

McCarthy-Towne School PTSO
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 15, 2015

Julie Weir, PTSO Sr. Chair
Julie Hobbs, PTSO Jr. Chair
Julie Maranian, PTSO Treasurer
Kerry Lewis, PTSO Secretary
David Krane, Principal
Jen Pratt, Faculty Representative
Tracy Smith, Parent Involvement Coordinator
Saloni Rao
Pete Girguis
Kristy Giurgis
Jennifer Stolz
Judy Bourdon
Allison Edlestein
Jurate Rutkauskas
Virginia Tawa
Kathleen Guinee

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 P.M.

Minutes

The Minutes of June 3, 2015 were approved as amended.

Principal's Report

David shared that he always enjoys the first PTSO meeting of the year; he loves seeing all the new faces coming out to support the mission of the school. The school year is off to a great start. The students and staff have weathered the bus dismissal changes well thanks to Matt McDowell's scheduling and the work of the staff and students. There's now a wave system where students are called to the cafeteria in groups. This has shaved ten minutes off the dismissal time at the end of the day. Everyone is safe and happy!

David reported that there are 40 new students. The school has its highest number of ELL students ever – 45. One ELL teacher and her assistant see about 80 students between McCarthy-Towne and Merriam, so administration is working to get more staff in this area. Also, the law in MA has changed with regards to teacher re-certification. Teachers are going through mandatory ELL training to meet the needs of all students. David went on to share a bit about the budget process and that ELL and student mental health are currently two large school district priorities.

There are many new faculty members. They are: Sara Ricci – 4th grade, Justin Kessler – 5th grade, Jillian Short 5th grade, and Kestrel Dunn – ½ day kindergarten. David is excited that many of these new hires are first year teachers who are smart, capable, and energetic!

The school is getting more iPads for the younger grades and hopefully another Chromebook cart for the older grades. They have some of the old MacBooks that still have some life in them.

McCarthy-Towne's contract with Teachers College has been renewed to continue the teachers' professional development on the Readers Workshop model. The staff developers will be the same as last

year and will include the much sought after T.C. trainer. David continues to be excited about being a Project School with Teachers College.

The school continues to use the Responsive Classroom model. The foundation of this program is the belief that children are part of the community-building process. Kindness, compassion, rule following, etc. are the responsibilities the kids and teachers are given as members of the school community. Students learn how to deal with conflict, problem solve, and how to use an adult for help during conflicts, if needed. Now most teachers are trained in Responsive Classroom. The common language and values of the Responsive Classroom program allow any staff member to discuss behavior expectations anywhere on school grounds. The book, Teaching Children to Care, is at the heart of this work and discusses the social competencies in the classroom and how to get kids involved in learning and the social community. Morning Meeting is a big component of the Responsive Classroom approach. While the school has been practicing Morning Meeting for a few years now, this is the first year that Morning Meeting is being streamlined with every student and staff member being a part of a meeting from 8:45-9 AM. everyday (Meeting begins by the teacher sounding a chime.) This brings some uniformity (with some flexibility) throughout the building and sets the tone for the day. It builds community and involves everyone; it's not a top-down situation. The meetings include a Greeting, Sharing, and Group Activities. Things are modeled and the day ahead is discussed.

Treasurer's Report

Julie Maranian shared her report that includes a balance report and recent income and expenses. The total funds available are \$98,904.20. There are three big Fall fundraisers – the Catalogue Sale, the Direct Appeal, and the Activities Expo. Information about all three have been sent home in Friday folders. The Activities Expo is free for families to attend. \$4,575 has been brought in from vendors so far. More funds will be raised at the Expo through food sales. Sorrento's Pizza has kindly donated pizza for this event. PTSO expenses are the McT bags (\$272) and directories (\$300-400) that will be given out at the Activities Expo.

Julie shared the Income Sources chart that Chris Hanlon, previous Treasurer, went over with her. Everyone agreed the numbers looked reasonable. Tracy Smith shared some basic information about the Auction for new families. There is something for everyone at the Auction!

Julie distributed the Field Trip Deposit and Reimbursement Procedures document. David will make sure this is shared with teachers, especially the new ones who may not be aware of the procedure.

The Parker Damon Fund has a balance of \$1,385.43. This is the amount left over after the purchase of the glass display cases in the lobby and should be spent soon for accounting reasons. David will talk to the faculty about how to spend the money. If any parent has a suggestion, he or she should email them to Julie Weir.

PTSO Business and Reminders

Playground Playdates

The kindergarten summer playdates were well-attended. PTSO plans to do these again next year. There is one more scheduled for this year. Now that school has started, families can now connect by class. It will be on Sat., 9/19 10 A.M. – 12 P.M. The PTSO Chairs will be there. David will ask the kindergarten teachers to email parents about this event.

Open House

Back to School Night will be held on Wednesday, September 16th, at 6 P.M. Schedules went home with students last Friday.

Fundraiser Updates

The 2015-2016 Steering Committee was shared. Open positions discussed. The Auction Jr. Chair is open as well as the Yard Sale Coordinator. Kathleen Guinee offered to take on the role of Potluck Coordinator. Parents are asked to take a look at the volunteer form that went home. The Steering Committee is asked to check their event websites to ensure information is up to date. Email Christine Brault with updated text, flyers, dates, and your email address.

The Charleston Wrapping Paper fundraiser orders are due September 25th.

The Annual Appeal is ongoing; families will receive a tax write-off for this year if their donation is in by Dec. 31st.

The 2nd Annual Activities Expo is being planned by Julie Weir and Julie Hobbs , who have been working very hard. The Expo is a trade show of extra-curricular activities. So far there are 27 vendors, a well-rounded assortment. This event is open to everyone in the community, not just McT or Acton folks. Attendance is important so vendors have to feel like it's worthwhile to keep coming back every year. There was a 99% return rate for vendors for last year. This year families that attend will receive a school bag pre-stuffed with flyers from the vendors. Pizza (generously donated by Sorrento's) will be for sale.

Shelley Cole, parent and professional photographer, is once again donating her time. She'll be offering family portraits at her home on October 3rd and 4th. Contact her for a time slot. \$40 of the \$50 sitting fee will be donated to the PTSO.

Acton Lions Community Day is on October 4th. Proceeds benefit the Home Base Program. There will be a 5K, refreshments, raffles, etc. There's a link with a commercial in The Howler. Their bootcamp for kids will help raise money for the various schools in town.

The School Directory will be released in late October. Proofreaders are needed. These are free for families.

Future Business

The list of all PTSO meetings for the year was shared. These are subject to change.

Dr. Brand will visit our October 14th at 7 P.M. meeting.

Be on the lookout for forums to be scheduled with David, with topics including Readers Workshop and Responsive Classroom.

Most of the money raised by the PTSO funds the school's classroom assistants. These funds are variable. In the past money from other school resources has been used to backfill as needed, but this could always change. David is grateful for the PTSO's amazing work.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry Lewis
PTSO Secretary