

September 8, 2009 Citywide PTO Minutes

- Volunteer registration forms and CORI's must be completed by all volunteers. The Massachusetts Criminal History Board previously informed the Bridge that, due to budget cuts, the turnaround time for completed CORI's would be about 6 weeks. Since that time, restored funding has resulted in CORI's being processed much faster...around 7 days. Volunteer registration and CORI forms will be available at the school open houses.
- Citywide will continue to meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 9:00 AM, in the Superintendent's conference room.
- We discussed the problem of PTO meeting/school event conflicts... Our current school meeting schedules are as follows;
School Committee meetings...2nd and last Tuesday of the month
Middle School PTO....3rd Wednesday of the month
High School PTO....1st Monday of the month
Lincoln School...3rd Tuesday of the month
Hoover School....2nd Tuesday of the month
Roosevelt School.....2nd Wednesday of the month
Horace Mann....undecided
Winthrop School....not known
- Superintendent Casey discussed with us the new H1N1 district guidelines. Community flu clinics for seasonal flu will begin October 1st. H1N1 flu clinics for children ages 6 months to 24 years will be offered on two consecutive Saturdays the end of October followed by two additional ones at the appropriate time intervals. The Wakefield clinics will be held at the Field House; the Melrose clinics will be held at the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Residents of both communities are welcome at either location. The vaccine will be free of charge. We discussed the possibility of having school nurses attend PTO meetings to discuss with parents the proper way to reduce the spread of infection.
- We discussed the use of technology with regards to parent/teacher communication. A mandatory meeting for high school athletes and

their parents was not adequately communicated to all students; therefore, some families did not attend. Use of the internet to distribute information to parents varies greatly throughout the district; some teachers do not post supply lists at all, leaving parents to scramble the first few days of school to purchase supplies. The digital classroom at the MVMMS is used sporadically, or not at all, by some teachers. Not all teachers use district e-mail, a fact many parents are unaware of. How can we as a district reduce our carbon footprint, and save money, by going paperless? How can we make sure we still serve the needs of families who do not have access to a computer? What should staff be aware of when communicating by e-mail to parents? How do we maintain confidentiality when using electronic communication? What parameters should principals set for parent/teacher e-mail communication? (e.g. giving a teacher 48-72 hours to respond, etc.)

- We discussed the ongoing challenges facing parents as they try to control cyber-bullying. The increase in handheld devices has made it easier for children to bully by texting. Also, we discussed the inappropriate use of Facebook and other social networking sites by younger and younger teens. Would workshops to help parents understand these issues be helpful? Would multiple presentations for each PTO be better attended than one district wide workshop?
- The crossing guard at the corner of Tremont and Melrose St. does not arrive until 7:45...too late to help middle school students cross safely. The crossing guard at that location is for crossing elementary school students only. Crossing guards are only required to cross children safely, not to direct traffic.
- We discussed on-going traffic problems at some elementary schools, and how the new Massachusetts anti-idling legislation can help efforts to change parent behavior. Under current Massachusetts law, idling in a school zone is illegal, with a first offense fine of \$100.00.
- How successful are individual schools at collecting dues/donations from parents? Percentages of dues/contributions collected range from approximately 25% to 67 %. Roosevelt school has found that, by adding their PTO dues form to the bottom of the student directory form, they were able to increase participation.

