

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY OCTOBER 23, 2023 @ 4:45 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Members Present: Matthew Shulman, Liz Porter, William Horgan

Also Present: Phil Piazza, Rebecca Beyus, Susan Austin, Patrick Florio, Emine Cabassa,
Ali Halvordson, Cailey Anderson, LeeAnn Burns, Melinda Georges

Chairperson Shulman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Conversation with school PTO representatives - Matt Shulman gave a brief opening statement which focused on how much the BOE values the contributions each PTO brings to its respective school. Our appreciation is beyond words for all of our parent volunteers as we share the common mission of broadening our children's lives with supplemental educational enrichment. In the past, Groton had a district-wide PTO Council that served as a forum to share ideas that work; to minimize date conflicts between PTO activities; and to otherwise cross-fertilize PTOs' successes. Stated purpose: We, the Committee and Administration, are here today to listen as you discuss whether and how inter-PTO collaboration might benefit your school's children.

Individual PTO Share-out

Comments and ideas from meeting aggregated by speaker

- **Leann (BARNUM):** Lyman Orchard Fund-Raiser; Back-to-School event; 11/30 Movie Night; Books-a-Million book fair (BAM provides staffing and higher commission share than Scholastic); to boost parental engagement, perhaps schedule PTO meeting immediately after school events
- **Eminé (MRMS):** Use of Parents Square (facilitated by school admin) to expand communications & staff liaison.
- **Ali (MRMS):** Media teacher helping with notifications with Parent Square; Staff engagement breakfast; raised question of a consolidated inter-school PTO calendar of events; have set up a 3-person fund-raising committee to support the PTO Board.
- **Patrick (TRMS):** Bake sales at parent/teacher conferences, Kona Ice truck, Election day; 11/8 partnership meal @ Moes; 11/14 Pop concert w/Kona Ice; Nov. poinsettia sale; Parent Square notifications; 2 Admin reps @ every PTO mtg; Scholastic Book Sale; The BIG challenge is minimal parental engagement in PTO (general concurrence based on participant non-verbals); parental engagement challenging.
- **Melinda (GMS):** 8th grade sale of mums; "welcome back" snacks for teachers; 11/6 family trivia + basket raffles; 12/? Spaghetti dinner; Dec. Poinsettia sale; March- Staff vs. students basketball ; May- end-of-year adult trivia night; Falcon swag night as a recruiting strategy; excellent admin support

Committee & Admin comments & responses to speaker questions

1. Liz asked if there was interest in re-initiating an inter-school PTO Council:

No one articulated opposition; no one expressed enthusiasm;

Patrick: "If there's something to discuss"

Susan responded: Noted the importance of PTO in the Groton 2020 Project

2. Susan agreed with Leeann comment on linking PTO mtgs to school activities (e.g. band, literacy)
3. Someone (missed) noted tight site budgets this year, referencing {A} Title 1 cuts and {B} PTOs possibly having to assume transportation costs for in-district field trips.
 - a. Susan explained {A} Federal \$200k reduction is a reality and {B} impacts of new bus contracts; stated that district is working on bringing more enrichment activities TO the schools + giving consideration to acquiring a small bus to handle in district field trips (and other district transportation needs)

Future meetings will be held as needed or as requested by PTO members.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.