Newton South High School PTSO

Minutes of the meeting of May19, 2015

Present: Betsy Blagdon, Emily Prenner, Faith Paul, Lori Lass, Robin Sherman, Liz Hiser, Ian Paul, David Weintraub, Kara Veley, Jenny Dolan, Jessica Sherman, Jo-Louise Allen, Helen Haley, Claudette Rowe

1. Principal’s Statement: Unfortunately the Principal was ill and was unable to make a statement.
2. Student Comments: The student representatives (Ian Paul, Jessica Sherman) stated that it has been a good year and that the students appreciated the PTSO pop up events, especially the hot chocolate. They also mentioned that the homework seemed more reasonable, but not necessarily the 30 minutes per subject per night when you factor in studying and projects.
3. Teacher Comments: David Weintraub and Jenny Dolan attended the meeting as representatives of the Faculty Council and reported that student stress has been their primary focus this year. They discussed two initiatives that have been discussed at the Faculty Council meetings—discontinuing weighted grades and limiting the number of honors/AP classes that a student can take while at NSHS. Both initiatives have support from faculty, although the representatives said that students were against both. The current policy regarding taking several honors/AP courses is that if a student is taking more than three, there needs to be a conversation with the faculty members and guidance to discuss the requirements of the classes and to make sure that stress does not become too much of an issue. Attendees suggested other matters that may cause student stress including weekend and evening emails from teachers with additional assignments, high teacher absences, and non-honors electives bringing down the GPA of students who take primarily honors classes, thus discouraging participation in these classes.
4. 2014-2015 Summary:
5. Approval of minutes from November 2014 meeting. Faith made motion to approve, Abby seconded it, and it was approved unanimously.
6. Success at South—This year the STEAM lab was the beneficiary of the annual targeted fundraiser. To date, we have raised almost $20,000 to buy equipment including a 3D printer, an interactive white board, and DNA kits. This will be matched by the PTSO for a total of $40,000.
7. Yearly recap: The PTSO has sponsored 3 coffees, 1 breakfast, and 1 lunch for teachers, parent coffees, the directory, a community dinner, SouthFest, and the emotional well-being “pop-up” student events, as well as identified parents work on a variety of hiring committees.
8. Volunteer opportunities: There are still several volunteers opportunities for parents to fill including newsletter editors, student liasons, and shadows for SouthFest, Co-president, and hospitality chair.
9. Treasurer’s Report: Faith presented the year-do-date financial review and presented the 2015-16 budget. Ian made the motion to approve, Liz seconded it, and it was approved unanimously.
10. Grants Committee Update: Betsy discussed that additional changes to the application process have led to more requests. 21 requests were received, 15 were approve, 1 withdrew. The entire process is online, and reimbursements are very quick.
11. PTSO Officers for 2015-2016 School Year:

Co-Presidents: Emily Prenner, Helen Haley [info@newtonsouthptso.org](mailto:info@newtonsouthptso.org)

Treasurer: Christine Murphy [treasury@newtonsouthptso.org](mailto:treasury@newtonsouthptso.org)

Secretary: Robin Sherman [Secretary@newtonsouthptso.org](mailto:Secretary@newtonsouthptso.org)

The slate of officers was announced. Betsy made the motion to approve, Abby seconded it, and it was approved unanimously.

1. Special Education Update: Jo-Louise discussed two new programs at NSHS that will be enacted for the next school year.
2. New Business:
   1. Claudette Rowe announced that Educatius International is looking for host families to host international students between the age of 14-18 who will be attending NSHS next year. This is a wonderful opportunity to make lifelong friends and truly assist a young person with his/her educational goals. There is a stipend for families who participate. For more information, contact [claudetterowe.educatius@gmail.com](mailto:claudetterowe.educatius@gmail.com).
   2. A goodbye and thank you to Besty Blagdon, Co-president, and Faith Paul, Treasurer, for a job incredibly well done!

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Sherman, PTSO Secretary

Attachments:

Financial year in review/proposed 2015-6 Budget

1. Treasurer’s Update: Faith updated the year-to-date fundraising information. The Community Dinner raised $2,743 (net) for Success@South. The main S@S fundraising drive will occur later in the fall. This fall’s membership drive raised about $48,000, which is about $950 more than last year. In general, income and expenses are performing about as expected. Faith noted that much of the library renovation occurred over the summer, so those expenses appear in this year’s financials. However, the funds for this work were raised last year, so these costs are completely covered by last year’s S@S campaign. We anticipate having the full amount budgeted available for this year’s STEAM project, assuming the S@S campaign is successful.
2. Grants Committee Update: Betsy said that $9000 has been distributed to the departments and there is $8500 left for individual teacher grants. The application form has been streamlined. All teachers are encouraged to apply.
3. PTSO Officers for the 2014-2015 School Year:
4. Co-Presidents: Betsy Blagdon, Emily Prenner [info@newtonsouthtso.org](mailto:info@newtonsouthtso.org)
5. Treasurer: Faith Paul [treasury@newtonsouthptso.org](mailto:treasury@newtonsouthptso.org)
6. Secretary: Robin Sherman [secretary@newtonsouthptso.org](mailto:secretary@newtonsouthptso.org)
7. PTSO Committees: The Community Dinner was very successful. It was a nice way for parents to meet and talk. Maybe next year there will be pairing of volunteers so that all of the hosts do not have to live so close to the school.
8. New Business: Al Manditch (Parent) spoke about his concerns with the Athletic Department. Emily advised, on behalf of the PTSO, that the PTSO does not have a role in this conflict and that Mr. Manditch continue working with Newton Public Schools and official channels to address his concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Sherman, PTSO Secretary

Attachments:

P & L Year to date