

FRANKLIN PTO 04/06/10 GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Executive Committee Members in Attendance:

Tracy Soehle - President
Eva Zervos - Vice- President
Deb Rooney - Treasurer
Lisa Chedekel – Co-Secretary
Meiera Stern – Co-Secretary
Amy Kelly – Principal

Call to order at 7:10 p.m. and welcome by President Tracy Soehle

brief update on the budget and upcoming May 1st auction. The auction will hopefully generate a lot of income for the school, because so far this year fundraising is down considerably from last year.

Trisha Kelleher—Franklin's technology specialist and Gretchen Hollmer, kindergartekindergarten head of the fledgling technology committee gave a presentation about the state of Franklin's technology and where the committee hopes to be in the future.

Franklin currently ranks fourth from the bottom, among all Newton schools, in its computer to student ratio.

There are some positive technological things going on in the classrooms now. These are all a result of money from the PTO.

1. There are now fantastic document cameras that project just about any object within the classroom--a fabulous tool for sharing lesson plans, drawings, or even 3D objects with the entire class. (And it cuts down on the cost of xeroxing). These are known as ELMOs and there are one for every two classes at Franklin.
2. Each class now has a flip camera that can take videos and pictures
3. FasttMath and Type to Learn are great software that complement the curriculum and give the children important Math skills and teach them typing skills, respectively.

Trisha and Gretchen explained that the system has a grading system to rank the quality of the computers within the school, but that even the machines that earn a grade of A, can still be about 5 years old.

All sorts of problems are occurring in the classroom because of slow processing speeds of the mismatched mix of outdated machines. As a result the students and faculty are very frustrated, and valuable teaching time is spent waiting for technology that is simply not working the way it needs to in order to prepare our kids to enter the world of the 21st century.

The committee would like all those who are willing and able to join the school in its attempt to buy 5 new Apple laptops (macbooks) and one teaching cart per classroom.

It's important to stay with Apple because there are already too many discrepancies, operating system and the like without adding a mix of PCs. (The Newton schools employ Apple tech specialists, and the machines are very user friendly.)

The total cost for just one cart and one loaded laptop is about \$6000. Therefore, this is a major undertaking, and anyone who knows of ways to raise money including:

grants
corporate donations
private donations
or any other type of fundraising should come forward.

If you can help or know someone who can please contact Principal Amy Kelly. <Amy_Kelly@newton.k12.ma.us>

Principal Kelly then lead Principal's forum. She mentioned that next year's kindergarden enrollment is low compared to previous years, and that instead of losing a classroom, it will enable Franklin to have 2 kindergarden classes and one integrated classroom.

She also mentioned how wonderful it was to have parents come in to volunteer in the classrooms. If anyone is interested to help out in their kids' classes they are strongly encouraged to speak to their kids' teachers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Minutes taken by: Meiera Stern