



NFS PTO Meeting Minutes **Wednesday, February 1, 2017 @ 7 p.m.**

Officers Present: President, Stephanie Hausman; Vice President, David Loehwing; Volunteer Coordinator, Rebecca Bernier; Treasurer, Gloria Manchego; Assistant Treasurer, Smitha Shetty; Secretary, Kelly Cioe.

Parents: approximately 23

Committee for Extra PTO Funds Update

- We have a great group of parents, if you are a parent of a second grader, we would love for you to join us. Then all grades are represented.

Guests: Steve Zdravec, Superintendent, and George Shea, Asst. Superintendent, from the Portsmouth School District. Board members, Kristin Jeffrey and Roseann Vozella Clark

Overview from Superintendent

- Communication, this is a great venue; you are welcome to come to a Board meeting and offer comments (not conversational). All our Board members' emails are on the web site. We are always happy to sit down and have conversations as well. We are approachable, please reach out to us.

Q&A

- Classroom size. Third grade does not have a good teacher to student ratio, at least historically. This current year, we went from 3 classes to 2. It was surprising and discouraging. Where are we going in the future, are we going back to three? We are at 17:1 right now, equal to the other schools, we are typically a bit lower though. NFS has tough numbers, 42, two may be too much, but 3 too little. Joanne advocates for this strongly. 20 is the top limit for the School Board, we try not to go over that. But the 2 or 3 decision is a tough one. It is on our radar. We look at the resources across all three schools to try and meet the pressure points.
- What is going on in the classroom is almost as important, for example third grade has a lot of kids that are ADHD. All kids suffer. It is not a numbers game Class composition is very important. You can have huge classes with a good composition and it works. We do take that into account.
- Ms. Dennis has 22 kids, 8 are really needy. I feel like my kid is put at the table to help defuse the table. That is my frustration. No one is getting a good shot. I am shocked at what it coming home, bad language, inappropriate cell phones and tones, etc.
- Third grade is the hardest. Testing, expectations are bigger. I have heard it called the roughest grade.
- Talk about redistricting? It is not on the table right now. NFS is pretty stable on enrollment.
- Hearing on the news about state and federal education. How much of our funding comes from state and feds and how will it affect us? We don't stand to gain or lose as far as the state. Not sure what it means on the federal level yet. Joanne oversees Title One dollars for the district. Title 3 as well. People at the state level are very cautious about change. We might see levels of funding a bit below what we have currently. I will say, Portsmouth has always been thoughtful about what is important for Portsmouth and we will keep doing what we do. We don't get caught up in the whirlwind until we have to. We know what is right and this is what we do.
- Foreign language? Board would like to learn what it would take to bring it in. We have some flexibility with enrichment things we can do, like MC3 or afterschool programs. At the elementary level it is where does it fit in the day, a time issue. We are talking later this month

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to see what it would entail. It will be on the table for budget consideration. It has come up at the Middle School as well, looking at for next year's budget. There is not a requirement around language in Portsmouth.

- HS Students are teaching Little Harbor kids Spanish. Possible expand this to Dondero and NFS.
- One World Language is only offered at Little Harbor. Access problem for NFS students to get there.
- Computer Specialist? Transition from seat time, and ask yourself what you want computer time to do? Typing, keyboarding is important. The testing is on the computer. The other schools should be emulating us for our computer skills. The model we have here, and the people we have doing it, our students are significantly better. It is not a budgetary issue here. At the other schools, the teachers need a place to put the kids for a 5th special. We have a rotation of an extra special. We get double art or music.
- Resources for typing on Sarah Zoey's web site.
- Meghan suggests more opportunities for teachers to learn how to integrate into classrooms. Need to be applying it and using it in a real way. Is it a resource issue? Middle School uses the Google foundation to communicate with teacher and class.

Additional Topics: MC3/Peak, physical plant, recess allocation, school times, social studies and science curriculum.

- NFS is essentially staying the same for start time. Buses are still being worked out. There will be some buses with K-12. The elementary buses are a lot more colorful right now. Looking to have a presentation in the spring to give you time with the new plan.
- Physical Plant. Finished Little Harbor (sprinkler), next year is Dondero. NFS had an energy upgrade, and we are looking at funding things in another 2-3 years.
- Professional development days have been used to high order science skills. Learning on the practice of science. For social studies, 6-12 working hard, working on a plan for K-5.
- MC3/Peak. MC3 in fourth year of five year grant. Anticipate maintaining MC3. Not a lot of Peak Students. When school is closed they are open. If Peak were to close, we would look at having a conversation with MC3 around that.
- Recess. Benefits of outdoor? Extending or having more. By building, logistical question. Teachers use a lot of brain breaks. No district policy, but teachers are aware.

February 14 is the first hearing for the budget of the school board. First Tuesday, March 2 is the School Board meeting on the budget. Comments on the budget are allowed.

Review and approval of January Meeting Minutes Tara Motion to approve, Sarah, Second, approved.

7:40 Stephanie Update

- Family involvement class challenge: Over 1,000 points that I gave. Ms. Spivack's class blew us away though!!
- Co-Assistant Treasurer for remainder of year (vote March 2017) and Treasurer for next year. Looking for co-assistant treasurer for the last 3 months. And a new Treasurer for next year. Please let us know if you have suggestions.

District Council Update (Tara)

- Put on the Summer Camp Expo. Started last year, with a couple parents from each elementary to work together on an event. We don't have budget or anything legal. We put on the Wizards last year. We will next year. Money goes tot Little Harbor and then split between the three. If you have questions email Tara.

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Treasurer's report-Gloria Manchego

- Short recap of ins and outs for January, donation from Target. Issued checks for three non-profits from Lawn Fete
- Recent grants approved. Close to end of budget. Social Skills Clubs approved. Ms. Marceau asked for money for costumes, we would give some money but not meet full \$500 request. Angie is bringing a science museum here, kids can go through centers, and we are working out details.
- Move the Math Enrichment money, \$2,500, to teacher grants. We are looking to fund the Angie program. Move to increase teacher grants next year. We have talked about it more with the teachers this year and have been able to use the funds. If Ms. Marceau doesn't get money for costumes, where does she get it? We can create costumes, parents help out with different color shirts, etc.
- We are missing teachers here. Connect us better with teachers to try and meet needs that teachers may have based on skills.
- Post grants on web site. It is on there under PTO Funded Events
- Copies of budget on the table

Principal's Report-Joanne Simons

- Amazing field trip to Museum of Science for 3rd grade.
- Luncheon was fabulous
- Drums Alive. Goes for two weeks. That is happening now, kids are loving it.
- 100th day of school, Feb. 8. Collections happening. Joanne making 100 phone calls, to parents about positive things about our kids.

60-Day Outlook

- Feb. 14 Kisses and Lightning Bolts, due Feb. 10 (Kristen), cut them out, get them in early.
- Feb. 15, The Shanty Benefit Night (Becky), starts at 5 p.m. 15% to NFS PTO. Joe is a parent of NFS kid.
- February 16, Healthy Try-it Day (Tara), not sure if we need help yet for preparation. Lunch time help from 11-1.
- February 21, Lynn Lyons speaks on anxiety and kids, strategies to interrupt the worry cycle.
- Pasta Dinner, Feb. 22 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (Christy & Heather), kid volunteers, class donation list is coming in packets, we have an annual Pasta Sauce plaque!! Need lots of help from 4th and 5th grade kids and parents as well. Opportunities for volunteering are up on Sign-Up Genius.
- Movie night in February move to April (Becky)
- Need to pick a date for Ice Cream Social. (Kelly Mee to get a date in the books)
- Friday we are starting some fresh fruit, first Friday of the month. Grapes this month.

Meeting adjourns at 8 p.m. Please join us at STREET directly after for further discussion and friendship.

Next PTO Meeting, March 8 2017 at 7 p.m.

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