



## Bishop School PTO Meeting Minutes November 18, 2015 Meeting location: Bishop Library

1. Welcome and introductions, those present: Laura Fuller, Mark Davilla, Amanda Maltais, Amy Markov Wieand, Katie Stencik, Roblyn Brigham, Skye Stewart, Mark McAneny, Wendy Johncheck, Jennifer Suisse, Rosemary Foster, Heather Breslau, Ali Lydon, Brecky Peabody, Deborah Kokinos, Katherine Reisz-Hanson, Jean Clark.
2. Rosemary motioned to approve October PTO minutes, Jen Badua seconded, all approved.
3. Guest discussion - Jennifer Suisse from school committee shared her knowledge of the APS enrollment crisis/challenge and listened to concerns. The McKibben Report is study of town demography and how relates to school enrollment. Over last eight years, 750+ new students, 550 new students in district over the last 5 years. Sixty percent of Arlington population has moved into town since 2000. Population explosion began in 2009. Bishop has the highest average classroom size (23) of any elementary school in town. A few years ago it was actually worse with eleven classrooms over 26 students, but redistricting has actually helped lower numbers. One extra empty classroom here at Bishop (computer labs going away). What the district is hoping to do is appoint an enrollment taskforce with town and school officials. There will be a meeting held on November 30, 7-9pm. Schedule of planned meetings will be twice a month. Next one on January 7<sup>th</sup>, Thursday open town hall meeting will small groups to get sense of values for district. Amy Markov spoke in favor of what happened in Cambridge with one year of single-grade students, Globe article spoke of creation of micro-community. A lot of options on table, document available on community relations subpage of school committee website. [Jennifer.Suisse@gmail.com](mailto:Jennifer.Suisse@gmail.com) email her if you have a new idea or want the document with the options

*Questions: Renata Thomas – what is timeline? When is this all going to happen?* At Gibbs building June 30<sup>th</sup> 2016 notice will be given to tenants, then one year to vacate, and one year to renovate. So it will affect current 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. Future may include debt exclusion for various community buildings. Town finance committee approves each additional student 25% budget increase, but that number is low and they will go back and request a higher percentage.

December 16<sup>th</sup> MSBA board will meet to determine which school will get the funding for a new building. Town will learn at that time whether Arlington High School will make the next round.

*Heather Breslau asked about the funding for teaching assistants when there are large classrooms?* Progress from ½ day aides in Kindergarten to full day aides. State grant for full day K is about to expire, but Suisse doesn't expect the former Kindergarten fee to be reinstated (under current state rules).

Survey to town about education from last year, over 200 pages, included a fantasy list for parents #1 was smaller elementary level classes, longer school day and reinstatement of foreign language at elementary grades.

Vote on state testing for 2017 will be MCAS 2.0 which is combination of PARCC and current MCAS test. Arlington will decide in December about what we will do for this Spring (2016). They want feedback on this decision so send an email if you have an opinion. Potential for computer based testing as soon as this spring.

Minuteman Rebuild: 30% of high school pop. from town go to Minuteman Vocational Technical High School. The proposal to rebuild this school is pending and therefore debt exclusion for town portion upcoming. 16 towns need to approve, but those other towns pay much less than Arlington. Governing structure is a mess. This is a pending issue.

4. Principal's Report - Mark McAneny – Good to have Jennifer Suisse here tonight. Principals need to respect and support the district and teachers. Budget meeting with administrators – full time Kindergarten teaching assistants are always an issue and its funding constantly competing with funds for new classroom teachers all together. District goal to reduce class size and further professional development. Kindergarten is evaluating what percent kindergarten coming in with limited letter sound proficiency, 1<sup>st</sup> grade reviewing math, 2/3 grades reviewing writing and spelling skills, grades 4/5 writing rubrics (Lucy Caulkins curriculum). Collaborative process between Mark and teachers to go over grade level development goals. One is grades to have more active updated websites (updated weekly). In January Mark will present last year's MCAS results and how relates to goals. New school website hopefully released in January. Mark getting married on Dec11th he'll be out Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>

5. Teacher Update - Ali Lydon - Thanks for the recent PTO checks! It's nice to be appreciated. Great to be at a school where parents are so invested in community and school. Teachers working really hard this year, as always. Conference sign-up process was a last minute news item for teachers, so apologies if it was haphazard. New report card style for grades 3-5, new to teachers and school so transition.

6. Garden Update - Wendy Johnecheck presented to PTO an update of Bishop School Garden recent activities. Last night was the first hard frost. Celebrate what we have accomplished this past year. April 2015 land granted for three-year pilot, May 1<sup>st</sup> ground broken, Spring last year transitioned from task force to teacher garden team. Summer 2015 eight bishop families maintained the garden, also teachers attending curriculum trainings. Goals of project were to provide outdoor classroom space, develop lesson plans linked to curriculum, grow fresh food appropriate for each grade level. Recent lessons: "I Spy" game for Kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade link corn to Wampanoag's "maize", 5<sup>th</sup> grade evaluating best designs for composting bins (engineering/design/math). Open garden time on Wednesdays, garden educator comes opens gardens and kids can come in during recess. There are still parent and family volunteer opportunities – looking for additional garden committee members. Contact Wendy Jonecheck if you want to volunteer [wjohnecheck@yahoo.com](mailto:wjohnecheck@yahoo.com), [bishopgardenandcompost@gmail.com](mailto:bishopgardenandcompost@gmail.com)

7. Treasurers Update – Renata Thomas gave a financial update. Top items, Bishop play is open and a lot of registration money coming in, half fee paid to director and assistant director (new this year). \$1500 cleared from Pumpkin sale, spirit sales up this year, almost \$5700 raised from Walk-a-thon, Original Works raised just over \$1400.

8. Co-President's report - Rosemary Foster – Holiday Help is the PTO's December community initiative. Local families in need ask for gifts, school matches Bishop families to make donations. Sign-up genius will be posted in mark's newsletter gifts in by December 10<sup>th</sup>. First science night held last year was so successful it will now be an annual community event sponsored by the PTO. This year format will remain same, student designed poster projects (last year 35 students participated in posters) and parent led demonstrations. Looking for parent volunteers to run demonstrations and come up with new ideas. Scheduled for February 24<sup>th</sup>, the Wednesday after school vacation. Rosemary Foster will take the lead and Ali Lydon wants to have 5<sup>th</sup> graders more involved this year.

9. Room Parent Coordinator - Katherine Reisz-Hanson reported that there are a lot of lost and found items. Looking for a parent volunteer to help display items over the conferences. During conferences PTO provides snacks and dinner for teaching staff.

10. Upcoming events:

- PTO craft fair December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Thursday at KofC 1<sup>st</sup> grade led event. Sign up genius will be in newsletter. 5:30-9pm small fundraiser for PTO
- Jen Badua – Movie Night is a community event that kindergarten parents organize, date January 8<sup>th</sup>, parents should remember that this is not a drop off event. A lead Kindergarten volunteer is needed. Movie TBD
- Bishop Night Out scheduled for January 29<sup>th</sup>, held at Common Ground, parents and some teachers. Fun event to build community. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class event also needs parent lead.
- Next PTO meeting, Wednesday January 13<sup>th</sup> – Hope to see you then.