

## City-wide PTO Meeting

October 5, 2016 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Learning Commons, RHS

### Goals:

- 1) Foster effective communication between the school department and parents
- 2) Provide a forum to discuss and address concerns/questions

### Agenda:

- Introductions (5 min)
- District Goals (Dianne Kelly)

Dianne shared the 3 overarching themes that were highlighted in last year's work with parents, teachers, staff and students. She shared the 3 themes and district goals for this year. The work on Assessment and Grading was discussed as parents raised concerns that grading is not standardized from teacher to teacher or across grades or even schools. Dianne and Danielle shared the future work of the Grading subcommittee as one step in a multiyear process as we look to examine our policies, grading practices and beliefs.

Next steps: Updates throughout the year on Assessment committee work.

- MCAS/PARCC Results (Danielle Mokaba)

Danielle shared some brief highlights of the PARCC/MCAS scores for the district and overall trends.

- Recess (Barbara Shea)

Discussion of recess and PE time at the Whelan School. Areas of concern brought up by parents included lack of unstructured "free play" time during the extended school day, students sitting out as a form of discipline during physical education class, and silent time during lunch. Teachers present shared idea that "chew time" was there to ensure students had the opportunity to eat quietly and safely and occurred only in the last 5-10 minutes of the 30 minute lunch block.

Next steps: Dr. Kelly will connect with Principal Flynn to share concerns and will attend the next WHE PTO meeting.

- Transition from Gr. 2 to Gr. 3 (Barbara Shea)

Parents addressed the "jump" from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as being something they were not expecting. Discussion of expectations for homework, requirements vs recommendations for work at home on programs like Achieve, Xtra Math, Fastt Math etc. Teachers present shared that these are

recommendations not requirements and should focus on the programs about the subjects in which their children need the most help. Parents were encouraged to seek out child's teacher for advice/support if homework is observed to take hours.

Next Steps: Focus the March PTO Seminar on transitions at all grade levels.

- Focus for future meetings (whole group discussion)
  - Growth mindset (will be focus for part of November PTO Seminar)
  - High school building project updates, Lincoln AC, Garfield roof and boilers
  - Food service/Aramark –food quality & breakfast (this will be focus of January PTO Seminar)
  - Cleaning company
  - Penmanship
  - Middle School Lottery
  - School Calendar
- Open forum

Bathrooms at RHS –Parent brought forth concern that bathrooms are locked in between classes resulting in long lines and not enough time for students to go. Parent also expressed concern that teachers don't let them go either or let them go only during certain times and it is a cause for concern.

Next steps: Dianne will address this with RHS administration and get back to the parent.

RTA members present led by Jayne Bonito shared information about the history of the RTA contract and religious holy days in response to the recent school committee meeting discussion on the calendar. Mrs. Bonito shared that Good Friday is one that many of the membership observe and this has been a concern all along. The line in the contract about paid religious days is one that has been discussed in contract negotiations previously and is something that will need to be discussed in that forum. Parents stated that safety is their primary concern on those days and it is necessary that safety be at the forefront of our conversations moving forward as decisions are made about what to do on that day.

Next steps: The School Committee will consider various options for how to deal with the April 14<sup>th</sup>. Update at next PTO meeting.