

FRANKLIN PTO 5/7/09 GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Executive Committee Members in Attendance:

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

Invited guest – Amy Muldowney of Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center

Call to order at 7:10 p.m. and welcome by President Tracy Soehle, who announced that the PTO's annual auction in April had raised in excess of \$21,000 for PTO-supported school programs. Soehle also thanked Newton SERVES and the Pollution Solutions Club for a recent clean-up of the school grounds. She previewed upcoming events, including a Faculty Appreciation Lunch planned for June 2; Color Day June 4; and an end-of-year family picnic planned for June 18.

Soehle and Treasurer Rooney also invited Franklin parents and staff to participate in an online job survey program that will generate \$20 per participant for the Franklin PTO. Treasurer Rooney reported that this year's PTO budget was running in the black, as some late-year revenues roll in and expenses are tallied.

Principal Kelly told the crowd of about 30 parents and teachers that Franklin would be filling two school council seats in the fall. During her trademark "Principal's Forum," she answered a question about how the school was using technology, saying she'd like to "infuse classrooms" with as much technology as possible, integrated into the curriculum. Kelly also said current budget projections for next year indicate that Franklin's staffing will stay at the same level as this year. The latest figures show about 63 incoming kindergarteners.

Teacher representative Angie Galbraith made brief comments thanking Franklin parents for organizing the auction and other events.

Parent Liz Marshall spoke briefly about plans for a 'Boston Buddies' program that aims to link Franklin families from Boston and Newton through social events in both cities. She said two events – a bowling party and a potluck gathering – are being planned for later in May. She asked parents to watch for news on the Buddies program, which is still in the early stages.

Amy Muldowney of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center --

<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/> -- gave a detailed presentation on bullying and cyberbullying, in an effort to educate parents and staff about the various motives and means behind modern-day bullying, and to offer advice on dealing with the problem. Among the highlights: Boys and girls bully for different reasons, in different ways, with boy bullies in need of "empathy training" and girl bullies more likely to be grappling with how to channel their anger. She said in-school "hot spots" include the bus, lunchroom, playground and hallways – places where kids are in crowds without close adult monitoring.

Cyberbullying, she said, is a "new twist" to the problem – and the fastest-growing form of bullying in recent years. Cyberbullying ranges from kids creating fake web profiles of

each other, to “flaming” or posting messages on each other’s webpages. Muldowney recommended that parents monitor children’s computer use through “key loggers” or other means, and that they let their children know that they are being monitored. She said barring a child from using the computer altogether was an approach that could backfire. She also recommended that children under 15 not be allowed to “text” on phones. She advised that parents whose children are being bullied should teach them ways to avoid the situation or “walk away”; encourage them to report problems by explaining that “telling” is different than “tattling;” and work with school staff if the problems are repeated and causing fear or out-of-the-ordinary behavior in a child. She took several questions from parents.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. No votes were taken.
Minutes taken by: L. Chedekel