

## **FRANKLIN PTO 10/8/09 GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Executive Committee Members in Attendance:

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

Call to order at 7:10 p.m. and welcome by President Tracy Soehle, who gave an overview of PTO's role as a community-building and fundraising group and made a pitch for parents to get involved in committees.

New member named to PTO board: Meiera Stern, as co-secretary. Nominated by Chedekel; seconded by Rooney; by unanimous voice vote, she was named to a two-year term on the board.

Rooney gave an overview of this year's (2009-10) PTO budget, set at \$48,115 (based on expected revenue). She noted that some revenue estimates were on the conservative side, such as expected proceeds from the auction, and she noted that technology is being emphasized this year, with \$6,000 allocated to that account. The budget was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Principal Kelly invited people interested in filling two seats on the School Council to make brief presentations about why they want to serve. Four parents –Susan Boyer, Eleanor Ambrosio, Becka Smillie and Joan Schultz – spoke about their interest in serving. Kelly asked the four to submit brief written statements of their interest in serving, which she said she would circulate to the entire Franklin parent community, along with a ballot, in order to select the top two vote-getters for the two vacant seats.

Organizers of three committees – the Halloween Bash, School Appreciation Day, and Creative Arts & Sciences – briefly described their activities and encouraged parents to participate in the upcoming events.

The featured presentation of the evening was made by teachers Laura Lanfear, Eileen Keane, Angie Galbraith and Principal Kelly, who described three new programs being initiated at Franklin this year: Responsive Classrooms, Professional Learning Communities, and Response to Intervention.

- **Responsive Classrooms:** 33 Franklin staff members were trained in this approach during the summer by Principal Kelly. The program emphasizes a social curriculum, teaching cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control through “morning meetings” in classrooms that include greetings, sharing and a ‘morning message’ from the teacher to which students respond. Lanfear said the approach helps to teach social skills and create a positive classroom climate of inclusion and belonging. She said teachers already are reporting a decrease in disruptive behaviors in classrooms.
- **Professional Learning Communities:** 11 staff members from Franklin were trained in this approach over the summer. The program encourages educators to work collaboratively to achieve better academic results, by sharing student data with each other

regularly, so that teachers can help one another develop best practices. The program has teachers focus on four central questions: What is it we expect (children) to learn? How will we know when they have learned it? How will we respond when they don't learn? How will we respond when they already know it? Keane said teachers share student assessments regularly with one another and that the program has created a "collaborative culture" at Franklin.

■ **Response to Intervention:** Principal Kelly explained this new approach as a departure from past practice of pulling children out of classrooms during core instruction for special interventions. Instead, specialists come into classrooms during reading and math to assist the classroom teacher, working with children in small groups. The program entails close monitoring of student progress through frequent assessments, with teachers using those assessments to drive instruction and to ensure that children who need help in certain areas are receiving it. Kelly called the core instruction in literacy – 90-minutes a day – a "sacred block of time," in which all students remain in the classroom. She said the program is working well so far. There were several questions from parents about details of the program.

Principal Kelly then invited general questions from parents. There was a question about whether the lunch system was working smoothly, given the absence of lunch aides this year. Kelly said it was improving. Another parent asked about the Blue Zone, which is being monitored by a student from the Northeastern Co-op program. Another parent asked if a situation at recess involving a "fort" on Franklin's field had been addressed; Kelly said staff had been made aware of the problem, and that children were no longer playing in the fort.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Minutes taken by: L. Chedekel