

McCarthy-Towne School PTST Meeting Minutes Tuesday, September 20, 2016

Chris Hanlon, PTST Sr. Chair
Julie Maranian, PTST Treasurer
David Krane, Principal
Tracey Smith, Parent Involvement Coordinator
Jenny Wilder
Adam Nolde
Kyra Wilson Cook
Maureen O'Brien

Judy Bourdon, PTST Jr. Chair
Kerry Lewis, PTST Secretary
Jennifer Pratt, faculty rep.
Deepika Drakash
Amanda Heffner-Wong
Meghan Seidman

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm. After quick introductions, Chris shared that he hopes parents will attend meetings all year. He then gave an overview of the meeting procedures and the Minutes of the June 2016 meeting were approved.

Principal's Report

David shared that this is his 8th school year at McT. Over the summer we gained about 40 students and lost about 40 students. Our students speak a variety of languages and we now have a 1.0 ELE teacher (up from .5 last year), Ashley Bock. She has a current caseload of 56 students and is already a huge part of the school. David reminded us of other faculty changes (See May and June 2016 Minutes.) too. The entire school and faculty are in great shape. There's a good vibe in the school.

The school will soon receive a new cart of Chromebooks. Slowly the MacBooks on the old cart are dying. They're starting to get rid of the old AlphaSmarts.

The school is continuing its work with the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project (Columbia University). David believes that literacy is the foundation of the school and our learning. It's learn-practice-do where teachers hold a mini lesson and then students practice the skill/strategy with their independent, just-right books. Meanwhile, the teacher holds small group practice sessions and/or confers with students individually. Teachers confer (assess) with each student about once per week. The workshop model is not a curriculum and is not scripted. The language is the same in each grade but layers are built over the years. There's teacher flexibility within the model but the faculty is loyal to the structure. Some teachers are implementing a similar workshop model in math and even science and social studies. A TC consultant is coming next week to work with the primary teachers. They will collaborate to continue making the reading and writing workshop models their own. Almost 2/3 of the faculty have been to one of the week-long summer TC institute in NYC. The faculty and our TC consultant have begun to talk about not involving a consultant next year but maintaining a connection with them. Jen Pratt (gr. 2 teacher), Kate Gibalerio (gr. 3 teacher), and Matt McDowell (assistant principal) will go to an institute on coaching; they will be trained to do peer collaboration and evaluation in order to help faculty improve their implementation of the workshop models in reading and writing.

David also gave an overview of the Responsive Classroom for the new parents present. This is a philosophy, not a curriculum that establishes a universal language and a risk-taking atmosphere. It encourages students to be active participants, take ownership, and be

involved in classroom decisions. Responsive Classroom encourages collaboration between grade levels and encourages the adults to work on the same structures as the children. A consultant kicked off the school year with McT's staff, and Chip Wood's Yardsticks was one of the things discussed. The faculty organized their class lists by age and thought about how age may impact their instructional practices. The in-service day energized everyone.

Sadly, Astrid Trostorff, a long-time (27 years) office administrative assistant is retiring at the end of October. David will surely miss his biggest support system, but Carol and Tracey will be a great support moving forward. The hiring committee is working to find a replacement and Astrid and the new hire will overlap in the office a bit.

The first all-school meeting took place the other day. David was very impressed with the students' listening skills and behavior as they watched their teachers sing on stage.

Treasurer's Report

We currently have \$93,804.04 available. We discussed why we raise money and how we raise it. Julie went over the '16-'17 budget chart, which includes the categories of CPAC, Art Integration, Grade Level Activities, Hospitality, Student Aid, Administrative Expenses, 6th Grade Celebration, and the McT Scholarship Fund. The large majority of our funds go to Contracted Services – the salaries of our Parent Involvement Coordinator, the Art Integration Assistant, and the Classroom Assistants. We discussed the anticipated income sources. We have a rough fundraising goal of \$74,975. The Auction, Direct Appeal, Lip Sync, and Book Fair are our largest fundraisers. Two Fall fundraisers are under way – the catalogue sales and the direct appeal. Tracey told us to look for a “free money” flyer coming home soon that will list easy ways to help the PTSO earn money for free, such as Box Tops, Scrip Cards, and Donelan's receipts.

Recent expenses include \$457 for the first grade, in-house New England Aquarium visit that's scheduled for Oct. 7th and reimbursements to Julie for \$96 for web hosting (every 2 years) and \$212.39 for Quickbooks Online annual renewal.

Looking Back

The summer playground playdates were fun and well-attended as was Back to School Night. The McT Mileage Club, run by Chris Hanlon, started its 5th year. Kids can exercise on the 1/5mi. course on Fridays from 8:30-9:05am. The program is free and you can come to as many as you'd like on a drop-in basis. Parents have to complete a registration form on the first day.

Looking Ahead

Chris shared the PTSO Primer chart that went home in backpacks. It lists many of the school and PTSO hallmark events (community building and fundraisers) and their dates for the school year all in one convenient place. The most popular events are the Fall Social with Book Fair, Family Field Day, Lip Sync Show, and Movie Night.

Tracey shared the “Get Connected with McCarthy-Towne” handout. Stay informed through these means: Facebook page, the Howler, the Bulletin, and PTSO website, and monthly PTSO meetings. She encourages parents to talk to people we know and spread the word about any news.

The list of PTSO meeting dates for the school year was also shared again: Oct. 18, Nov. 22, Dec. 20, Jan. 17, Feb TBD, March 21, Apr. 11, May 16, and June 13. They all begin at 7pm in the school library. This year's Steering Committee chart was also shared.

Fundraiser/Event Updates:

- Annual Appeal (will always accept donations) and Catalogue sale (Sept. 30 deadline)
- Directory – Submissions due Sept. 23
- Family Portraits – Oct. 15-16
- Class Potlucks – families should get a flyer via backpack with details for our potluck in 1-2 weeks
- Scholastic Book Fair begins Oct. 31
- Fall Social - Nov. 4th 6-8pm

Volunteer Needs:

- 2 sheets (school and PTSO) were sent home via backpack a couple weeks ago. There are a variety of ways to help out – both during the day and at night. Volunteers make a big difference! Kids love it and parents get a lot out of it too.
- Fall Social helpers needed. Contact Tracey Smith, Bibiana Knell, or Julie Epperson.
- Auction (March 18) – We had 75 parent volunteers last year. This is an adults-only event at the Devens Common. There are items for everyone with a variety of price tags. Classroom art projects are a hit. Contact Tracey Smith, Auction Chair, if you'd like to help. There will be a kick-off volunteer party on Oct. 16 at 4pm at Tracey's house.

Plan for the Year

A possible new volunteer idea is for parent volunteers to make copies for teachers. David shared that there isn't anything in motion yet. This would require significant teacher planning and buy-in. It will be explored this year as it'd be nice to have classroom assistants always working with the students rather than performing these clerical duties.

Possible Parent Forum Topics for '16-17:

- School committee update
- ALICE
- Acton Police Child Safety Officer
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
- Responsive Classroom
- Math Workshop

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerry Lewis
PTSO Secretary