



## **Bishop School PTO Meeting Minutes**

**Date: September 11, 2019**

**Location: Bishop School Library**

**7 – 9 p.m.**

**Attending:** Principal - Mark McAneny; PTO Board Member: Co-President-Elisa Komoni (2nd year); Co-President -Christina Marko (1st year); Co-Treasurers: David Brecht (1st year); Room Parent Coordinator: Laura Tikonoff (2nd year); Communications Coordinator: Junko Nagano (2nd year) & Assistant: Satoko Carlstrom (1<sup>st</sup> year); and Recording Secretary: Neshe Gafuri (1st year); **Regrets:** Karin Moellering (2nd year) - PTO Co-treasurer (not in attendance for this meeting)

Approximately 20+ members of the Bishop Community attended, including several classroom parents, as well as Abigail Wolf from Home Harvest, (HH) and Judy Geyer from Arlington Education Foundation (AEF).

**1. Introductions:** Elisa (PTO Co-President) opened the meeting and all in attendance introduced themselves.

**2. June 2019 meeting minutes** were announced as on the website and a motion to approve the minutes as written was presented by Junko Nagano, seconded by Christina Marko.

**3. Arlington Education Foundation (AEF) Intro/Update:** Judy from AEF, representing Bishop for approximately 4 years, provided AEF intro. AEF is not-for-profit organization that collects donations and sends right back to the schools. The foundation is independent of PTO but often partners with PTO. She highlighted that the foundation's board consists of parents, representative of school district office, teacher representative, and school committee member. She shared some of the AEF's past work; primarily giving out different kinds of grants including Innovation Grants for all teachers that have applied and been granted (these innovation grants have sometimes been led by PTOs). Some of the AEF funded examples are; One Book-One School @ Bracket; AEF helped fund Climbing Wall for the Gym also @ Bracket where PTO helped pay for good portion and AEF paid the rest.; AEF has also worked with Bishop PTO. Bishop PTO invested in the garden and AEF helped paying for some of the garden curriculum development. She also went over the process and stressed being rather straight forward with 6 total questions w/each question needing 1-2 paragraphs. She offered assistance w/writing grants and offered guidance w/the process. Emphasized that these grants have to be innovative, and need to simultaneously inspire curiosity, and innovation in schools, and solicited support for Co-Bishop rep. to work with her this year and who would also be ready to assume the role for next year.

**4. Home Harvest (HH) Intro/Update:** Abigail from HH, garden educator and coordinator at Bishop, launched this program 5 years ago. The program works in collaboration with PTO and as mentioned above AEF helped develop the curriculum where every Bishop student gets to work in the garden, plant something, harvest something, and take something that they grew. This fall they have allocated 35 hours

of classroom activity which coincides with classroom teaching where they developed partnerships with teachers at Bishop to work as Co-teacher to provide gardening lessons to the students. She also stated that the real fun part of her job is to see students come out and play, where some of these students when she first met were kindergarteners and now, they are in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and observing them learn, and grow it has been rewarding. She also briefly talked about new developments in the garden such as; new sitting area which was used today with kindergarteners that came out for their first lesson of the year. She added that the sitting area is hidden in the back, visually pleasing and with organized structure. She also solicited some help with the garden liaison; looking for someone who can assist her connect with Bishop community, help out with certain tasks such as open garden volunteers and stated that more information about that will be sent via newsletter. Principal McAneny also added that Bishop contracts with HH, where 5 years ago, they took the idea and the plot in order to design the project and incorporate it into curriculum which now has become a model for the district where other schools have implemented outdoor classrooms. He also added that his main objective when the project started was the sustainability. He also shared that there are people year around that come to assist with garden upkeep, which needs to be closed in the winter, and late fall there is some prep. work that need to be completed.

#### **5. Principal's Update (Mark McAneny):**

Welcomed everyone back to 2019-20 school year and reported the beginning of the school year has been very busy; total of 10 new staff have been hired or shifted around. Eva Liner, new assistant principal, has been a great addition to Bishop, and will be in attendance with Principal McAneny in the bishop launch for curriculum night, and strongly encouraged the community to offer Eva a warm welcome.

**Space update:** Bishop continues to have 9 sections, with K, and 2<sup>nd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> grades each with 3 sections, and 4 sections of 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Reported that there will be some staff attrition but did not go into the details at this meeting d/t not knowing yet what is going to happen but stated that it would be fair to expect some staff with some movement. Also, at this meeting, addressed that if Bishop happens to get an additional section bringing it up to 20 classrooms will then be out of space and unable to keep the integrity of art and music programs. Shared that the district is putting in 2020-21 budget request monies for another module to offset in case the additional section was to occur. However, encumbering those funds and putting the bid out for modules might not necessarily help Bishop next year, but it will help the following year. He briefly gave an update on a school advisory council that will start meeting next week and has scheduled 4-5 meetings for this year in order to address space issue. The group of people addressing this issue consist of parents that have already met with superintendent and have participated in school committee meetings to raise awareness of space needs at Bishop and are looking to explore what can be done to make everyone comfortable. Praised the efforts in being proactive and moving forward to address space issues; more to come on that as next summer comes when the enrollment numbers become known. Parent in the room asked if there's been discussion to look into buffer zones differently as most of the renovation/additions at other schools, that brought students from other zones to Bishop, have been finalized. Principal responded by saying that the Superintendent is looking to expand the buffer zones and given that Bishop is over capacity in the future families will not get their choice at Bishop, but instead will start with other schools first since they now have more capacity. Currently there are 98 1<sup>st</sup> graders, which is a lot of children going to cafeteria at once, and on Tuesdays' 72 kindergarteners are added. Thus, there have been efforts put in place to look into providing more space such as buying new tables/chairs in order to accommodate children in the cafeteria. Currently Bishop has total of 463 students, and the enrollment grows large particularly around the month of March d/t Asian families coming over to do work and having to enroll their children, which makes for a revolving door throughout the year. There are some challenges, but everything is being addressed. Principal stated that he knows the staff, and that staff understand his expectations, and, in that fashion, they work well together where everyone in the building comes together

and does some extra work in order to address issues such as cafeteria space and recess. He also shared that there is also a retired community that comes in to support and keep our children safe. Additionally, he stated while cafeteria time is the most busy and hectic time of the day at the same time for him is a good time to interact and connect w/ the kids and he encourages other adults to do the same. This year he has scheduled all the TA's to choose 20 minutes of their day to come down to support Bishop's effort. Thus, at any given time, for K-1 there is 5-6 adults in addition to cafeteria staff to provide additional support for the students

Teacher PTO rep. update: Caroline Tom will be coming to Bishop next year, and she will be the new teacher PTO rep.

**Science camps for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students:** scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup>; strongly encouraged those who have an opportunity to chaperone to do so. Curriculum night is tomorrow night. Newsletter will always go out on Thursday, thanked Junko and everyone else that helps with the newsletter.

**Update on 3-year school improvement plan:** Teachers develop their own practice and students learning goals as it relates to district learning goals around student achievement. The improvement plan when approved will be posted in the Bishop website. Principal's closed his updates by thanking everybody that give to Bishop community and welcomed everyone to the new school year. Assured the community he is making sure to support educators in the building as well as out in the community.

**Website Coordinator Position Pitch/Update:** Colin McCarthy, parent of two children that went to Bishop last year, served as a Webmaster and managed the monitor in the lobby where there are pictures of different activities that help making learning visible. Colin, who helped make systems easier, has now moved to Texas, and there is a vacant Webmaster position for anyone in the community who is interested.

**6.Co-Treasurers Update (David Brecht/Karin Moellering):** David presented the 2019-2020 Budget, and summarized fundamentals of what happened last year vs this year. He added that the budget is open to the community. This year worked harder to make the budget reflect more realistic amounts of money that can be raised and prioritize spending accordingly as well as project more realistic spending opportunities for the next year. Hence budget is more conservative this year; every penny that gets raised in the end gets spent in the classroom and/or any other initiative around the school with very little amount spend toward overhead for accounting purposes. One of the parents asked if it would be possible to receive receipt earlier than last year in order to get company match program for their annual fund donation. David responded by saying that PTO is in the process of creating a process where the date will need to be moved earlier for the receipts to be sent out. There were few more questions regarding Science night, and Movie night that were addressed as well at this meeting. Additional question that was posed by another parent was with respect to one-off initiatives and if they would be founded. Elisa responded although the PTO funds one-offs, there are no anticipated requests for this year. One of the Parents in the room also asked a question regarding surveys conducted last year. Surveys responses were taken into consideration and based on the surveys' the only thing that changed is Bishop night out month and day is different this year. The feedback with respect to the dance event was significant where people generally liked the event Another parent asked about Annual Fund deadline. Elisa responded that the Annual Fund goes throughout the year, but it is strongly recommended that suggested donations are made as earlier as possible.

**7.Co-Presidents Update (Elisa Komoni/Christina Marko):** Elisa reported that so far there have been two successful events: Ice Cream Social and Picnic, and Back to School Coffee. NYAJ Fundraiser was launched and for those planning to dine there please be sure to let them know that you are from Bishop for a certain % of the bill to be donated to Bishop. Update was provided on the packet sent in mailbox that includes intro to PTO, request for Annual Fund Fundraiser, outline open PTO Positions, September Calendar, and the NYAJ Certificate. Also, PTO Calendar for the year, and once we have full list of Enrichment Activities

will be sending via backpack mail. Approved bylaws are already posted on the PTO website [www.bishopstoolschoolpto.com](http://www.bishopstoolschoolpto.com) and will be posting the approved budget on the PTO website.

**Grants approved:** The recurring grants are going to be approved every year. Examples of received and approved grants are the following: S'more which is a newsletter; Spelling City is recurring grant; IXL Math is also recurring grant; and StoryWorks Magazine is pending approval. Christina read thank you notes that PTO received at this meeting.

**7. Bishop Play intro/update:** Heather gave an intro on the next Bplay, it is a self-sustaining program and does not rely on PTO for funds but works very closely w/PTO to leverage PTO non-for-profit status in order to help out with expenses. Plan is to have a play again this year; play community is meeting for the first time one week from this Friday and that is when they will meet with the director and committee of 6 people (looking for one more person to add to the committee). Sarah Morrison will be returning to Bishop as play director. Play will run similarly on how it was run in the past. It has not been decided yet on what the play is going to be but will be announced at the November PTO meeting and the registration will start immediately after. Last year it was oversubscribed, production supports ~190 kids, which is nearly half the school and thus some parents had to be turned back last year. Feedback from last year's parents received was; blown away by last year's production and thanked for including kindergarteners.

**7. Room Parent Orientation:** Laura Tikonoff (Room Parent Coordinator) Welcome and thank you to room parents. A PowerPoint presentation is available on the Bishop PTO website.

Meeting Adjourned.

**NEXT PTO MEETING: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2019**

#### **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

Curriculum Night – Thursday, September 12, 2019  
METCO Apple Picking – Saturday, September 21, 2019  
Fall Clean-Up Day – Sunday, September 22, 2019  
Picture Day – Wednesday, September 25, 2019  
DIG Meeting – Wednesday, September 25, 2019  
Spirit Day – Friday, October 4, 2019  
Walk-A-Thon – Friday, October 18, 2019  
Pumpkin Sale – Saturday, October 19, 2019  
Original Works Due – Thursday, October 24, 2019