

**Newton South High School PTSO
May 30, 2013, Meeting
Minutes**

In attendance: Betsy Blagdon, Ethel Downey, Jamie Chaloff, Joel Stembridge, Nina Levin, Lori Lass, Bonnie Barber, Joseph Scozzaro, Joan Hayes, Bruce Henderson, Nancy Mann, Mara Nislick, Jack Rice, Jo-Louise Allen, Faith Paul

Topic of Discussion	Action Taken or Needed
Welcome and Introductions	
Highlights of the 2012-13 School Year – Lori Lass and Betsy Blagdon	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful membership drive resulted in level year-to-year numbers • Many thanks to Bonnie Barber and the hospitality committee for a wonderful group of events • The directory was published and distributed, thanks to Mara Nislick and others. • Shannon Smith and the grounds committee were thanked for the new entrance and for recruiting the Mt. Ida football team to weed the courtyard • Stephe Fleck (newsletter) and Bruce Henderson (website) were acknowledged and thanked for their dedicated work – and for continuing to raise the bar for all of us • The electronic mailing list is also being used for the library and guidance newsletters and for the principal's letters – thanks! • Thanks to Bruce for adding the athletic calendar to the website • The override passed this year, so there will be a bit more funding for the schools • The potluck was fairly well attended, but perhaps next year we should remind parents that they can stay and that this 	

<p>might be a nice opportunity to talk with the teachers in a more relaxed environment</p>	
<p>Principal's Statement – Joel Stembridge</p> <p>This was a good year at NSHS. This week in particular has been both fun and worthwhile. There have been year-end programs for Springboard and Central (at NNHS) and for Southside (at NSHS). It was very moving to hear the seniors who have gone through these programs talk about how important they have been to the students' success.</p> <p>Highlights of the year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This year the goal at South was to pilot a program that will identify and support students who are struggling. This year it applied to 9th and 10th grades, for Ds and Fs only. Each week the teachers identify these kids, so that support can be brought in immediately. The support can include small study rooms, tutoring, peer tutoring – there are many kinds of interventions. There is subsequently a lot of follow-up and communication. The program was very successful. Next year, the program will move to include C students who are not working to potential. Note that not all Cs require intervention, just in cases where a student is not at his/her potential. <p>A question was asked about how the teachers feel about this new program. Joe responded that it is helpful but it is quite a bit of work. The weekly deadline is tight – but the kids do improve. There are some kinks to work out, but most students respond to intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This year there were 4 no-homework weekends. Students and parents enjoyed them. There were some	

<p>scheduling issues with the religious holidays in the fall and then all the snow days. It is possible that next year Brown and Oak Hill will have the same no-homework weekends.</p> <p>Side note: The students are still asking the School Committee about fees (for parking and student activities). There is some resentment because they feel that this is merely a fundraising activity for the School Committee. On June 10 Joel and John Jordan are going before the School Committee to talk about the differences in activities between middle school and high school. (Middle school activities are run by adults for students; high school activities are run by students for students.) Participation is down and there are fewer start-up activities. There are lots of layers of complexity with this issue. For instance, we are in danger of losing the 'tidepools' at the school as students go off campus for amusement.</p>	
<p>Students' Report – Jack Rice</p> <p>Jack reported that the tables outside the auditorium are greatly appreciated, although the timing of their appearance was a bit of a puzzle. So long as the students are not horribly trashy, the rules about not eating there have been very slightly relaxed.</p> <p>Jack and RJ are graduating, so we will need new student reps. Joel reported that for next year's student representatives to the PTSO, the housemasters will probably pick 1 or 2 students from each house.</p>	
<p>Teachers' Report – Joe Scozarro and Ethel Downey</p> <p>Ethel reported that the library is implementing new electronic research tools to help with history reports. Easy Bib, in particular, makes</p>	

citations simple.

Thanks to Joel's generosity, the library now has a shrink-wrap machine; this has helped with the art exhibits in the library.

The Alumni Awards night for the Newton Schools Foundation was held at South, And the library, which was transformed for the evening, became the VIP area.

The library is hoping to have a "listening lunch" later in June – this is like an 'open mic' activity, where people bring a lunch and listen to student musicians. The students are organizing it.

Ethel went to Wellesley HS to learn more about their e-book program (Overdrive).

Both teachers agree we need more technology in the library.

Joe reported that the Faculty Council and the South Senate meet regularly and come up with policy ideas, which they pass on to Joel. The homework-free weekend was such an idea.

The Faculty Council is discussing with Guidance potential modifications to the way annual student appraisals are handled.

Treasurer's Report – Nina Levin and Betsy Blagdon

- The non-profit status application is still pending. Nina has sent another letter to the IRS. She will continue to work on it through year end. Because of sequestration (and other troubles), the IRS is working slowly.
- Discussion of the P&L followed. She noted that donations are lower than

<p>previously; PayPal fees are higher than previously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Book Sale showed a \$2,000 profit. <p>Betsy moved that PTSO dues be increased from \$50 to \$60 per family. The motion was approved.</p>	<p>Note: PTSO membership material should be amended for fall 2013 to show new rate.</p>
<p>Grants Committee Update – Nancy Mann</p> <p>This year’s budget was between \$17,000 and \$20,000. We were able to fund most projects. Sue Kirshenbaum will be the next Grants Committee chair. Betsy Blagdon and Faith Paul have joined the committee.</p>	
<p>Committee Reports – various</p> <p>Mara Nislick, Directory: She is working on the next directory. Brown and Oak Hill information is coming this month. We are going on-line next year so that parents will be able to do their own updates. All the schools will be doing this, so the process should become somewhat simpler.</p> <p>Bonnie Barber, Hospitality: The teacher appreciation breakfasts were great. The on-line volunteer signups are making it easier to get the right number of volunteers and get them in the right places. We need to make sure that we get different people, not just the same people signing up time after time.</p> <p>Joan Hayes, SouthFest: Plans are proceeding well. There are sufficient volunteers and funding, although they could use some more clean-up volunteers.</p>	
<p>PAC Liaison Report – Jo-Louise Allen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She wrote a Special Ed FAQ for the website • There is a group at Brown called FOCUS, 	

<p>which is helping high-functioning Asperger's kids. They are hoping to move this sort of thing to South as a new way to include these kids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program called Connections for 18 to 22 year olds, which is currently at both high schools, will be consolidating at North. There will be a bigger cohort and better opportunities for the kids • She is working on a wide range of issues, including questions about transcripts for SpecEd kids and handicap parking 	
<p>New Board Member for Next Year</p> <p>Betsy moved that Faith Paul be elected as Treasurer for next year. The motion was approved, and Faith was voted in as Treasurer.</p>	
<p>Farewell</p> <p>Joan Hayes, Nina Levin, and Nancy Mann are retiring from the PTSO. They were presented with farewell flowers and our heartfelt gratitude for their many years of devoted service to the PTSO. They will be missed.</p>	

Newton South PTSO Meeting Agenda
May 30, 2013, 7 p.m.
Newton South Library

- I. Highlights of 2012-2013 school year – Betsy and Lori
- II. Principal's Statement – Joel
- III. Students' Report – Jack and RJ
- IV. Teachers' Report
- V. Treasurer Update – Nina and Betsy
 - Status of non-profit application
 - Budget Feedback
 - Summary of donation made to Principal's Fund
 - Recommendation to increase dues from \$50 to \$60 per family
- VI. Grants Committee Update – Nancy
- VII. Committee Chairs' Reports (all committees present)
- VIII. PAC Liaison Report – Jo-Louise Allen
- IX. Directory Update – Betsy
- X. New Board Members for Next Year

PTSO meeting

May 30, 2013

2012 – 2013 Report

We had three official meetings with Joel and Kathleen. Out of 5, 2 were canceled, one due to the school shootings in Newtown, CT, and one due to a major blizzard.

We reviewed how students can apply for accommodations for SAT / ACT
This information is now included in the FAQs – copy attached

We created FAQ on the Newton South PTSO website. This is a new resource that hadn't been included on the web before.

We discussed new and existing programs in special education at South.
Possibility of FOCUS "like" next year at South. FOCUS is a program at Brown Middle School. FOCUS stands for: Furthering flexibility, Optimizing executive functioning skills, Cultivating emotional and sensory awareness, Understanding ourselves and others, and Strengthening social thinking.

Connections (18-22) moving to North, bigger cohort, better to operate out of one location, kids can socialize, go out in the community together, go to jobs, learn together.

Increase of .5 fte S/L specialist The new specialist will be split between Underwood and South.

Unanswered questions, to continue discussion in 2013-2014:

Many parents ask about South vs. North, whether special education is different or "better" at one high school or the other.

Parents are requesting information about "transcripts" sent to colleges, and if it is illegal to include special education programs on the transcript.

Sarah Ward, Executive Functioning guru, is speaking in Newton on November 7, 2013. PAC is looking for school auditorium because she will draw over 200 people. Newton South PTSO offered to host, but later found out that November 7th is already booked.

Parents are seeking services for bright students in Honors level and curriculum I who have executive function needs.

PTSO suggested I speak to Mike Cronin about HP parking spots at South and location of those spots.

Summer of 2013: Work with PTSO to set up a summer coffee for entering 9th grade parents to meet Joel and Kathleen. This year will be the 4th summer that we have offered this in addition to the coffees planned for any entering 9th grade parents.

Respectfully submitted, Jo-Louise Allen Special Education Liaison