

Newton South School Council Meeting Minutes  
November 30, 2010

Attendees: Lucia Dolan, Chip DiMarco, Lisa Rucinski, Joel Stembridge, Barry Wanger, Deena David, Liz Richardson, Ariel Kaluzhny, Marcia Okun, Jeanne O'Reilly, Robert Parlin, Ryan Augusta, Mona Hochberg, Janet Wertheimer, and Charles Myott.

**I: Principal's Update**

Recent News: Fun and successful pep rally day before Thanksgiving. Today, there had been a Lock and Hold drill, which went well. Sometime in the spring a Lock, Hold and Secure drill will take place.

In response to a question regarding what issues the student senate is involved in, Joel said he would provide us with such information. He said a current major initiative is the development of a system for students to give feedback to faculty. He said he would find a way for Council to be more informed of what the Senate is working on.

**II: Safety Letter**

The Council reviewed the draft letter written to Mayor Warren. Council discussed that although the traffic committee will ultimately deal with the tasks, it should go to the Mayor first so he knows the school's needs. Suggested changes to the letter is that the recent accidents have occurred as well as the fact that traffic at drop off has been a problem for many years. Members suggested that we may want to ask for speed bumps to be installed and all agreed it would be beneficial for a traffic engineer to come to the school and suggest improvements. The issue of whether residents on the street need to sign off on any changes was raised, as apparently for unknown reasons, the South area is not a school zone.

The letter will be re-worked by Barry and re-sent around for members' approval.

**III: Outstanding Renovation List**

Liz and Deena had created a list of construction needs to be presented to the School Committee. The list was categorized as to Instructional Items and Safety/Security/Energy. The goal was for the Committee to prioritize the items before it went to the Committee.

Moved to the top of the priority list were: fields/exterior toilet rooms/stands/press box; athletic storage; field house stage and chair; exterior lighting; phones for math, science and theater departments; and the signage/lines on parking lot (also part of letter to Mayor as discussed above).

It was decided that the categories of the list should be changed to "equity" and "non-completed." The equity issues are technology; performing arts renovations in the music room and TV production facility. The non-complete list sends a message that workmanship at the school has been lax in some areas and this needs to be addressed, such as the exterior lights and certain bathrooms. The other items on the list are considered a lower priority.

The list will be re-worked by Liz and Deena in collaboration with Joel for the next meeting.

#### **IV: 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration**

The original plan of a big celebration involving alumni and taking place in January has been scrapped in favor of a smaller party for current students held on a Friday in March. The PTSO and the senior class will plan events and projects.

#### **V: Alumni Development Program**

Joel said the Administration is considering an alumni development program modeled after Boston Latin School's very successful program where alumni do mentoring, tutoring, college counseling and job counseling, and fundraising. Deena is taking the lead on this.

#### **VI: Reducing Student Stress**

A subcommittee of school council members, teachers, students, guidance counselors and other will be formed to develop a program dealing with student stress and resilience. The subcommittee will begin by meeting with relevant people at Lexington and Needham high schools, which have had programs for years. The subcommittee should be between 12-16 people with 5 of them being students. Committee members who are interested in being part of the subcommittee should contact Barry. Barry, Marci, and Joel will meet to review the names of those interested and select a chair. There will probably be two meetings a month during J block.

The subcommittee's task will be to find the best practices that can be made into policy at South. Since there is a limit as to how much stress can really be reduced, the objective should be helping students develop resiliency in how they face the normal stresses of high school. The subcommittee will be charged with identifying key areas of stress and recommending appropriate strategies that would be supportive to the needs of students.

Submitted by: Mona Hochberg