

Newton South School Council
January 24, 2012

Attending: Joel Stemberidge, Marci Sapers, Ryan Augusta, Deborah Linder, Marcia Okun, Jeanne O'Reilly, Tom Lee, Charlie Myette, Ariel Kaluzhny, Eleanor Richard, Deena David, Liz Richardson, Linda Green, Sue Flicop, Lisa Rucinski, Janet Werheimer, Zuzana Skvarkova

Principal's Update

Maintenance of effort budget (no cuts) for 2012-2013. Projected +45 student population should = increase in staffing to maintain current class sizes.
Student population currently at 1700, within next three years, projections show close to 2,000 students.

Statement of interest submitted for special State program funding science labs. (Massachusetts School Building Authority)
Current South labs undersized. State decisions to be made in March/April with projected Sept. completion date for labs.

Student midterm comments were sent home via the Parent Portal. Midterm grades to be sent via Parent Portal. South will track who opened grades and house secretaries will contact families as needed. South saves \$800 per mailing. PTO will look into adding messages, previously sent thru mailings, onto Parent Portal.

Newton Community meeting tonight at NNHS 7 pm with Dr. Fleishman to address recent happenings at Zervas.

Stress and Resiliency Update

South junior Zuzana Skvarkova presented the results of her survey of 561 South students on student stress. Over 80% of students felt 'stupid' (did not take enough AP or honors courses, 'inadequate effort') and felt stress affected their school performance. Over 90% replied that school/grades were the leading cause of their stress and that a 'less stressed' atmosphere' would lead to happier students.

A list of suggestions Zuzana included was discussed and compared with the list of suggestions from the last school council meeting.

Principal Stemberidge highlighted his top four:

- Homework-free weekends/nights/vacations;
- Revise ½ days,
- Allow for more fun and relaxed yet structured shorted schedules;
- Professional Alumni or parents or community members speak as part of a panel to share how they got to their positions, many different ways to get to

great jobs, etc.; Major assignment assigning and grading protocol (clear to all w/ timely feedback)

It was agreed that:

- The guidance department will handle the college process suggestions
- Teachers Tom and Deborah will work on suggestions for setting clear teacher expectations, esp. around homework policies.
- Sue, Eleanor, Lisa, Marci, Ariel, and Lucia will sort thru the remainder of the list and determine which 3 to 4 suggestions to focus on.