

PTO Executive Board Meeting – 1/14/2021

Meeting held via ZOOM 7:30pm – 9:20pm

IN ATTENDANCE - Agnes Pietrzyk, Jayven Rappa, Eric Sprung, Michele Morris, Roxanne McCarley, Ginny Richmond, Lauren Myers, Robin Levenson, Krisla Strand, Norah Ferry, Annette Nedeljkovic, Nicky Chapman, Blair Lesser-Sullivan, Flora Edwards, Mary Glendon, Anna Claeys, Joe Guarino

DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES – approved

TREASURER REPORT -- MG

Cabot PTO received approximately \$9k in deposits, mostly through the Campaign for Cabot (CFC) and expects another \$1k next week, also from CFC.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

**Campaign for Cabot** recap (MM): \$12,945 raised in total. We raised approximately \$700 through Facebook Giving Tuesday, \$10k through Membership Toolkit, \$950 in checks, and \$1k from an alumni gift.

**Readathon** (MM): This is another child-focused fundraiser. Last year, we earned \$24k from the Fun Run. This year, we'd like to shift the focus from fundraising and focus more on reading and the kids. Williams ran a Readathon and generously shared its Google Drive. Proposed fundraising goal of \$10k. Utilize a minute tracker, with the goal of 250 minutes of reading per student.

Group discussion around whether Readathon should be a fundraiser or a community-building event. Discussion around timing – February versus March. Could align with March Madness books. Discussion around competition and prizes (e.g., Newtonville Books gift cards, CASC authors address winning classrooms, in the past Mr. Sprung has done a read aloud on the roof to celebrate Read Across America).

PRINCIPAL UPDATE (ES)

K-2 Schedule changes: come with logistical challenges, including adjustments in amount of time students will have with teachers and staffing changes.

MCAS: DESE has announced MCAS testing will be administered, but it will be scaled back. Students in grades 3-5 can expect to participate.

Upcoming Events:

- Superintendent & School Committee to meet with Cabot PTO and community: Thursday 1/21/21 at 7pm
- Principal Coffee: Tuesday 1/26/21 at 9am. ES has invited Amy Hartford (Literacy Coach) & Meran Ellis (Math Coach) to join. They plan to address some of the most common questions from families, including decisions around content, regression and students' being prepared for upcoming academic years.
- Principals to meet with Superintendent in two weeks to discuss planning for next year.
- Progress reports: February 10, 2021.

Questions from Committee:

- Staff member losses: how to handle condolences. Different staff have different comfort level with sharing. Room parents have sent a card, in the past. ES to keep people informed and posted.
- Kindergarten registration: usually takes place in March. Registration works when next year is clear. Meeting with superintendent should provide some clarity.
- Parents are increasingly concerned about district planning for spring and next year. Parents also concerned about whether district is equipped to bring students back school full time: the goal of Superintendent's office is to get students back in school. Meeting among principals in two weeks to discuss planning. Superintendent's email yesterday touched on some of these points.
- Does the Cabot building have space for all students in the event distancing requirements were reduced to 3 feet? Yes – we could fit all students at Cabot, but unsure about other schools.
- Question around staffing and increasing staffing to get students back more? If that is what is needed, then we need to do it.
- Question around equity of in-person instruction & attendance between Cohorts A & B. As of Monday January 11, Cohort B is at a 3-day deficit to Cohort A.
- Snow Days: some surprise that there was a snow day on Friday 12/18/20 and not on Thursday 12/17/20. Will snow days be made up? We usually make up snow days, unless DESE instructs us otherwise.

#### COLLABORATION BETWEEN PTO SOCIAL ACTION & GRADE 5 STUDENT COUNCIL

Grade 5 Student Council and PTO are looking for opportunities to collaborate on social action initiatives.

Update from Joe Guarino: First year leading Grade 5 Student Council (SC). SC meets 11:30-12 and pursue social action initiatives together. We have a great group – often have 30something students show up to help.

- Volunteer initiatives to date: (1) Newton Food Pantry food drive – we filled three carloads with groceries. (2) Cradles to Crayons – SC bagging and packaging materials. (3) Helped PTO by building a Kudos Board for support staff to accompany PTO teacher gifts.
- Heading on paternity leave in February and returning in mid March. Many teachers have offered to help in my absence, including: Ms. Phillips, Ms. Foley, Ms. Candee, Ms. Leibowitz.
- DLA students are encouraged to participate (4-5 already do). JG has a Google Drive for Student Council. Students can join at any point.
- 5th graders are always willing to help out with messaging events to other students.

#### UPDATES FROM GRADE LEVEL & DLA REPRESENTATIVES

K (RL) – hoping to plan another playground meetup

1 (BLS) – thankful for class parents who organized teacher gifts. Playground meetup and food drive – to benefit Centre Street Food Pantry Kids Clubs -- on 12/27. Great idea to combine a meetup and volunteer opportunity, was well received.

2 (FE) – no updates

3 (LM) – no updates

4 (JG) – no updates

5 (AN) – NC has begun planning for Grade 5 activities. Upcoming parent meeting to discuss on 1/19/21.

DLA (GR & KS) – Met with all DLA liaisons last month. Discussion around schedule changes given new DESE guidelines.

- Social emotional learning within school days is a challenge. Met with ES to discuss asking teachers from the Newton Community Ed to do one-off trials of their classes. Additional opportunities through Outschool, Netflix watch parties. Great ideas but also present problems with technology – sites are blocked by NPS – and could be a problem with NTA contract, if the classes are offered during school hours. Plan to meet with DLA administration on Tuesday to present social emotional learning ideas.
- DLA material pickup: Ginny and Amelia facilitated today.
- Playground use: DLA families continue to request access to playground. Some elementary schools have identified specific days for DLA, e.g., Wednesdays during set hours.
- Safety as a social opportunity: discussion around having someone from Newton Police Department host a tutorial around safe biking. Similarly, Safe Routes to School to give guidance for students who will be walking to Day Middle School next year.

#### UPDATES FROM CABOT CONNECT, FORJ, SEPAC

Cabot Connecting – Families of Color event on 1/31/21 at 4:30-5:30pm

FORJ (RM) – Must acknowledge events of January 6, 2021 at the Capitol. Appreciative of ES email addressing. Other updates:

- Look for an email spotlighting MLK weekend and events
- Book Club meeting to discuss New Kid: 1/19/21 @ 8pm
- Podcast discussion next month. FORJ reps met with Cabot's Anti-racism task force (Peter Wong & Jill Leibowitz) at Cabot; this was the first of many meetups.
- First meeting of year with FORJ social action group; initiatives and themes include: supporting families of color, parents and kids talking about race.
- Question around how to give feedback regarding the police filling in for a crossing guard. Can be addressed to ES and Ali Dunn, who heads up Safe Routes to School.
- Kathy Lopes attended Cabot' Anti-racism committee meeting. She will attend a general PTO meeting on Thursday 2/25/21.

SEPAC (AC) – Held our first Cabot Sepac meeting on Monday 1/11/21. It was well attended. Intend to organize another and try another time slot. In the process of trying to collect emails and making sure we are reaching all families. Some discussion around Cabot SPED staff that are DLA specific; teachers include Lindsey Mallette, Lucy Couture. Jodie Whidden is team chair for DLA. At the district level, Newton SEPAC will soon be hosting "Basic Rights in Special Education."

#### CO-PRESIDENT UPDATE (AP & JR)

- Room parent spots filled

- Holiday gifts for Cabot specialists & support staff: Distributed \$25 Amazon gift card to 63 people. ES noted it was much appreciated. Discussion around adding holiday gift to the Cabot PTO budget to avoid collecting funds at busy time. Could add it to teacher appreciation line in the budget. Discussion around being very clear that a donation to CFC would include teacher gifts. Further discussion around standardizing teacher gifts across all grade levels by creating one fund that families donate to.
- Joint Square One Art Fundraiser with CASP: Students in CASP will work on their art in CASP. Non-CASP students can upload their art work to site. All families can participate; must upload their art by 3/8/21 in order to purchase an item with their child's art work on it. Discussion around extending this to an online community art gallery.
- Auction update: JJ provided a list of 2020 Cabot Spring Fling auction items. MG volunteered to take list and follow up with the businesses to ask if they are able to honor them.
- Program Enrichment Grants: teachers can apply for a program enrichment grant to bring some specific things in the classroom. Start within the next month.
- CFC & Thank you to Alum for Donation: Mr. White donated \$1,000 to Cabot; it was a special place to him. Discussion around how to thank him – send a note with some Cabot goods.

#### WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Update on Country Spotlight/TOTW Cookbook: details TK
- Community Goosechase event: forthcoming, may use Zoom platform for the next one and organize it as a family event in the evening. There is a game in our account. Discussion around grade-level specific events.
- Book Fair committee: EA is working on this.

Next Executive Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday February 23, 2021