



## Bishop School PTO Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2021

Location: [Zoom](#), 7- 8PM

Attending: Principal Mark McAneny; Assistant Principal (AP) Eva Liner; PTO Teacher Representative Caroline Thom; DIG representatives (Rebecca Bell, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher; & Sarah Popper, parent); PTO Board Members: Co-President Christina Marko (2nd year); Co-President Laura Tikonoff (1st year); Treasurer David Brecht (2nd year); Communications Coordinator Amanda Maltais (1st year); Fundraising Coordinator Tai Sokoloff (1st year); and Recording Secretary Neshe Gafuri (2nd year). Total of 20 members of the community attended. Regrets: Class Parent Coordinator Lindsay Sweeney (1st year), not in attendance.

Introductions: Christina (PTO Co-President) welcomed all in attendance. AY 2020-2021 PTO Board members and all other community members in attendance introduced themselves to the audience.

December 2020 Meeting Minutes: Christina Marko proposed a motion to approve the December 2020 Meeting Minutes. Laura Tikonoff seconded the motion and minutes were approved by a majority vote. These minutes are posted on the PTO website.

### Principal's Update:

- Systems and structures are in place. Both hybrid and remote programs have shown resilience and flexibility. Mark is thankful to staff, students and parents. A great team effort.
- Trying to meet DESE requirements on learning time and additional special blocks have been added.
- There have been a few COVID+ cases at Bishop over the past couple of weeks that impacted some classrooms. However, due to protocol adherence, the school was able to manage the cases early and effectively while maintaining academic programming for most students.
- Pool testing trialed last week and 98% of hybrid students were tested with no positive cases!
- District is looking to get all students physically back in the classrooms in the near future.
- Arlington Public Schools has been accepted into the Commonwealth's pool testing program which will be at no cost to the district. Bishop will have weekly testing beginning the week after February break.
- MCAS testing will happen this year. DESE's testing schedule will be from April 5- May 28. There will be only one session for each subject as opposed to the usual two. Remote Academy students will have to test at the school. Further information forthcoming.
- There were no questions from the community for Mark. One parent in attendance commented: *"you probably heard this so much, but I'll reiterate you are doing such a great job. I can't believe how well and smoothly everything is running under the circumstances and that Mark and the staff really deserve a lot of praise- thank you so much."* Other parents also agreed with these sentiments.

### PTO Teacher Rep's update:

- Thanked the PTO on behalf of the staff for the Spring checks that they received recently.

- Thanked the PTO for funding the grant for teacher wellness kits. Thanked Eva Liner and Rebecca Bell for writing the grant and shared that the plan is to make kits available to teachers by the end of March.
- Stated that Elena, the classroom assistance dog, has been unable to easily visit classrooms due to Covid limitations. Suggested that children in other classes write, draw or send a note to Elena via her email or school mailbox. Ms. Thom would also consider other creative ways that Elena could reach out to the community at large.

#### PTO Invited guest speakers, Rebecca Bell and Sarah Popper, from the Bishop DIG

- The DIG was started at Bishop in 2018 by Rebecca Bell and Ally Frank, both 5th Grade Bishop teachers, Sarah Popper, a Bishop parent and another parent whose children have since graduated from Bishop following regular meetings with a diversity and inclusion consultant that had recently been hired by APS.
- The DIG's mission is to:
  - Work in collaboration with families and the school administrators in order to make the school safe and welcoming for all the Bishop families and children who come each day
  - Celebrate differences
  - Advance equity and inclusion at the Bishop and in Arlington Public Schools in general
  - Foster awareness for the Bishop community about issues related to diversity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-racism
  - Promote connections among caregivers, staff and students through events including DIG's monthly Advisory Board meetings that are open to all
- Shared anti-racist work that's being done specifically in honor of Black History Month (February)
- Accomplishments have included:
  - Black Lives Matter posters
  - Recess closet with clothing and boots and other supplies for students
  - Summer book club
  - Translation services within APS
  - Advocating for hiring diverse staff
  - School pizza night, Cultural evening (later canceled due to Covid)
  - Gender neutral bathrooms
  - Monthly advisory board meetings
- Future planning/goals include:
  - Further developing the Rainbow Alliance. The Rainbow Alliance is a safe group for all the LGBTQ+ community and Bishop community to come together to support each other. The first meeting of this group will be February 11, 2021 from 6:00 to 7:00 PM.
  - Creating a community survey to determine ongoing community needs and grow attendance
  - Maintaining a DIG website and email distribution list
  - Continuing to advocate for translation services and hiring staff of color at Bishop and throughout APS
  - Restarting the DIG student and caregiver book club
  - Increasing communication by finding more ways to reach the community
- Christina thanked Rebecca and Sarah for presenting and for all of the hard work that they have been doing. She further added that the PTO is happy to continue to support the DIG.

#### AP/Remote Academy Update:

- Eva reported that things are going well with the Remote Academy
- Christina added that we are all so glad that both models are flourishing under Bishop leadership and staff - it's really a testament to how hard Bishop staff work. She thanked them for all of their efforts.

#### Treasurer Update:

- David gave a budget update, which is also posted on the PTO website. Overall fundraising to date is about \$40K. \$27K has been spent, leaving about \$12K which has mostly been allotted to Spring events (enrichment, garden, staff appreciation week).
- On the fundraising side, the PTO received more Annual Fund contributions in December and early January. David thanked all the families who have contributed.
- Spring teacher checks were distributed.
- Room Parents received a second \$100 check after feedback that more money was needed to fund teacher gifts, parties, etc. Initial budget did not include a second room parent check this year.
- David advertised for the vacant treasurer position.

#### Co-presidents Update:

- Christina announced the First Annual Bishop Readathon that will run from February 8-28. The PTO is very excited about this new event.
- Laura shared the grants funded since our last meeting in December which include:
  - Teacher Wellness Kits
  - Bishop Stronger Together Banner that hangs outside the school
  - Additional mentions: repair of garden fence and staff holiday gift (Bishop mug and DD gift card)

#### Thank you notes:

- PTO received several thank you notes for the holiday gift and checks
- Some items purchased with teacher checks included a second monitor, printer supplies, new books and additional intervention programs.

#### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Bishop Read-A-Thon - February 8-28

No School (Winter Break) - February 15-19

Meeting Adjourned

NEXT PTO MEETING: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021 @ 7PM

Minutes by Neshe Gafuri, PTO Recording Secretary