basis. This includes the 1<sup>st</sup> grade field trip to the Boston Children's Museum to see the Japanese House.
- Automatic monthly payments were made to MCI in the amount of \$14.80 for the safe arrival hotline and Auction Software fee in the amount of \$26.95.

The schedule for the contracted services payments was also discussed. Julie Maranian will follow-up with David and human services on the schedule dates.

A reminder was made that the Parker Damon fund with \$1,385.43 needs to be used. David will discuss the fund with the staff at the next faculty meeting. The staff has to vote on how to use the funding to benefit the school. Suggestions were made that the funds should support the Art Integration program or update reference materials in the library.

### **Fundraisers & Event Updates**

*Book Swap:* McT hosted a Book Swap on Wednesday, February 24. This was a free event open to all McT families. The event was very successful and an estimated 70 – 80 families in attendance. All of the books available to take were donated from a variety of sources including the Acton public library and McT families. Due to storage constraints, the leftover books from the event were donated to a school in Haverhill that lost a majority of its library collection to a school flood and an organization that sends relief supplies to Uganda. A second book swap event is being discussed for June.

*Auction Raffle:* Currently 105 raffle tickets were sold through grocery stores ticket booths and approximately 30 envelopes were returned from family backpack sales. Volunteers are needed for ticket booth sales on Sunday, March 20 at Roche Brothers. The Auction is scheduled for Saturday, April 9. Tickets are on sale on the PTSO website and through hard copy forms sent home via Friday folders.

*Lip Sync:* The annual Lip Sync is scheduled for Saturday, March 19. A videographer is needed for next year's performance. Interested parties are welcome to shadow the current videographer this year.

*Willow Books Night:* This annual event is scheduled for Thursday, March 31. The reading schedule is TBD. A portion of the proceeds from the evening go to support the McT Title 1 Program.

*Tag Sale:* Volunteers are needed to run the Tag Sale tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 30. The event will be cancelled if no one volunteers to run the event. Please contact Julie Weir if you're interested.

*Grant Writing Program:* A number of grants have been identified and researched to help subsidize school programs. Fieldtrips and playground support were identified as the two main categories for grant funding. The deadlines and submission requirements vary greatly. This initiative will be an ongoing effort.

*InterSchool Council:* The first InterSchool Council meeting hosted by Dr. Brand for the 2015/2016 school year was held on Tuesday, March 1. McT has two representatives (a School Council member, Tracey Estabrook and a PTSO member, Carol Chytil) attend the meeting. The council was restructured this year to get a broader sense of activities and concerns at each school. This meeting was designed to be an overview. The purpose was to gather updates from each school and learn about the facility renovation committee/effort. The next meeting will be held in May.

### **Guest Presentation: Acton Finance Committee & Kelley's Corner Improvement Initiative**

Mike Majors, Acton Finance Committee Chair and Margaret Busse, Acton Finance Committee Vice-Chair presented a summary of the Finance Committee's annual point-of-view. The summary included an overview, update on revenues, spending, proposed capital projects and key recommendations. The key recommendations included:

- Return to structurally balanced operations
  - Limit tax increases to 2.5%; Limit spending increases to 3%; No planned use of reserves
- Replenish the stabilization fund as part of maintaining an overall reserve balance of 5% of budgeted spending
- No Proposition 2 ½ override
- Continue to fund OPEB contribution
- Form Capital Planning Committee to plan for future capital expenses, both maintenance and new.

Concerns were raised about the school budget and class sizes.

### *Kelley's Corner Improvement Initiative*

The purpose of the initiative is to promote development that creates an attractive and coherent town center, improve traffic flow, provide safe and social connections for bikers and walkers and beatify the public spaces. Voting on two articles for this initiative are scheduled for the second night of Town meeting, April 5. The articles needs a 2/3 vote for approval. The first article is an amendment to the zoning requirements. The second article is a bonded investment funding request for \$756,000 to complete the infrastructure plan.

### **Other Updates & Future Meetings**

The Acton Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 4 and the Boxborough Town Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9. The School Committee strongly encourages all parents to attend and show support for the school budget.

The next McT PTSO meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 11 at 7:00 PM in the library. The 2016-2017 PTSO budget will be presented at the meeting. The budget will be voted on at the May meeting.

The March PTSO meeting was adjourned at 8:59 PM.