September 2025 Preliminary Agenda

PTO Meeting
September 10, 2025 - Location Countryside Library & Google Meet
7:00pm - 8:30pm

Welcome and Introductions: Tera, Steve & Melissa H

Principal's Updates: Principal Herlihy

- First day back/Return to school: How are the students/staff adjusting?
- Welcome Back Parent Coffee Recap 9/2
- Building/Construction Updates
- Misc / reminders / anything else

Introduction

- First days back
    - Return to school has been successful and teachers thoughtful care and planning as the kids kick off the year.
    - Beth has been meeting with the new families and working on open communication.
- Welcome back coffee:
    - well attended, happy to have all the K involvement.
- Building
    - The month of august really moved along. The topping off ceremony is going well. Very well and very noisy. Not too disruptive.
    - Traffic - police - she wants a police officer there and there will be community meetings with the 4th Tuesday of the month to share feedback.
        - Concerns about safety of the kids.
        - Blue zone is going well and people are using it the right way. Check out the website and community meetings.
- Work/ Greater School District:
    - Launching of the school year, the superintendent (NPS website) they went through the to find the portrait of a learner and they came up with different portrait - this will drive what we do as a community. The compass will be our bottom line and if you weren't around last year, they did it with 150 community members and they talked about what we want for our young people when they graduate.
    - This can also apply to use as a PTO. Dignity and belonging and that is a foundation of learning - this will lead to student engagement and achievement.
    - The goal is for the classroom to be rigorous and loving. Beth feels (we agree) that we have the best facility - on record.

- Strategic plan for the next 5 eyras for the budget and the milestones for the portrait of a learner

Co-Presidents Update – Tera, Steve, Melissa

- School Committee/ PTOC Updates
- Teacher Representatives Update

Presidents -
Welcome - steve, tera and melissa
They are there to help all families this coming year - thanks for coming
Few updates

- The school committee approved the budget - Steve and Rohit having the teacher stipend checks in hand
- Ward 5 out - will be leaving after the next election and at the school committee to review the equity policy and to maintain the spirit of the policy and make it less challenging for PTOs.
- Superintendent Nolan has worked to protect the PTO legally - there is no longer going to be a fun run. No bake sales and funding for the PTO during school hours.
- Equity item - it's a portion of the budget that specific items on and its equity items - you can put 40 (369 kids) there is 14 - 15k for equity items (teacher stipends, rugs, library books, field trip, and mini grants) this will be more scrutinized in the future to make sure that there is equity across each of the school.
    - 5th Grade bake sale - when kids are not in session, we can do that.
    - They did do it in the parent teacher conference and the big one in is in the fall and that makes a big difference
- Universal Breakfast - They have a grab a go breakfast and there are bags available and the kids can go and say there name.
    - Sometimes if kids forgot a snack, they used that - Jillian (social worker) is working to find an alternative since we can no longer use breakfast food. ~30 kids a day
- Teacher representatives - they did not do teacher rep meetings last year, but teachers are happy to meet.
    - Meet 1x a month the morning of our meetings so we can bring items to the PTO meeting. This would allow the staff to weigh in on PTO items
    - Specific items -
        - Halloween party - too long (2.5 hours) - Historically - maybe the make the layover tighter
            - 1.5 k- 2
            - 1.5 3-5
            - Do not want the kids going outside around the construction and kids get bored and wander the school

        - Stipend checks - Thank you Rohit for sending those out so quickly this school year
        - Room parents sign-ups - lots of activities there - teachers would like to have the formalized introduction to the room parents before the "Back to School" night
            - Erin Ray is going to provide an example of what was sent out
            - Beth H - having standardize would be great
    - Erin - is the update going out bi- weekly, can the room parents send out a separate blast to get more people?
    - Accessibility committee - they will let them know needs
        - Back to school - gluten free, dairy free options
        - Next meeting is the morning of October 8th

Discussion Topics

- Open Volunteer Positions: Steve, Tera & Melissa H
- Budget/Reimbursement Process Review: Rohit
- PTO Website: Melissa H & Ian
- Annual Fund Update: Stephanie & Amye K

    - Volunteer Positions
        - Good progress on the room parents - 15 out of the 19 classes
            - Do we want to coordinate on teacher/ parent expectations
        - CAS - 2 grades are done (Creative arts and science)
            - Melissa to do a blast early next week and CAS needs a lot of expectations
            - Each grade level gets 3 different experiences - 2 - 3 parent rep per grade level. They get the resource guide for the presentations and the teachers have their people that they like to invite and they find a date that works for the school calendar and the co-chairs (Heidi and Melissa)
            - Low impact and high involvement in school
    - PTO Website (Melissa and Ian) - it's a google site that is easy to reach and it's a central place to make the newsletter easier and the events are easier. Everything is linking to the site - the website is the place to go in depth.
        - More space on the website
        - Email blast - it was hard to see the sign up - things like that that had to be changed that is an easy fix. Link to the website (website update first and then the emails go out).
            - Send anything they want on the email - send to Ian and Melissa - Ian maintains the website (but he's just copy and pasting it - not editing)

        - Social Media - do people use Instagram or Facebook for information?
            - Put it aside and just focus on the website
            - Suggested - in lieu of social media - is there a way to have regular meetings added to keep things organized. Get enrollment to get the alerts. It does not sync to the apple calendar and you can add it on - PTO website its not added.
            - Princ. Beth - suggested to turn off the comments
- Back to school night
    - What can you bring?
- Treasury - reimbursement and there are envelopes in the lobby and you should email Rohit and there is a box in the lobby. It needs a week to reimbursement
    - There is going to be a new sharepoint site and all the major roles have a folder
    - This will be a place for the co-chairs
    - Document retention
    - Annual fund - kick off on back to school night - Amye and Stephanie is the co-chair
- Fall Picnic -
    - This will be at the Emerson Community - its really nice and lots of fenced in. Parking will be tough
    - Magician will be coming
    - Pizza, concessions, port-o-potty
    - Very low on volunteers
    - Picnic - we will need the sensory table, Sameer will find a volunteer and set it up - it can also be self-serve
        - Just need a set up and a pack
        - Where should the sensory table be best up
        - Melissa to coordinate Meghan
- Picture Day - Wednesday, September 24th
    - Need to figure out where to do things
    - Mr. Maxwell - if he is ok
    - Upper and lower -
        - 3 locations for the individual
        - 1 for group picture
    - Maybe along the kindergarten courtyard - and if they can come and take a look before the day
    - Can we do it in front of school to have it in the space so we can see what entrance - so it might be nice to have the school in here
    - Picture day -

        - They do get the 20 scholarship for 20 families, people do not sign up but we should make use of that - Beth to connect Ayca to Jillian (Social Worker)
        - Coffee Pond - sends 100$ but they can send it to CAS
        - Could we do an entire school picture
        - Time is 8 - 12
    - Back to school night - 9/25
        - Please come and it's a great way to hear from the classroom teacher
        - 3 - 5 go first and then k - 2 - do what works for you
- Halloween - 10/25
    - Purchased new decorations (under budget)
    - DJ
    - Requested the magician - unsure where that would be - 400$ for the magician
    - Need to finalize with stacy the plans - games planned and a photo booth
    - Sensory room - the sensory space and a separate craft room -
        - maybe the upper craft for crafts
        - They have the dia de los murtos
        - Fortune teller
        - Fog machine - did set off the fire alarm - maybe don't do that
        - Face painting
        - NCE - Newton community ed - if you provide face paint, they will give volunteers
        - Press on tattoos
- Green Team- Julie
    - 1x a month on a Thursday
    - Meet in Art Room
    - 1st meeting with be in a few works
        - There will be a fall team party and a look for worms and garden for the whole year
- Welcome Committee Open House - Beth and Bridgit
    - Yay K families are here!
    - It was a nice event meet up after the open house
    - Provide snacks
    - New family coffee and we have a new student start on Monday
    - Every new family will get a T shirt and its cute and it's a late add - a flash
- Library Sign Ups
    - No one has signed up – still evolving on what the PTO would want
- K playdate
    - Happened at the end of August at Newton highlands
    - Encouraged those to sign up for Membership tool kit

        - Website
        - Larger whatsapp chat for K
        - If someone wants to be part of the chat - please find Michelle
    - Room parent - who is not getting communication
    - September 19 - the day to have Aspen updated
    - Room parent coordinator
        - Please sign up

Misc Items, Discussion, Input/Ideas, final thoughts

- Mural discussion – if you go to a recently built school there is a board there
- This leads back to dignity and belonging
- Follow up - Metco program - is there any opportunity - things that are after school - is there any way to assist doesn't living in the neighborhood for the gap of time.
    - Queston from parents: What they have done, the picnic is off site and the kid can stay here. Some families the kids have a lot of activities and Beth relies on the teachers and the parents to help coordinate. Harder being offsite - maybe a buddy program with families.
    - This will be something that needs to be done in the event to discretely ask for help. Uber lift gift cards - can help another family member be resourceful.
    - Jen T - back to school night or in a communication - the teacher can help facilitate it so they don't further "othering"
    - Fernanda - is the Metco coordinator - not a social worker but here to connect with the students. Classroom teachers are the best way

Discussion around the mural for the new school

Attendees (apologies fort the single name)

Beth Herlihy
Yuki Inochochi - K parent
Ayca
Denitsa
Melissa
Samantha - Silver
Allison Levin - 1st and 5th

Danni Fu - 3rd Grade
Janet Jackson - 4th Grade
Susan Rusu - Liu
Anikita Sudedi - K parent
Julie Winsett -4th grade
Aida Brand - 2nd Grade/ 4th Grade
Erin Geraghty - 5th Grader (Room Parent)
Jen Kump - 1st and 2nd Grade
Sue Johnston - 4th Grade
Jill Tucker - 3rd Grade and 5th
Beth Harmon 3rd
Heidi
Jen T - 4th Grade Teacher
Nanda - 4th/ K
Tera - 4th
Steve - 4th
Melissa - 1st and 4th Grade
Zina - 5th Grade
Michelle D - 3rd Grade/ K
Dentisa - 2nd
Shahar
Yaben Ha