

McCarthy-Towne School PTSO
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday January 23, 2013

Present:

Kate Murray, PTSO Sr. Chair
Tracey Smith, PTSO Jr. Chair
Carolyn Dee, PTSO Secretary
Chris Hanlon, PTSO Treasurer
David Krane, Principal
Matt McDowell – Asst. Principal
Patty Lee, Parent Involvement Coordinator
Kate Gibalerio, McT Teacher
Jen Pratt, McT Teacher
Cheryl Beaudoin, McT Teacher
Laura Martin, McT Teacher
Kat Hudson, Lauren Richardt, Janet Munson, Sorel Sammons, Simon Peffers, Carol Chytil, Maureen Greer, Other McT Parents

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

Minutes

The minutes of December 12, 2012 were approved as amended.

Principal's Report

David reported that the flu is present in the school. There is an average of 35 kids per day out with the flu. Hopefully the worst is over and things will begin to get better.

Budget Saturday is January 26, 2013. This is a citizens forum and citizens are encouraged to attend. This is where the various town departments present their budgets. There are some budget cuts expected within the schools. It was reported that we will be losing Chapter 70 money as the district shrinks. One of the biggest cuts being reported is that the \$20,000 in district funding for classroom assistants will not be available next year. Without the additional assistant money and if the PTSO doesn't meet its' goal we may be looking at cuts. There continues to be a strong push by the School Committee to eliminate all outside funding for personnel because of inequity in fundraising among the 5 elementary schools. Some additional positions that are in the budget will be .5 Asst. Principal for Douglas, .6 ESL teacher and a 1.0 School Psychologist for Douglas, Gates and Conant.

Kindergarten tours will be beginning this Friday. About 150 people attended kindergarten night. February 12 will be McT kindergarten presentation night. This is a very busy time of year and David thanked Patty for all her work getting everything together for prospective kindergarten parents.

Assessments

David talked about how the school assesses the children and different levels they are at in Reading and Math. The focus is to keep children at the center of curriculum and instruction. Student growth is studied from K – 6 and the best practices are used to ensure every student is growing each year. The teachers gather data about each child, collaborate on curriculum and scheduling to ensure that the needs of every child is being met to the best of their ability. A 45 minute instructional block was introduced this year, where no children would be taken out of the classroom for additional services. The entire classroom would be together for a 45 minutes period of time. It has received positive feedback from the teachers.

When teachers are assessing the progress of the children they start with a benchmark at the beginning of the year. They use different tools to keep track of their progress including performance assessments. At McT teachers and parents also participate in 2 or more conferences per year. If a parent feels like there is an issue that they would like to discuss with a teacher outside of the normal conference time they are encouraged to contact the teacher and set up a meeting time.

Teachers keep track of children's reading progress through a process called running records. Books are categorized based on their challenging words and content. Children are then encouraged to choose just right books plus a little challenge based on the teacher's recommendations. The children are asked to read aloud to the teacher and they will track miscues for the individual reader. Children will also be given writing prompts and asked to write to the best of their ability. There are several Teacher/Student conferences where they discuss successes as well as difficulties and how to achieve their goals. As a school we are committed to high end literacy and we have led the way in this throughout the district.

We are also very lucky to have Sharon Ryan and her staff as Reading Specialist to identify challenges children have with reading and ways to overcome them.

With Math we use Kathy Richardson's "Assessing Mathematical Concepts" as our curriculum guide. Within this curriculum there are many different ways to look at mathematical concepts. There are Pre and Post Tests at the end of a unit. Teachers use performance assessments and observation of students which leads to student/teacher conferences to discuss their challenges and successes. This curriculum also uses writing prompts to teach mathematical concepts.

We are also exploring guided math which allows children to be at different levels. There are certain Common Core requirements which come from the Federal Government stating what children should know by the end of a certain grade. These Common Core guidelines are still evolving but continue to change what kids will be learning at different grade levels. We are moving towards a standardized testing model throughout the country much like the MCA's which we have in place in Massachusetts. The goal is always find out where the child is starting from and grow them. It is all about assessment not only about testing.

Fundraising Update

The Auction will be held on March 9. Auction updates will be coming in the Howler on Thursday's highlighting exciting donations. T-Shirts are on sale now as are tickets. Raffle tickets are also on sale and the raffle prizes are, Kindle Fire, Mini I-Pad, Bose Radio. Raffle tickets will be coming home on Friday. Volunteers are needs to help with the classroom projects. We already have \$14,000 in business donations.

School Pictures

The PTSO voted to renew the Coffee Pond contract for 1 year. They will be taking our school pictures again next year.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday February 14, 2013 at 9:30 A.M.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Dee
PTSO Secretary