

Chenery PTO Meeting

Feb. 1, 2018, 6:30-8:00pm

Chenery Middle School

Board members in attendance: Barbara Bulfoni, Laurie Bufano, Anna Freitag, Deishin Lee

Meeting minutes taken by: Deishin Lee

1) Welcome - Barbara Bulfoni, Laurie Bufano

2) Special Guest: Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent

- Presented ongoing achievement gap study, and work on social emotional learning.
- Conditions under which people learn better.
- Survey data indicates different perceptions of Chenery experience by students of different backgrounds. In particular, African American/Black students' experience at Chenery is worse than others.
- Concrete steps are being taken to address cultural proficiency and achievement gap in classroom.

Mike McAllister

- Presented what is happening at Chenery on social emotional learning.
- Developing strategies (in classrooms and school in general) for developing cultural proficiency.
- Ongoing initiative at Chenery to continuously improve cultural proficiency.

Q&A:

Q: Great idea of surveying students. Does training put teachers in role play?

A: Want to get more conversation around the topic. Toolkit designed to be used in meetings -- takes 10 minutes.

Q: Name some topics in cultural proficiency course? Example of sentence starters?

A: Book by Z. Hammon (?) -- awareness of self, build relationship in classroom.

A: Understanding, fluent in another culture? Go to someplace where you are not in the majority culture. Not just reading a textbook -- go somewhere (alone) and experience being in the minority culture.

A: Example of a way to deal with provocative word: *It offends me when I hear ...*

Go back later and check in with student: *I wanted to check back in to see how you are doing...*

Before sensitive topic in class, check in with student: *I am going to talk about ... just wanted to check in ...*

A: Every day spend a few minutes talking to student about something other than class material.

3) Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes

Meeting minutes approved.

4) PTO Updates

a) Budget review

- Exceeded fundraising goal by \$4000.
- Spending on target

- Directory fundraising

b) Enrichment

- 2 programs for 5 & 6 grades already (simple machines, electricity show, greek mythology)
- 2 more programs coming for 5&6 grades
- Author series - visiting author program for each of the 4 grades.
- Other programs -- please see website

Q: Author programs during school day?

A: Yes -- all kids benefit.

c) PTO After School Clubs - winter session

- 8 week sessions
- 18 clubs, but 3 did not meet minimum enrollment = 15 clubs running
- 185 enrollments in 15 Clubs
- 19 students requested financial assistance
- 27 seats not filled

To do: Send out dates for Spring session.

5) Principal's Updates

- Unanimous vote for 7-12 grade configuration for new Belmont High School - projected 2215 students
- 4th grade will be added to Chenery, 4-6 grades, approx 1000 students
- Design: major addition, minor renovation, keep field house and pool
- Belmont anticipates increase of 100 students per year ongoing for near future.
- Projected cost of project: \$313.2 M, reimbursement ~\$84M from state of Massachusetts.

Q: Teacher reactions?

A: Lots of warning, teachers were prepared. Need to think about integrating 4th grade into Chenery. Opportunity to create culture of school.

Q: Advice to interacting with other town residents regarding BHS project: Remain calm and try to use persuasion, emphasize cost per student, cost per square foot, positive impact for children...

Q: Need new teachers? How to fund?

A: Yes, will need more staff. Need to message. Need more than teachers: nurses, technology specialists, etc. Parallel path for capital raised for building and increase in operating expenses for more resources.