

Newton South High School
School Council Minutes

9 March 2010

Members present: Joel Stembridge, Barry Wanger, Jane Starkman, Debbie Linder, Ryan Augusta, Lisa Rucinski, Marci Sapers, Eleanor Wood, Ariel Kalushny, Eleanor Richard, Prevenya Harris, Mona Hochberg, Marcia Okun, Bob Parlin, Jeanne O'Reilly, David Deutsch, Chip DiMarco, Deena David, Charlie Myette

Guest: Parent, Mrs. Green (Sorry, no first name.)

Introductions

Public Comment

Invitation for public comment, no comments offered.

Budget Update – Joel Stembridge

The proposed budget does not impact any teachers but multiple administrative/supportive staff positions will be affected. Proposed reductions were designed to have the least impact on students. Reductions would be felt more by the adults as the workload will not decline, but there would be fewer adults in non-teaching capacities.

Liz Richardson stated that much of the \$1.8 million of the budget increase was dependent on state aid that is expected, but has not yet been committed.

Deena David added that there would be a rally at the state house on March 23 to lobby for funding for communities and schools

Both high schools will reduce assistant principals by 3.0 FTE. 2.0 FTE vice-principals will be added as a 12-month position with supervisory duties. The executive secretary position will be reduced and a 0.2 secretary, level 2, will be added.

Debbie Linder suggested that student transcripts could be sent digitally to colleges, leading to improved efficiency. Stembridge said that IT would be addressing that solution.

Liz Richardson recommended that the principal look into equity of stipends based on ratios, not just raw numbers.

Ariel Kalushny pointed out that Section C in the budget has a 0.6 error in FTEs. Stembridge said that it might be a difference due to equity or just an error. Another example the principal gave for equity was that 0.7 library reduction would be 0.5 at South and 0.2 at North.

Lisa Rucinski made a point of clarification regarding the athletic budget increase. It did not represent an athletic fees increase, but a budget increase based on transportation, supplies, equipment, etc.

Marcia Okun expressed her concern that the 0.2 library reduction would impact hours of availability during lunch and J-block. This has happened in the past.

Deena David remarked that the PTSO had received the budget and would be willing to advocate to the School Committee regarding items of inequity. She then asked if there were items that members had concerns with.

Stembridge stated that there should be equity regarding technology between the two high schools, as Newton North's new facility will have improved technological capabilities. He pointed out that elementary schools have taken the hardest hit in the budget process. Debbie Linder stated that she was glad to hear that equity with elementary schools is being recognized and acknowledged by the principal.

Stembridge reviewed three most likely resources for revenue streams this year. Funding through an early morning drop-off program, cost savings via cafeteria restructuring, and state aid. There was also a possibility of a slight hike in athletic fees. Eleanor Wood asked if anyone is excluded if they cannot afford the fee. It was clarified that students in need are granted financial waivers through the athletic department. Mora Hochberg asked if it is possible to institute fees for other programs, such as art.

Ryan Augusta asked when the budget proposal would be completed. That date is currently April 5th, but since the status of state aid is still uncertain, it could be later. Deena David pointed out that the Board of Alderman votes on budget after it has been approved by the School Committee.

Working Groups

Stembridge updated the council on Working Groups formed to address learning and achievement gaps.

- After School Programs
- In-School Support Options
- School-wide Best Practices
- Achievement/Scholars Program

He informed council that these groups will report back in May. He also asked for input on initiatives and ideas from the council. Mona Hochberg remarked that she was in favor of the in-school ideas. Liz Richardson proposed that students receive credit for community service and/or participation in outside programs. Students who currently work as aides in Science, English, Math, etc. do receive credit. Lisa Rucinski stated that she thought that having the achievement gap as a main goal was a good idea and that she thought that all students could benefit from this type of programming. Marcia Okun stated that Directed Studies as they are currently set up are not effective: The sizes and times do not work well and in-school supports should apply across curriculum levels and grades. Stembridge stated that North has large and small Directed Studies. The large ones work well with students who do not need much help or supervision (independent learners.) The small groups work well for those students who are in need of help and direction.

By-Laws

Marci Sapers presented a general overview of minor By-Laws updates. Most were grammar or structure based. The one significant clarification/addition was that the Principal would appoint a member when a vacancy is created during the year.

The vote to accept the By-Laws was unanimous.

Submitted by Charlie Myette, 19 March 2010.