

PTO Meeting September 16, 2014

Welcome & Introduction PTO Board

Ian Kelly: Start of the School 2014-2015

Great start to school year- what stood out was how quickly teachers and students created classroom community and moved into learning.

New Faculty and Staff (slide)

Overview of all new staff (or staff changes to Ben-Hem)

Enrollment Update (slides)

In summary:

- ❖ Continuous increase of students K-4 from 1999-2014
- ❖ Increased 112 student in last 7 years.
- ❖ Growth at Ben-Hem is disproportionate to remainder of district.
- ❖ Ben-Hem and Brown are growing, whereas Johnson and Memorial are stagnant. Lilja is starting to rise.

Class size (slide)

Shows total number of students per grade and average per class

Enrollment Planning (slide)

- ❖ 3 different methodologies for planning.
- ❖ Natick uses census data, also evaluates new growth and development.

Enrollment Projections (slide)

- ❖ On average over the past 11 years we gain about 11 children per year. Based on this history we'll be at 657 for next year.
- ❖ In addition, the State projects 18 new students from Paper Mill housing project on Rt. 27.
- ❖ If this is accurate 675 is the new number for next year.
- ❖ However, Ian's estimate is 30 new students for the next year (in addition to historical 11 new students) giving us a projected total of 698.

Enrollment Projections (slide)

- ❖ **CAVEATs** There are certain things to bear in mind based on data projected/presented.

Enrollment Projections (slide)

- ❖ Assumptions

General Comments:

- ❖ No more space here at Ben-Hem.
- ❖ Some space has been re-configured.

- ❖ We're getting into the position of thinking about if we're getting more students, where will be put them? There has been discussion about getting modulars (mobile classrooms) for Ben-Hem or Brown. This would be a good thing- give us more space.
- ❖ If we were to get them, Ian would want them attached to the building vs. standing alone. Continue down main hallway, have them connected and just extend length of main hallway with new classrooms on either side of hallway.
- ❖ Currently there are 5 or 6 modular classrooms at Kennedy- as they've had similar growth. In addition, Kennedy is due to be re-built. Kennedy is first on the priority list to be replaced, with elementary school behind that however that's from ten years or more away.

Q. Is re-districting an option?

A. Yes however most other schools are fairly full. Could theoretically re-district students to Memorial however would be very small impact, and really not a viable long-term solution due to how quickly enrollments are growing.

Parent comment: We still need a long term plan to address our issues. Encourage people to attend school committee meetings. If you can't attend meetings, write a letter to share concerns, let them know what you're worried about, etc.

Q. Based on projections given, what is time frame we're looking at for modulars?

A. Encourage you to ask superintendent for total clarity however believes request will be on Town Meeting Warrant this spring. Use this summer for prepping site and open the following year 2016-2017

Q. Is there a building capacity limit?

A. Not one that we're necessarily near.

Parent Comment: Curious about what the future of education looks like re: size of classrooms. What are trends in education? Length of school day? Introduction of technology into learning?

Parent Comment: There will be a huge issue when current third grade class goes to Wilson. Across the board in Natick, third grade parents need to speak up. Same situation for current first grade.

Q. Has there been discussion about year-round school?

A. It is not a conversation that has been open

Ian would be happy to come back to future meeting(s) to respond to share and answer questions re: trends, etc. and also have Dr. Sanchioni come to future meeting to share his thoughts, etc.

Q. Are all children going into Paper Board districted to Ben-Hem?

A. Yes

A lot of these issues are front of mind for Ian & Ben. While they don't have direct control over them they certainly are aware and concerned. Be sure to voice concerns to school committee and let them know what you're worried about.

Next School Committee Meeting:

September 22, Monday 7:15 PM. At this meeting, they will be voting on school start time. If you can't attend, you can always e-mail them. In addition, there is a time period for public speak.

Introduction of Kathy Wick- representing Cultural Arts Committee.

Cultural Arts operates on multiple levels- town-wide, state-wide and regional.

Bring in musicians, artists, etc. things that we typically don't have in curriculum

Typically there are two 'performances' per grade-level and also three all-school performances.

All-School:

Chinese acrobats to coincide with Chinese New Year

Percussion Band- all students will get to participate

4th grade:

Museum of Science- traveling science show

Wheelock College to see Shrek

3rd grade

Paul Revere historical Figure (correlated to field trip to Paul Revere House

Poet- Andrew Green

2nd Grade

Eugene Neelon

Also trying to get Earth Balloon

First Grade:

Impulse Dance- Gwendolyn the Dancing Pig

Martin Swinger- singer/songwriter- working curriculum into a song

Kindergarten:

Michael Glaser - Oceanographer

Tanglewood Marionettes

For anyone who's interested in getting involved- could use help. Each person takes a grade level and that's how they structure the support.

PTO 2014-2015**Major Objectives (slide)****School Supplies (slide)**

Change for the school this year. Really wanted to reduce number of times that we ask parents to spend money. Worked with Ian, and Ben to ensure that together we can cover this for parents.

Meeting Structure (slide)

Changes to future meetings- take only about 15-30 minutes for PTO Business.

Introducing Parent Speaker Series-

Future topics- hopefully for October meeting:

Anna Nolan Asst. Superintendent

Lice Prevention/Treatment

PTO Grant (slide)

There are grants available (due October 3) for initiatives that enhance education experience of students. More information available in Bulletin or web site.

Upcoming Events (slide)

- ❖ Family Picnic- Thursday September 18
- ❖ Natick High School Jazz Band Plays
- ❖ Spirit Shirt Contest

School Council

Three open School Council Positions. Deadline for those interested is this Friday. Paper information sheet went home.

Q. What is difference between school council & school committee?

A. School Council is focused on Ben-Hem- comprised of parents, administrators, etc. Discuss and vote on school specific issues. School Committee elected positions that serve all town issues.

Volunteer (slide)

There are plenty of ways for parents to get involved- whether just for an hour or more if you're interested in it. Ben-Hem community benefits a LOT from what we offer and really takes the help of all of those in community to make it happen successfully.

In addition to general communications, we're trying to find a technology chairperson for next year.

We're also looking for a person who would like to do marketing/public relations.

Seed to Harvest Chairperson- really integrate garden into school.

We're also looking for people to chair 4th grade committee- includes fun day, year books, 4th grade activities. Message will be going out by Friday to 4th grade parents.

Check PTO website for more information on all of the above: www.benhempto.org