

Newton Middle School PTO January 2022

General Meeting Minutes

Mr. O'Tremba talked about enrollment. His goal is to keep class sizes to 28-32 students and overall enrollment at 800 or less.

Open enrollment from the first window accepted all the students who met the criteria for open enrollment. That puts the school at 790 students for next fall. He is aware of several students returning to Newton due in part to the new building, but in large part to the academic growth scores achieved by the school, even with the school operating under the hybrid model last year.

The district is doing a new staffing formula for the next academic year. The district currently doesn't consider any types of modifiers when determining staffing numbers but beginning next fall the district will consider things like students with IEPs, numbers of students receiving free and reduced lunch, etc. Hopefully we will gain 4-5 new staff members under the new model. Staffing has generally been cut in the past, at least since Mr. O'Tremba has been at Newton.

Staffing numbers will hopefully be in place in the next two weeks or so.

This year Mr. O'Tremba has routed additional staffing to mental health, but the counselors are still swamped, and the pandemic and life changes continue to impact children's mental health.

Out of District open enrollments are limited, and people have been attempting to open enroll even past the two windows.

6th grade for next fall is capped at 270 students.

Open staff positions may be posted around spring break. Cherry Creek additionally posts later in the year compared to other districts.

This year Newton's growth came in large part from other schools in the district. Mr. O'Tremba worked with the district to ensure fairness in the process of teachers moving schools, and to make the process more favorable for the teachers.

There may be some shifting in the Language Arts Department in the coming year due to retirements.

There was a question about teacher dissatisfaction. Mr. O' Tremba reports any teacher dissatisfaction came from the transition to the new building, similar to the struggles one faces when moving to a new house. Teachers aren't expressing dissatisfaction with Covid procedures.

There was discussion about the Recognition Assemblies that took place this month, and parents generally enjoyed the process. The school did have to make a change to have the ceremonies in the gym due to the number of people in attendance, but everything went well.

A concern has been brought forth from the community about the idea of nominations for Code Awards being based on the concept one boy and one girl not being inclusive. Mr. O'Tremba clarified that it isn't gender based, but it was insinuated incorrectly in the 7th grade assembly.

Newton will continue to give out awards for not just Honor Role (grade based), but for other strengths students show, such as math growth.

An update on the Spelling Bee - Mr. O'Tremba was impressed by the group of contestant friends and families and how the students all cheered all the contestants on, not just the ones they came to support.

Shred a Thon Update

Leslie shared that this year's Shred a Thon will take place Saturday April 23rd (around Earth Day) - the question was asked about the parking lot changing before that day, and it is unlikely. Arapahoe Credit Union is handling all the logistical set up, as they have in year's past.

Leslie asked those to share information about the event in their neighborhood newsletters as appropriate.

Sandra mentioned that in prior years a food truck was there and the credit union paid 50 percent off for people's food truck orders.

PTO Changes

Jessica Fann has had to leave her position as VP for next year, and we are on the look out for a new VP for next year. If anyone is interested, they should reach out to the board. Tiffany will continue as president.

Backpack Program - It's currently on hold. There just isn't space in the school for food to be stored. Brainstorming will take place about easier ways to support the families with food insecurity.

We generally budget around \$500 for the backpack program. Sandra will meet with Tiffany and Rebecca and talk about options, possible by providing grocery store gift cards instead of actual food.

Budget Update - Sandra Barnes

We are doing very well on fundraising. We are actually well ahead on fundraising for the year. The plan is still to fund our second commitment to the school for the cost of the new Fitness Lab.

Teacher grants have been paid out, and we were able to fund every teacher's request.

The PTO is still able to pay out on teacher supply requests.

The King Soopers and Amazon amounts are generating nice passive income.

Holiday Hand- Ups - we were able to provide \$100 Walmart Gift Cards to 15 Newton families in need, as identified by the staff.

Teachers enjoyed their Amazon gift cards for the holidays.

Holly will help coordinate and several board members will help with assembly for teacher appreciation candy vases.

We received additional funds for staff appreciation that will go towards May.

Joint PTO Scholarships - Every PTO contributes to scholarships which is then pooled district wide, and then teachers can apply for funds. We have made our contribution.

Spirit Baskets will be due soon, for the LPS Foundation. Every school donates a basket for a district wide auction. Tiffany might be able to reach out to the owner of Garden of the Paws, and we could go for a pet theme basket.

Next Year's Board Positions - Most have been filled. We still need to fill the Fundraising Communications position and Vice President positions. Reach out to any board member if you are interested.

Several board members will be reaching out to elementary schools before the end of the year to help make the transition to Newton a bit easier. Tiffany will follow up with Mr. O'Tremba to see if there will be tours for incoming families this year. We will be doing a Newton booth at feeder elementary schools Field Days to try and reach out to parents headed Newton's way.

Meeting was Adjourned at 11:10am.

Catherine Jones - Secretary

Attendees: Tiffany Hansen, Catherine Jones, James O'Tremba, Sandra Barnes, Jennifer Benedict