

McCarthy-Towne School PTSO Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 17, 2015

Julie Weir, PTSO Sr. Chair
Julie Hobbs, PTSO Jr. Chair
Julie Maranian, PTSO Treasurer
Kerry Lewis, PTSO Secretary
Kirsten Nelson, Director of Food Services

David Krane, Principal
Jen Pratt, Faculty Representative
Bridget Chambers
Judy Bourdon

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M.

Minutes

The Minutes of October 2015 were approved.

Principal's Report

David reported that the recent Professional Development Day for teachers was different from in the past. Teachers from across the district met together to look at the stress and mental well-being of the students and adults of the A-B learning community. Coping mechanisms were shared and experienced, and discussions were had about how to incorporate them in the classroom. David reported the staff missed the PTSO luncheon this year due the change in venue for the Professional Development Day and hopes that we can find time for it before the school year is over.

David also shared that a recent *New York Times* article was very relevant to the topics of Social Emotional Learning and the 7 principles of The Responsive Classroom. He will forward that to all families.

The Responsive Classroom forum that was held a couple weeks ago was very successful. David received very positive feedback from families.

The teachers of the lower grades are processing their recent professional development day with Teachers College (Reading and Writing Project). The upper grades will have theirs in December. It's nice to continue their work in this area and the school is in a good place.

There's a need to relook at art integration and the school culture. There will be some professional learning coming where teachers will experience the process of making art themselves and how it's a reflection of what is seen in the world. The experienced teachers who've been at McT for many years will lead the charge. There are many new staff members; there has been a 70% staff turnover in the past seven years that David has been at McT. It's believed art is missing from some classrooms and grade levels, so the training will break down the notion of art integration into mini pieces to be taught/reviewed. Art integration is as important as academics, and David has given his staff permission to make time for it. There will be a focus on how to integrate art with academics.

The enrollment numbers of 19-21 students per class have remained stable in kindergarten. The upper grades are looking at 24-25 students per class. There may be lower enrollment down the road. There isn't a legal limit for the number of students in a classroom, but we are within the recommendations. There has been an increase in the number of ELL students across the district. Merriam and McT share one ELL teacher for 80 ELL kids. David is requesting more staff for this area. He trusts his faculty, but it's hard with these numbers.

Teachers from Amherst, MA visited the Parker Damon Building recently. They're looking to build a twin building with two schools housed in one building (big cost saver).

Treasurer's Report

We have about \$119,000 in total assets. The Annual Appeal has brought in \$5,115 so far from a total of 36 families. The Book Fair brought in \$2,667, which was about the same as last year. The Charleston Wrap fundraiser didn't do as well as previous years bringing in \$2,373. Last year \$3,505 was made. Should we do this next year? The McT class t-shirts earned \$990.69, which was a big increase from last year's \$369 earnings. The Fall Social brought in approximately \$700. There are many field trip expenses this past month. David thanked the PTSO for the grade 5 Merrowvista scholarships.

It was suggested that we should look for a Grant Writer in the community that would be willing to help out McT. There are so many grants out there for which we could be applying!

Fundraiser Updates

The Annual Appeal info. will be reposted in *The Howler* and the Facebook page with a link to donate online.

Bridget Chamberas shared the Fall Social was very successful. It felt much bigger than last year, and we made about \$700 even though the goal has always been community building not fundraising. New Chairs are needed for next year and Bridget suggests that committees are formed. We discussed whether we should charge for every game/activity to bring in more money. There's some hesitation as the focus has always been on community and making sure that everyone can participate at low cost. If we were to collect money at stations, we'd need more volunteers the night of the Social. We discussed utilizing more high school volunteers in the future. It was also suggested that we include more activities that would appeal to the older grades; right now it feels geared towards the lower grades.

The Book Fair sold \$11,000 and McT received \$2,700 of that from Scholastic. Julie Weir and Amy Stimac looked into other options for next year, but Scholastic is really the only option.

Other

Most classroom parent potlucks have happened or are scheduled for sometime between now and February.

The Directory went home and looks terrific. Many thanks to Julie Maranian and her husband's company for printing it this year! We hope to get it printed earlier next year, but this means a lot of the ad work will have to be done over the summer.

Gates School is holding a Winter Clothing Drive to benefit Acton families. The Parker Damon lobby is a drop spot through this Friday. David will include a reminder of this in his email to families.

There will be another Parent Forum in late January, The exact topic and date are TBD.

Kirsten Nelson's (A-B Food Services Director) Presentation

Amy French is the Café Manager for McT and Merriam.

90% of the staff is certified. Their kitchens are very clean! They serve over 3500 lunches per day across the district. Over 7% of lunches are free and reduced. Applications can be found on the website and the info. is kept confidential.

The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act 2010 mandates that every student has to take at least three of the five choices available and one must be a fruit or vegetable. They're working to watch calorie intake, all foods are trans-fat free, etc. There are many regulations. Parents can find nutritional info. for all school lunches on the website. In the elementary schools there's a cycle menu every 5-6 weeks, though the sides may vary. The café manager picks the sandwiches of the week.

A-B Schools have a point of sale system. Weekly notifications go out on Sundays (email/phone call) to parents whose account(s) has less than \$5. A la carte restrictions are available for parents to make on Parent Online. Parents should review their credit card info. and automatic payments each year.

A-B Food Services has a new Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/abfoodservice/> Check it out!

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Lewis
PTSO Secretary

