

## **FRANKLIN PTO 12/1/09 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, who thanked organizers of School Appreciation Day, Halloween Bash and coat drive. Treasurer Rooney gave a brief overview of budget, highlighting a lag in PTO membership dues this year. Parents are encouraged to support the PTO by paying dues. Teacher representative Eileen Keane thanked parents who volunteered for School Appreciation Day for sprucing up the school and the grounds. Parent Noa Rensing said plans are underway for the annual Winter Coffeehouse -- on Feb 6 or 7, featuring singer Catie Curtis. She asked for help in finding a venue for the event.

Principal Kelly gave a detailed presentation on Franklin's most recent MCAS scores, which showed improvement in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math from 2008 to 2009. Some highlights: ELA scores for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, for example, show 33 percent of Franklin students are "advanced," compared to 27 percent in the Newton school district. 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA scores, meanwhile, show room for improvement – 15 percent of Franklin 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored "advanced," compared to 23 percent district-wide. In math, Franklin continues to fare well, placing 15<sup>th</sup> overall in the state.

Kelly said some of the difference between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA "advanced" and "proficient" pool (larger in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) is due to "tremendous difference" in the grade-level tests themselves. She also outlined a new effort to look at the rate of improvement in student scores across the years, which compares a student's individual progress to that of his/her academic peers across the state. Franklin students fared well – higher than the typical rate of improvement – under this measure.

Kelly outlined a number of initiatives underway at Franklin aimed at improving student achievement, including MCAS data conferences and professional learning communities, which have teachers sharing information, and "carefully crafted interventions" targeting individual students. She also said MCAS after-school programs are planned for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who need remedial help. She said that, unlike in past years, Franklin is making an effort to integrate MCAS-type skills into day-to-day instruction, instead of squeezing such preparation into an "MCAS prep month." She said teachers are working especially hard on increasing the volume and quality of writing by students.

"We made tremendous gains from 2008 to 2009," she said. "We're definitely moving in the right direction here."

She said parents can play a role by encouraging extended reading time for and with their children.

Kelly invited questions from parents, who asked about MCAS results, blue zone parking violators, and the H1N1 vaccines being offered through the school. Some parents also questioned why Franklin has only one literacy specialist – the same as other Newton schools with much smaller student populations – with some suggesting that Franklin deserves more than one specialist to account for the larger (400-plus) student body.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes taken by: L. Chedekel