



Bishop School PTO Meeting Minutes

Date: November 9, 2016

Location: Bishop School Library

7 – 9 p.m.

Minutes

- **Welcome and Introductions**

Heather Breslau opened the meeting with a brief outline of the agenda. At the time of introductions the following Bishop Community members were present: Heather Breslau, Meredith Dimola, Lynne Aftuck, Jenn Badua, Anna Pisanina, Jeannine Ranaghan, Mark Davila, Rosemary Foster, Wendy Johncheck, Mark McAney, Kathy Caruso, Tricia See, Amanda Maltais, Abigail Wolf, and Annette Brubaker.

- October 2016 meeting minutes were announced as on the website and a motion to approve the minutes as written was presented by Heather Breslau, seconded by Jenn Badua.

- **Principal's Update (Mark McAneny)**

Mr. McAneny said this week his concern was about the election results and making sure the staff and students were supported as some were celebrating and some not celebrating. There was a teachers' meeting on the morning of Wednesday, November 9th to discuss the best way to talk to the students about the election results. During morning announcements on Wednesday, November 9th, Mr. McAneny discussed the electoral process and democracy. He related it to a competition between teams where there are winners and losers. He told the students that how they accept the election results says a lot about who they are as a person and asked that if the students did not have anything positive to say then to keep their thoughts and comments to themselves. Mr. McAneny discussed what he thinks the election results will mean for education. The Obama administration has favored common core and Donald Trump has talked about possibly eliminating it and giving local school districts more control over their curriculum. Donald Trump has also vowed to open up local funds to give parents more public/private/homeschooling options.

Mr. McAneny said that parent/teacher conference dates will be Dec 6th and Dec 13th between 12-3pm and Dec 15th between 6-8pm. December 6th and 13th will have an 11:15am early dismissal (with no lunch served) to accommodate daytime conferences. Teachers are taking over the conference scheduling this year. It will no longer be done online through the district. Depending on teacher availability there will be some early morning conference options scheduled outside of the specific days.

Question from Rosemary Foster –Are all teachers using the same system for scheduling? The scheduling system for Ms. Holden's 3rd grade class was confusing. Response from Mr. McAneny – The teachers are not all using the same scheduling system. Most teachers are use google docs.

Question from Anna Pisania – When can we expect to get the scheduling request from the teachers?
Response from Mr. McAneny - Tomorrow (Thursday 11/10) the teachers will be given the ok to send the scheduling requests out to parents.

Mr. McAneny said the 3rd - 5th grades are taking the MCAS online this year. The district purchased Chromebooks for the 4th grade to use during MCAS testing. Bishop currently has 81 Chromebooks that are being shared between classes. For the past 2 weeks the 4th and 5th grades have been piloting a new reading comprehension software called iReady. iReady is an online software that accesses reading comprehension. This software in conjunction with MCAS test results will allow teachers to better determine how to direct instruction. The correlation between iReady and MCAS scores is high. Bishop is looking to adopt iReady going forward as it seems more effective than what has been previously used.

Mr. McAneny thanked Meredith DiMola (PTO co-President) for the work she has done to get the new basketball hoops installed. The basketball hoops were purchased by the Bishop Class of 2016. The PTO is funding the purchase of new poles and posts also needed and the installation. These will be delivered tomorrow (11/10) and the installation will occur Friday (11/11) – Tuesday (11/15). Mr. McAneny expects the blacktop to be repainted soon as well.

Mr. McAneny is in the process of planning a dedication for Charlie Buck in the garden. This will be a semiprivate ceremony on Nov. 23rd attended by Charlie Buck's second grade class, the Buck family, and some of Charlie's soccer friends. A bronze plaque with Charlie Buck's name and an inscription was purchased. The plaque will be placed on the large boulder in front of the garden. Some of Charlie Buck's friends made stepping stones which will lead to the gathering space in the garden.
Question from Jenn Badua – Will the dedication be discussed with the other grades? Response from Mr. McAneny – Yes, we plan on having the other grades eventually go out to the garden to discuss this.

Mr. McAneny discussed scheduling for the Thanksgiving break. Wednesday, 11/23 will be early dismissal at noon (with no lunch served) and Thursday 11/24 and Friday 11/25 will be days off.

Mr. McAneny said they are having a great start to the year. Teachers are setting professional practice goals and student goals. He feels very fortunate to be at Bishop where there is a lot teacher/principal collaboration.

- Teacher's Update (Lynne Aftuck)

Ms. Aftuck thanked the PTO for the teacher checks which were distributed last week. Bishop held a mock election on Monday (11/7). Ms. Viveiros and Ms. Capaldo set up precincts in their classrooms. The students were able to see how the voting process works and also discussed mock elections. "I voted today" stickers were distributed on Thursday (11/9). Yesterday (11/8) was a professional development day for teachers. There was a speaker discussing literacy, comprehension, and best teaching practices. The teachers felt this was very useful and provided a lot of helpful ideas to use in the classroom. There was also science professional development for some teachers and kindergarten and first grade teachers had math professional development. Ms. Aftuck also said report cards will be sent home prior to parent/teacher conferences around Dec 2nd.

- Co-President's Report (Heather Breslau and Meredith Dimola)

Heather Breslau said the PTO is off to a great start this year. Since the last meeting the Walkathon and Pumpkin Sale have occurred. The Walkathon continued to grow this year. The event raised approximately \$9,500 which was \$2,000 more than last year. The Walkathon is a very good community event, but also an important fundraising event for the school. The Pumpkin Sale also exceeded expectations this year. The event sold out of more pumpkins and donuts than in the past. The Annual Fund is tracking as expected. One thing to note on the PTO budget (which was distributed at the meeting) is the expense for the first round of teacher checks which have been distributed (to reimburse teachers for what they spend out of their pocket).

- Bishop Play

Heather Breslau introduced Sarah Morrison, the new Play Director. Heather Breslau, Skye Stewart, Celeste Hogan, Johanna Niles and Amy Speare are on the Play Committee and are working with the new Director to get her up to speed. Sarah Morrison discussed her background. She studied theater at Hampshire College and has been teaching theater since she was 14 years old. Sarah Morrison believes the play should give kids a chance to grow their confidence and also teaches empathy and kindness. Her goal is to create a great community. The Bishop Play this year will be The Wizard of OZ. Registration will be Nov 21st – 30th. There will not be a cap on the number of student participants. Sarah Morrison anticipates having two casts in order to accommodate more kids. The Tech Crew will have more project based learning and will be presenting their set design ideas to the Play Committee. The kids will also be involved in prop building like the tornado scene. During performances the Tech Crew will be involved in running the show. The audition process will be different this year with group auditions and then call backs. Rehearsals will begin in January. There will be 4 public performances March 30 – April 2. Additional Play information will be on the PTO website and the Play flyer will go home in backpack mail. The Play Committee is looking for a lead for the costume team, a sound engineer and a choreographer.

Question – what is the parent volunteer meeting? Response from Amy Speare (parent volunteer coordinator) – Any parent with a child in the play must volunteer. On the registration form you can select what you would like to volunteer to help with. The parent volunteer meeting is the kickoff meeting where everyone meets the Director and meets the team they are volunteering with.

Question from Ms. Brubaker – For students that come in from Boston to Bishop is there any transportation home for them? Response from Mr. McAneny – The parents of those children will have to pick them up.

Question – If a 4th or 5th grader auditions will they definitely get a role? Response from Sarah Morrison (Play Director) - Yes, everyone will get a role which is why we will have 2 casts. Most 4th and 5th graders will get speaking roles and some speaking roles will be divided to allow for more speaking roles.

- Garden Enrichment Presentation (Amanda Matias, Wendy Johnchek, Abigail Wolf, Annette Brubaker)

Presentation will be available to on the PTO website

In summary – The Garden officially closed its 2nd season today on Nov 9th. Ms. Wolf has been the garden educator from the start. Ms. Brubaker handles the lesson plans and incorporating the

Garden into the curriculum. The presentation discussed the following - 1. Having onsite composting at Bishop which the 5th graders handle and are responsible for taking the compost bucket out from lunch and bringing it to the garden. 2. Linking the garden activities to the curriculum. 3. Open garden time which is Wednesday mornings from 9-11am in the spring and fall where the kids can go in and do a variety of different activities (prepare the beds, manage the compost station).

There are many volunteer opportunities such as being on the garden committee, garden maintenance and support team, open garden volunteering, adopting a garden bed in the summer, and helping at the plant sale and seedling sale during the Bear Fair.

Comments from Mark McAneny – Thanks everyone for their help and believes it's incredibly important for the kids to learn about the Garden. Mr. McAneny believe the Garden is bringing the community together and is being looked at as a model by other schools in Arlington. Sustainability is very important and he sees the garden continuing to grow. Question from Mark Davila– Who should we contact to volunteer? Response from the Garden Committee – Amanda Maltias can be contacted.

- Upcoming Events/Volunteer Needs:

1. Craft Fair, Dec. 8 (2nd grade event) – Planning is going well. There are currently 22 adult craft vendors (7 or 8 vendors are new) and 4 student crafters. We can accept some more student crafters if interested.
2. Book Fair, Dec. 12 – 16 – After Thanksgiving, the PTO/library staff will be looking for volunteers.
3. Teacher Conferences (meals) – The PTO provides lunch and/or dinner to the teachers during conference days which is very much appreciated. Anna Pisania will be reaching out to the room parents to coordinate volunteers to help pick up the food and clean up on those days. Question from Mark Davila - Will the food be delivered to the office or do volunteers have to pick it up. Response from Anna Pisania – We can figure out what works best as it gets closer.
4. Movie Night, January 6 – Three kindergarten parents have volunteered to lead the event. The movie is TBD. Question from Rosemary Foster – Can the lights be turned off during movie night this year? Response from Mr. McAneny – Yes, I will work on getting the lights turned off during Movie Night.

- Community Announcements

Arlington Education Foundation (AEF) – AEF raises money through community donations. AEF distributes more than \$100,000 annually in grants in all level of Arlington Public Schools. The Bishop Garden benefitted from an AEF grant. The Ottoson Inside Out project is from an AEF grant. AEF has also partnered with the PTO to provide funds for enrichment. AEF welcomes any ideas for grants and the bishop ambassador for AEF can help with the grant application which gets presented to the AEF board. The AEF Star Program is very popular in which a family can make a donation and the teacher of their choice receives a star as recognition. The minimum donation for the Star Program is \$20. The annual fundraiser for AEF is on Monday Nov 21st at Ristorante Olivio.

Arlington Parent Forums - A group of Arlington parents and Arlington school employees who organize various presentations, movies, and events that are informative to parents in the

community. The next event is Monday, November 21st at Ottoson Middle School. It's a seminar about parenting strategies for school aged children.

- Public Comment/Questions

Mark McAneny recognized Skye Stewart for all she has done with the Enrichment Committee and thanked her for all that she has done for the school.

- Meeting Adjourned. There will not be a PTO meeting in December. The next Meeting is January 11, 2017.