

September 14th, 2010 Citywide PTO

- Rebecca Mooney from the Melrose Alliance Against Violence came to speak to us about upcoming Bullying Prevention Workshops being offered to parents. Last spring Melrose teachers attended a workshop with MAAV: in November there will be training for students.
- MAAV's 15th Annual Walk will be held on Sunday, October 17th at 4:00PM. The organization has grown and expanded its message to discuss bullying prevention, as well as domestic violence, and would like to invite the elementary school parents to consider forming teams and participating. For more information, and to register on-line, go to <http://www.maav.org/home>
- The Massachusetts Department of Education has put together a sample plan for an anti-bullying program for use in the Melrose Schools; Superintendent Casey has invited administrators and staff from surrounding communities to come to Melrose to attend the presentation. The superintendent has been working closely with Ann Gilligan, the coordinator of the Safe and Drug Free Schools program at the DOE.
- The district is currently in the process of choosing a comprehensive K-12 Health and Wellness Curriculum to pilot. Feedback from staff has indicated that currently, a patchwork of different materials is being used across the district. Some staff members are not satisfied with this material. The adoption of a comprehensive curriculum could also help better position Melrose when applying for grants written under the safe and healthy schools initiatives.

- This September, Hallmark Health will be offering a free seminar to help, parents, coaches, and medical staff understand and recognize sports related concussions in children. For information on dates and how to register, visit www.hallmarkhealth.org and click on "Event Calendar", or call 1-800-540-9191.
- Changes in drop off procedures at the high school and middle school have gone smoothly, with no incidents reported and improved safety for children.
- Parents are questioning when the middle school homework website, Cognite, will be up and running. Superintendent Casey says children should be getting their passwords soon. There is no definitive date for activation of the High School teacher website, Edline.
- Because Melrose PTO Inc. is now a registered non-profit, new bookkeeping practices have allowed PTO's to share more information regarding their budgets. To improve our understanding of the budget process, and to promote transparency, PTO treasurers have requested details about the principals' revolving accounts. These accounts are typically funded through a variety of mechanisms, (picture money, fundraising, etc.) and can be used solely at the discretion of the principal. It is hoped that by sharing this information, we can perhaps realize some savings through joint purchasing of supplies and services.
- Raffle permits....some PTOs have expressed frustration with the process of obtaining raffle permits from the city. The city is asking for information from previous years, such as names and addresses of winners. Because of frequent changes in volunteers, current boards often don't have this information. Would it be possible for Melrose PTO Inc. to one permit that would cover all PTO's?

- What do most schools suggest families donate for their “voluntary contribution” (formally called dues)? Most schools suggest either a \$25.00 contribution or \$25.00 per child, with a cap of \$50.00.
- Thanks to Ellen O’Neil for introducing the Safe House program. The Safe House Program is an agreement voluntarily signed by parents. The agreement states that if their child hosts a gathering in their home, the parents will be present to chaperone the gathering and will not allow student consumption of drugs or alcoholic beverages. This agreement is viewed as a means of promoting safety, health, and open communication among parents. Parents who have signed the agreement are noted in a student directory as being participants. How can we implement this in Melrose?
- Citywide PTO will continue to meet on the second Tuesday of each month in the superintendent’s conference room. However, due to a no-school day Oct. 12th, the next meeting will be held on October 19th. We will also begin posting an agenda before each meeting listing speakers and topics members would like to discuss.