

February PTO Meeting 2025

PTO Monthly Meeting

February 12th, 2025 - Location Countryside Library & Google Meet

7:07pm - 8:08pm

Attendees: Principal Herlihy, Melissa Monokroussos, Bridget Tsai, Beth Harmon, Adam Lipson, Tera Hickie, Erin Geraghty Kapoor, Janet Jackson, Steve Lee, Sahar Zaheer, Jill Tucker, Amanda Wong, Julie Winsett, Barbara Mauger, Larissa Duzhansky, Jess Lourie, Renchao Chen, Saurabh Saraf, Deepak Jayabalan and Shilpa Kuttikrishnan.

Minutes Approval: Adam L motions to approve January 2025 meeting minutes. Melissa M 1st, Adam L 2nd and minutes are approved.

7:07pm-7:10pm Principal's Updates: Principal Herlihy

-Building Project Updates: No specifics. Landed on a contractor and everything is on track. Thinking about the parking plan is a work in progress. Looking at side streets. In March we will lose parking lots and fields. It will displace 44 cars and those will be going into the neighborhood. Staff parking for CCC will be greatly affected. Abby Bannon made a Google Form to collect information about size of car, direction you come from. Zones on map will direct teachers where to park. Need to watch out for bus streets. Will be working with the Traffic Division, Regina Moody transportation person for Newton and the police. Make sure neighbors are aware and put in new signage. Work with teachers to be respectful to neighbors' property. More reminders with parents for drop off & pick up. 1/2027 will move into a new building. Parking will return to normal 1/2027. Will need to ask parents to help unpack and pack up classrooms. Will let neighbors know how they can reach out if people have questions and do not have school age children in school.

-School Council Recap:

Will host educational opportunities for parents. Coffee in March will be about EL, coffee in Spring will be on the MTSS team and how we support kids in school. The MTSS coach and interventionist will explain their new roles.

-School/Professional Day Recap:

Celebrated the Hundredth Day today. The Kindergarten team went all out and dressed as old people today.

This afternoon staff had a data workshop, MTSS (multi-tiered system) team and school wide reset/common expectations/Caring Cubs initiative. Every class met their goal for January. Kids are very motivated. Random classes were chosen to submit name selection for the new mascot. Tuesday after the break will have a mascot name vote. Reviewed the reflect and repair sheet, having kids think about what happened and how were you feeling. The emotion "bored" is being used a lot and trying to see what kids are seeking. No shame, but want to talk about it. Let Them Theory is an audible book and everyone has emotions and needs to

co-regulate. Some challenges kids are experiencing. Consistency is important. Adults need to model for students and how to respond to misbehavior.

Implementing a new EL program. Doing integrity walks with the principal and literacy specialists to see how our implementation is going. Visiting different schools and unpacking the lesson. Hosted Mason Rice principal K-3 grade classrooms.

7:10pm-7:40pm Discussion Topics: Adam, Maria & Tera

-PTO/Booster Club/Support Organization New Policies Follow Up: Adam L

NPS District came to the PTOC to discuss how donations, material goods and equipment are being accepted. Anna Nolin is trying to learn what the PTOs are doing. PTOs donate well over 1 million dollars to NPS. The PTOC is a forum and advocacy group for all the NPS PTOs. There is chaos about how donations are being accepted. The district needs formal policy for this. PTOs can weigh in on the new policy rules. A draft of the policy edited by the PTOC has been done. The district cares about the safety of holding funds, is fundraising happening legally, no sponsorships are happening, is fundraising not happening during school hours, etc. Delegating to the principals for the overseeing material goods. PTOs felt like the new policy is protecting the district and there is no guarantee of a turnaround time of when the new policies will start. The proposed new changes will affect the Bake Sale and Fun Run which can not happen during the school day. Will need to submit a budget to NPS for review. Want to see what you plan on spending toward the school for things like teacher appreciation, equity items, mini grants, etc. PTOs fill in the shortcomings of what the district does not provide.

Surplus Funds: Adam L

The new mural no longer needs to be funded by the PTO. Now we have a surplus of funds that were collected to build a new playground that is no longer needed. PTO is set up to spend that money to support the community and enrich students. Would like to retain member memory of who contributed. Need to spend money to benefit the community. Can set up a committee on ways to do that. Could go toward community events that need to change because of the building project. How to support the 4th and 5th graders who will lose access to the field. Families will be inconvenienced. Could maybe do more for the 5th grade experience. Spending the funds should be a multi-year approach. Could lower the annual fund dues. There is some guidance set in the new by-laws. Will need approval from the large board for expensive purchases. Dr. Nolin would like the elementary school buildings to become more equal. Want a good and similar education for all students. Discrepancy in what PTOs can raise is noted between the different elementary schools. Can send out something to see if anyone wants to be a part of a committee.

Action Item/To Do: Send out sign up for Surplus Funds Committee

SEPAC: Tera H & Janet J

Would like to make events accessible and inclusive to the community. To create an accessibility framework and a template you could use to generalize to all events. How to have common

materials and common conversations. It is a work in progress. Can reach out to Tera or Janet if you have any ideas.

7:40pm-8:10pm Community Events

-CAS Updates: Melissa M & Amanda

There are 2 scheduled performances tomorrow AM and others happening at a later time. Some had to be canceled for the snow day. Survey due in March for the school wide performance series. It will be the Tanglewood Marionettes. Last here in 2016. The performance will be the Dragon King. Themes are respect for elders and respect for differences. There is a video of the performance to preview. It has special effects and the teacher reviews are excellent. Kids were very engaged. It's \$4.41 per student - \$1680 is expected cost. The performance needs to be unanimously approved by all the PTOs in order to happen. How satisfied are we with the CAS selections? The general programming is good. Ideally what do we want to contribute to the performance series? Should the district pay for the CAS performance series? These are questions to bring up with CAS director Stacey.

-Bingo 3/2: Melissa M & (Amye K absent)

3 sessions will be held and the sensory session will be first. Each participant will get 10 bingo sheets which have 3 games per sheet. The sheets will be free. Each child will get a little prize and there will be food concessions. Will send out a blast on Friday for RSVP and signups. Children can be a caller and put their names in to volunteer.

Action Item/To Do: Send out blast for RSVP and volunteer signups.

-Parent Party/Auction: Melissa M & (Amye K absent)

Committee is meeting after winter break. The possible dates for the parent party are 5/16 or 5/30. For locations Seasons 52 is closer and Social was fine, but is further away. Down in the auction prizes this year. If you can get a donation double check with Amye first to see if it hasn't already been asked for. Amye has the master list. We have a letter to give to businesses to solicit donations.

-Multicultural Festival 4/5: Sue J (absent) Melissa M & Adam L

Event is very well organized. Couple of dress rehearsals will be done at Brown Middle School. Performances can be a dance, singing, etc. The theme this year is Sports. Students will get a passport to be stamped at each table. The prize will be an Earth squishy ball. Will need parent help to clean up after the event. Will recruit some parent volunteers. The Welcoming Committee can send out photos and links to web page to show new families and Kindergarten families what to expect at the event. It also allows families to see if they need support for accessibility purposes. Families can reach out to ask for accommodation and ELL teachers can be a good resource. Will send out information after the Bingo event.

Action Item/To Do: Beth H to send out information to new/Kindergarten families about the event. Will send out Sign Up Genius to get parent volunteers for clean up.

-Fun Run 4/16: Sue J (absent) & Principal Herlihy

Will need to modify the route because of construction. Fun Run is a quarter mile loop and this will likely be the last year for it due to new PTOC rules about fundraising during school hours.

Field Day will be at Newton Highlands. Springfest location needs a location that will allow bounce houses. The Newton Highlands park is not ok with it because of an irrigation issue.

Could look at Skyline Park or maybe at Oak Hill. Maybe use the courtyard at school. Jill Tucker is looking into the locations.

Action Item/To Do: Continue to look for a new location for Springfest 2025.

8:10pm-8:25pm Additional Updates/Recap on Past Events

-None

8:25pm-8:30pm Misc Items, Discussion

Input/Ideas

-None