

January 11th 2011 Citywide PTO Minutes

- Citywide member Kathleen McGourthy has graciously offered to create a Citywide PTO website, which will serve as a central repository for information on all PTO events, including fundraisers, open houses, meeting dates, etc. We would also post the Citywide minutes here. Religious, civic, and athletic groups throughout the city could then check this site to avoid conflicts when scheduling their own events.
- Superintendent Casey discussed the budget draft being presented at the 1/11 School Committee meeting. This budget adds one full time teacher at the High School and one full time special education teacher as part of a co-teach model at the elementary level. The FY2012 budget total of \$27,683,961 represents a balanced budget and an increase of 1.60% or \$436,323 compared to FY2011. Details of the budget can be found here....
http://www.melroseschools.com/msc/finance_and_facilities/FY2012_Budget_Draft_1_Presented_January_11_2011_R2.pdf
- It should be noted that the budget does not reflect pending grants or the principal's accounts.
- The district has not raised fees in four years, and has actually reduced the fees for all-day Kindergarten.
- One of the many funding challenges faced by the district is the fact that Chapter 70 reimbursement is based on the

number of students enrolled in October. Students that subsequently return to the district are not including in the funding formula.

- We discussed the districts heavy reliance on para-professionals, who often have no academic training, to provide services to children. The district is moving toward a co-teach model, using MSNs who work with the regular ed teachers, as opposed to untrained classroom paras.
- Half day Kindergarten will be moved to the Lincoln school due to the need for more space.
- The MVMMS is now being used to host regional educational training events, in an effort to build a partnership with the DOE and reduce costs by sharing training with surrounding districts.
- The district will be looking to make changes in the way e-camp funding is processed, because of its impact on our bookkeeping/reporting system.
- The School Communication Plan Working Group will be meeting to develop a comprehensive communication plan for the district. We discussed various ideas not currently being used in the district, including principal's blogs, Tweeting, and parent surveys. We discussed how use of new technology can be used to enhance communication with parents and students, and make things easier. (For instance, digital textbooks would mean students would no longer have to carry heavy textbooks everywhere.)

- We discussed school improvement plans, and how the needs outlined in these plans are prioritized and funded in the upcoming budget. The middle school's ongoing problem with a faulty drain in a science classroom has not been permanently addressed....will it be addressed in the 2012 budget?
- We discussed the increasing class size at the High School. Currently, 25 classes have more than 30 students in them, and 93 classes have between 25 and 29 students. We hope future budgets will address this.
- Why does the middle and high school use different administrative software? The district is investigating different administrative software packages, and hoping that some Race to the Top grant money may be available to offset costs. The ultimate goal is for both schools to use the same software.
- The district has been pricing out remote hosting services as a way to cut costs.
- The Melrose Trivia Bee will be held on March 26th.
- The next Citywide PTO meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 8th.