

McCarthy-Towne School PTSO Meeting Minutes Tuesday, November 22, 2016

Chris Hanlon, PTSO Sr. Chair
Julie Maranian, PTSO Treasurer
David Krane, Principal
Kristina Rychlik, School Committee
Virginia Tawa
Shelley Cole

Judy Bourdon, PTSO Jr. Chair
Kerry Lewis, PTSO Secretary
Jen Pratt, PTSO faculty representative
Eileen Zhang, School Committee
Carol Chytil, PTSO Interschool Council Rep.
Tracey Smith, Parent Involvement Coordinator

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. Jen Pratt started the meeting with a Responsive Classroom “gobble, gobble” greeting experience. The October Minutes were approved with one edit.

Meet with School Committee Members

School Committee members, Eileen Zhang and Kristina Rychlik, shared various updates with us. Eileen is our school’s liaison; Kristina came to give us the overview and help Eileen, who is new. Both women shared that two-way communication between parents and the School Committee is important.

They shared printouts of the ABRSC Update: Fall 2016 presentation, which focuses on the district priorities: student health & wellness and Challenge Success. Kristina also shared the Crisis Response plans.

District-wide school enrollment is not declining as quickly as projected. We are also seeing an increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students and English language learners. David thanked them for recognizing McT’s growing needs and for the recent increase of a full-time school psychologist and full-time ELL teacher.

Kristina and Eileen gave an overview of the Capital Planning Process. We are in Phase 2 and looking at six possible options for Building Projects in light of the findings of Phase 1, which indicated a great need for school maintenance. Douglas School has the most pressing needs with Conant and Gates not far behind. There is work to be done on all schools. The culmination of the Master Plan, the six options with three grade level configurations (K-6, Pre-K and 1-6, 6-8), will be presented at the Community Forum on December 8th at the Jr. High Library at 7:30 P.M. The district has applied to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for funding help and will be notified in February if we are accepted into the program or not. If accepted, we have until November 2017 to approve design funds.

Kristina shared that the school start times are seriously being looked at in combination with research on high school students’ sleep. Most realize there are good reasons to have the high school start later than the elementary schools, but logistics need to be figured out. The bus tier system, school sports schedule, etc. all need to be considered. The details remain to be seen, but there’s momentum in town and scientific research to justify a change. Many other districts are considering making a switch too. Eileen encouraged parents to send her your thoughts on the matter.

Finally, the Three Year Projection Budget Drivers, Budget Annual Growth, and FY18 Budget Timeline were quickly shared.

Principal’s Report

Challenge Success is focusing on three things: homework, schedule, and family engagement & communication. Each school in the district presented what they’re doing to support the work at the high school to the district faculty. McT is already doing many of Dr. Pope’s recommendations, so we’re in a pretty good spot. McT faculty will continue to think about homework, school day schedule, the importance of recess and regular energizers/movement in the classroom as well as stress prevention and intervention. Dr. Pope is starting to work

with elementary schools. She's piloting a gr. 3-5 survey in Carlisle. A-B may work with her and coordinate with other districts in the future.

McT faculty and the School Council are revisiting the history and implementation of art integration. David shared that he'd like the newer faculty to be further educated. Furthermore, parents and School Committee need to have a deeper understanding of this McT hallmark to see its incredible value on student self-confidence, mental well-being, understanding of who they are as learners, etc. This will be a school improvement goal for next year.

The school had its first ALICE drill. There was a little anxiety over coordinating with Merriam but it went very well. Students were taught that the most important thing is to be quiet and listen for directions since they will not be the same every time like a fire drill. Staff has to make different choices depending on what fake scenario is presented. A Google doc has been created for faculty to provide feedback regarding the drill. The police would like the school to practice these often.

Christine Hanley has made a terrific transition to her position in the office. David really values her flexibility and sense of humor.

A faculty committee is being formed to determine how to spend the Parker Damon Fund of \$1,385.43. David will report back.

Treasurer's Report

Julie Maranian shared that our current funds available are \$109, 183.52.

Recent income/fundraising:

- \$1,691 from the Fall Social: This is almost \$1k more than last year because the chairs donated the cost of the pizza and prizes., Bibiana made the games herself and didn't expense some of the materials, and an entrance fee was charged for adults too this year. Thank you, Bibiana Knell and Julia Epperson!
- \$2,551 from Book Fair
- \$1,986 (plus \$900 received at meeting) from Charleston Wrap
- \$440 from family portrait fundraiser. Thanks Shelley!
- \$744 from Script rebates. Thank you Pam!
- \$10,350 deposited in reserved funds for grade 5 Merrowvista trip
- another \$40 in McT Class t-shirt fundraiser

Recent expenses/activity:

- field trips – 2nd grade Acton Historical Society, 3rd grade Plimoth Plantation, 4th grade Drumlin Farm, 5th grade Old Sturbridge Village
- \$500 deposit made to Crocodile River for CPAC in March
- \$84.50 to Concord Flower Shop for kindergarten carnations
- \$625.76 to Bibiana Knell's reimbursement for Fall Social materials and equipment rental
- \$67.91 to Hanna for art integration supplies
- \$5,081.70 to Scholastic Book Fairs for their cut of the sales
- \$277.50 to YAMA for Dec. 8th assembly

Looking Back

Carol Chytil, our Interschool Council rep., shared a bit about her meeting on November 19th. Her report echoed what we had already heard from the School Committee members and David – Challenge Success, school start times, safety/security at school, and student wellness. At this big meeting the School Committee's role was shared and the Superintendent's goals were posted and approved. The Superintendent is also looking into what the various PTSOs and Community Ed. are contributing financially to the district. Tracey Estabrook will take over for Carol in this role as InterSchool Council Rep.

Denise Pope's Challenge Success talk from November 2nd is available online if you missed it. You should have received an email from the Superintendent's office with the link.

Judy Bourdon attended the joint PTSO Chairs Meeting. There have not been any changes to gift solicitation to the staff. Each family may only give each teacher gifts of \$50 in value or less per school year. If a gift is given from the entire class, it is not to exceed \$150 in value for the whole school year.

Looking Ahead

Tracey Smith shared the results from the parent school photographer survey. 51 families responded. It was 50/50 with families who were happy/unhappy with Coffee Pond. 69% think they're too expensive. 45% don't like the quality. The other responses were pretty evenly split as well. So, it's been decided to sign a contract with Gekus, a new photographer. This company offers a smaller and less expensive package and also does a la carte ordering. They'll photograph outdoors too. They also have an app so parents can see the photo before ordering. They've offered us a great signing bonus to do the one year commitment and offer 20% commission back to the school.

The Auction plans are well underway. Business letters were printed and will soon be stuffed by parent volunteers. Then they'll be mailed from Central Office.

Chris suggested we consider a change in meeting format. Maybe meetings could alternate between "business" and "general"? Would this help more general members attend and not just those that have key positions? We'll discuss further at another time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Lewis
PTSO Secretary