

## PTO Executive Board Meeting - 10/14/2020

Meeting held via ZOOM 7:30pm – 9:30pm

In attendance - Agnes Pietrzyk, Jayven Rappa, Eric Sprung, Michele Morris, Mary Glendon, Ginny Richmond, Lauren Myers, Robin Levenson, Richelle Smith, Josina Raisler-Cohn, Roxanne McCarley, Krisla Strand, Blair Lesser-Sullivan, Norah Ferry.

### INTRODUCTIONS & CHECK IN

Each member asked to introduce him/herself and state positives about the start of school year and challenges. Select answers included:

- Positives: students are happy to be back in building and see friends, DLA, spending more time as a family, curriculum and new content, effort by staff
- Challenges: missing school b/c of a cold, needing more school, constant change, insufficient physical activity, winter looming, missing community, keeping younger students engaged online and in particular, non-readers.

### SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES – approved

#### UPDATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

- Virtual Back to School Night scheduled for Thursday October 29, 2020. Adults will attend grade-level meetings and then break off to join individual teacher presentations. More details forthcoming.
- Halloween: ES reported that staff is very enthusiastically planning some type of Halloween celebration. It will be held on more than one day to include all cohorts.
- Devices: All students will receive a device. Chromebooks arrived today for students in grades 3-5. They need to be labelled and distributed; the goal is by the end of next week. We are still awaiting iPads for students in K-2 at this time. ES to send a note about distributing new devices and collecting previously issued ones from spring.
- New executive administrative assistant: ES is pleased to have Monika Nixon on board. She is very experienced and a wonderful addition to the Cabot community.
- ES recently attended an important meeting with select parents and staff to discuss how best to honour Molly Williams.
- Staff Anti-racism committee meeting was held today. Discussion around how to connect and collaborate with FORJ, existing groups, and parents. Peter Wong and Jill Leibowitz are liaisons with parents. RM noted that FORJ would like to send a note of introduction and connection to staff. ES to send an introduction.

#### UPDATE FROM CO-PRESIDENTS

Newton PTO Council Meeting:

- Class lists: only one school – Countryside - received class lists. Supt. Fleishman is looking into this further. ES is working to address ASPEN issues and make it easier for families to identify who is in their cohort.
- Addition of DLA representative to council board: Tamara Wieder from Franklin Elementary

- Extending Hybrid days to full days: contingent on hiring. Because 12:30 to 2:30 is reserved as teacher planning time, extensive hires would need to be made to supervise students.
- Creative Arts & Sciences (CAS): Eva Thompson advising on CAS-- tentatively to be held on Wednesdays beginning January 2021

### Creative Arts & Sciences (CAS)

GR provided a more extensive update on CAS. Efforts underway to ensure equity. Principals will be given a short list of presenters by grade level, which they will rank by preference. The goal: that every second grader (for example) across Newton -- regardless of school and education model -- will see the same CAS presentation. Starting point is one CAS presentation per grade level. Author Fest could be a second opportunity.

Budget: per capita rate that ranges between \$3 (low end) to \$15 (high end). With 405 students that is approximately \$6k max.

*Women in World Jazz* is a concert presentation that was paid for last year. Figuring out logistics.

### TEACHER DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

Letters to go out. Discussion around whether to give funds to all DLAs or just Cabot DLAs.

### DLA

KS, GR, and ES met prior to the executive committee meeting this evening. They are working collaboratively to address equity issues (e.g., curriculum night, playground access) and close gaps. GR noted some issues are also shared by Hybrid families.

Eager to forge connections through ASPEN

Liaisons meeting with Jen Shore and Eva Thompson to create more cohesion across DLAs

DLA Picture Day at Cabot: KS welcomes assistance with scheduling, organizing.

### GRADE-LEVEL UPDATES

- K, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3rd grade: reps sent notes of introduction to parents
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade: Organized pumpkin painting that was well received. Created a sign-up genius allowing for 10 slots on Saturday and 10 on Sunday.
- Open positions: seeking grade-level reps for Grades 4 & 5

### CABOT CONNECTING FAMILIES

JC & RS noted that they received a Metco student list.

Traditionally events are rollerskating in Boston and ice cream social in Newton. In the process of trying to plan an event.

Discussion around bringing in Boston teacher and author who graduated from Newton North and was part of the METCO program, Lex Mongo. He read his book at Franklin in the spring – very well received. If CAS is not able to bring him in as a presenter this year, perhaps he could present as part of a

CCF or FORJ event. Lex Mongo: [lexmongo4@gmail.com](mailto:lexmongo4@gmail.com). [WBZ Interview with Lex Mongo](#)

### FORJ

RM noted that there is significant involvement and interest from families, and a particular interest in learning.

Discussion around how to bridge chasm between family and staff efforts, amidst challenges hosting live events.

Theme: reporting on racist incidents.

Forthcoming discussion of podcast *Nice White Parents* hosted by Families of Color Affinity Group

### SOCIAL ACTION

MG provided an update. Initiatives include: Newton Food Pantry, Boston Food Pantry, The Second Step

Amy Martins, Isabel Wagner, and Joe Guarino are partnering with fifth grade student council on social action initiatives this year.

### PTO OPEN POSITIONS

PTO is seeking:

- SEPAC liaison to serve on PTO Executive Committee
- Room parents for 5 hybrid classes and 6 DLA classes
- Corresponding secretary to handle the weekly PTO newsletter
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade representative to PTO Executive Committee
- Co-Directory Administrator (to help with Membership Toolkit/Directory)

### PLAYGROUND

Discussion around playground use during CASP hours and non-school hours.

Many families and CASP students, in addition to middle and high school students, are trying to use the play structures and surrounding areas. Some students are not wearing masks. The volume of people is particularly challenging for Lee and CASP staff, as they are left trying to enforce appropriate protocol.

Discussion around the need for signage encouraging masks and social distancing protocols be followed.

City-wide issue as Mayor Fuller addressed this in her newsletter. Ward 2 SC Member Margaret Albright is meeting with after-school programs to discuss.

### BUDGET

Cabot Connecting Families & FORJ budgets same as previous year, even if activities change.

### FUNDRAISING

- Campaign for Cabot: discussion around when to send letters and financial challenges facing our community this year. Largest fundraiser for the school. Goal of approximately \$15k.
- Readathon: MM discussed organizing a readathon for winter – possibly February. Programs such as SORA and Libby can help students track their reading.

#### COMMUNITY BUILDING/PTO EVENTS

- Discussion around how to build community in the current environment. Crowdfsource ideas.
- Country of the Month: MM proposed making this virtual. Share via Google Slides and include links to readings, recipes. Discussion around possibility of Cabot Cookbook.
- Spirit Days: First Friday and Monday of every month. Wear Cabot gear.
- Cabot student masks arrived. To be distributed. Discussion around labelling. Possible fundraiser through Mabel's Labels
- Spring Fling: discussion around how to handle donated items, including baskets. Perhaps raffle baskets with donated items for holidays
- General PTO Meeting: discussion around potential topic and possible guest speakers -- Superintendent Fleishman, School Committee Chair Ruth Goldman, Kathy Lopes new Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

NEXT MEETING: TBD – November 10-12, 2020.