**AGENDA FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES**

7th meeting 7PM Monday, April 1st 2013

Room 103

**1. Attendance of School Council Members**

Jen Price, NNHS Principal & Co-Chair

Jo Doherty, parent representative & Co-Chair

Bev Spencer, community representative

Andrea Steenstrup, parent representative

Irene Golden, student representative

Sonya Jampel, student representative

Melissa Hanenberger, teacher representative

Lynne LeBlanc, PTSO representative

Sally Brickell, PTSO representative

Wendy Lai, NNHS Principal Intern

Late to meeting: Jackie Gelb, parent representative & Ellen Gibson, parent representative.

Apologises in advance of the meeting were received from Margaret Albright, & Chris Alberg.

Ellen Gibson reported she maybe running late.

**2. Acceptance of minutes from last meeting – March 6th, 2013**

The motion was proposed and seconded and the minutes were passed by unanimous vote. These minutes will be posted on the School Council website – action discharged.

**3. Opportunity for Public Comment**

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

**4. Update on progress of Documentation group - Melissa, Chris, Sonya, Irene, Jo**

Melissa provided an update on the progress of writing the “College & Post-Secondary Opportunities Handbook”. The group met again on March 28th & estimates that approximately half of the handbook has now been written with the completed document anticipated to be around 70-80 pages in length. Some of the content in certain sections are complex & it will be recommended those sections be read from start to finish for full comprehension. However, Melissa emphasised the objective is to ensure the handbook can serve as a reference document – to facilitate a reader dipping into relevant sections as & when necessary. The group has decided that it wants to complete all sections & have the opportunity to edit the document in its entirety before distributing it to School Council members for comment. Irene Golden & Sonya Jampel have volunteered to read a rough draft of the document from the perspective of rising sophomores. Jen Price indicated that for the handbook to be translated in time for September she would need to have the copy by June.

The School Council then discussed ways in which publicity could be generated for the handbook to ensure its use by students & their families. Given its intended use as a reference tool it was suggested that many would seek to obtain a printed copy rather than just use it as an on-line document. Perhaps a hard copy could be offered by the PTSO when it canvasses for dues & the directory at the start of the school year. It could be offered for the cost of printing by NNHS’s Graphics department. The handbook could then be distributed along with the PTSO directory, to those who have paid for it, at Back to School Night, which is the largest parental audience of the school year. This should generate a substantial level of interest & reference could be made to the handbook when the Principal & Head of the Counseling Department address the school.

Principal intern Wendy Lai has nearly finished contacting families that have not accessed their parent portal to view their child’s grades or to schedule parent teacher conferences. Those who do not have regular internet access have been identified & it was suggested they should be furnished with a hard copy of the handbook free of charge. As should those participating in the pilot mentoring program, both mentee & mentor.

In addition, school council members felt the online handbook had to be located in a prominent place on the NNHS & the PTSO’s homepage to facilitate easy recognition & access.

**5. Update on progress of Pilot Program - Sally, Lynne, Ellen & Jackie**

Sally Brickell reported that as a result of a series of meeting with the Newton Mentoring Alliance & a focus group of low-income &/or minority seniors, the working group has now drawn up job descriptions of the various participant roles in this pilot: mentor, mentee Newton Mentoring Alliance & the mentor meeting planner. For the mentor & mentee roles the description details their main responsibilities & commitments. In addition, the mentor job description details the steps to be completed in order for someone to become a mentor. The main responsibilities of the Newton Mentoring Alliance have also been identified with reference to initial screening of potential mentors, the matching of mentee students & their families with mentors & also the facilitation & logistics of the monthly meetings. In addition, a detailed list of topics to be covered at these meetings has been developed. All of these documents are identified at end of these minutes & are provided as attachments to school council members only.

In discussion, it was suggested that a monthly time commitment should be identified for the mentor role rather than a weekly commitment. And that the document referring to the role of mentor should be re-formatted to clearly identify the time commitment per month includes all the activities listed. It was also suggested that for the mentor role it should identify that previous experience of the college process is not a pre-requisite.

The length of time for the commitment of the mentor of 18 months should be clearly identified as starting mid-way through the mentee student’s junior year. Once the first year of this program is up & running it was confirmed that during the second half of any school year there would be 2 programs running simultaneously – one program kicking off in the junior year & the other program running through the senior year. Once this program is established it was suggested that the senior mentees & their families would be great motivators for those participating in the junior program, which will be in its start up phase.

Wendy Lai confirmed that an initial list of students has been identified as mentees but that they need now to be confirmed.

There was some discussion as to the location of the monthly meetings. Holding meetings at the Suburban YMCA in Newton gives flexibility for child-care & might be the easiest location to initially use. It was suggested that consideration be given to using NNHS where the Early Childhood Development program might be able to provide child-care & also to Boston as locations for subsequent future meetings.

In discussing the draft list of monthly meeting topics it was acknowledged that the earlier meetings seems a little heavier on content but that this reflected both the college applications process & the fact that the pilot is not able to start until the beginning of a mentee’s junior year. It was suggested that in the list of monthly meetings the annual senior parents night held at NNHS in September/October should be included. And that perhaps consideration should be given to the possibility of holding a de-brief after this meeting for any mentee families that might feel overwhelmed.

The possibility was suggested of asking NNHS alumni currently attending college but home for the summer, who share certain demographics with the mentee student (first in their family to go to college &/or low income) to meet the mentee student & their families at the meeting in June. Meeting a NNHS alumni from a similar background to themselves who has already negotiated this path & may have some advice for the student & their family might be a powerful positive influence. And perhaps parents of some of these alumni might consider being future mentors.

**6. AOB & Next Meeting – 7pm Monday, May 1st in room 103**

The first item raised was an announcement by Ellen Gibson that she was seeking election to Newton’s School Committee through the open seat in Ward 1. These elections take place on the first Tuesday in November & if elected Ellen cannot be a serving member on both the school committee & the school council. Therefore, with regret she wanted to give notice she is resigning her position on the NNHS school council to be effective at the end of the 2013 school year. As per the NNHS school council’s by-laws, Jo Doherty requested the PTSO run an election for the vacant seat for the full 3 year term. She requested that the election be timed so that the successful candidate be able to attend the last scheduled school council meeting of the year in June. School council members & Jen Price in particular extended thanks to Ellen for her commitment & dedication to Newton North High School.

Discussion then took place regarding the possibility of expanding the student presence on the school council in order to bring more variety of opinions to school council business. Jen Price & student representatives Irene Golden & Sonya Jampel were tasked with identifying a plan for increasing student membership on the school council. For information the relevant section of our school council’s by-laws state the following regarding student representatives – these by-laws can be amended at a school council meeting where a quorum of members are in attendance, defined as 75% of the council membership:

“Student Representatives

The School Council has up to a maximum of 4 student representatives serving on the council for the duration of the time they are a student at NNHS. Representatives must have participated in their year’s class officer elections and will be recommended by their respective House Masters to the Principal.”

The next item concerned the school council communications survey. Jen Price confirmed she will prepare a statement for the next school council meeting which will contain both a summary of the surveys results & what changes have been implemented to NNHS’s communication policy as a result of this survey. She will also identify her plan to communicate this statement to those whose opinions were sought in the survey – students, staff, faculty & parents.

The final order of business was a grateful acknowledgement by Jen Price of the successful passing of the override. She noted the impact for Newton North High School is the addition of 6.25 Full Time Equivalent Teaching (FTEs) positions which she is currently assessing how best to implement. She also remarked that this would be the first time in her 7 years at NNHS that she has had the opportunity to add these levels of resources. In addition to the 6.25 FTEs, she is now able to hire an additional secretary to support department heads, increase the school’s special education staffing & provide a slight increase in social worker staffing.

Please note that the date of the next meeting has been changed from Wednesday, May 1st at 7am to Monday May 6th at 7pm. We then have one more meeting remaining of the school year on Monday June 3rd at 7pm. Please make a note in your calendar and make every effort to be at both of these meetings. Remember please that attendance at school council meetings is mandatory for all school council members. The Principal may remove a representative who misses 3 full School Council meetings during the school year from the council.

Attachment to these minutes for distribution to SC members & invited meeting attendees only:

Attachment 1 Draft description of the role of the Mentor

Attachment 2 Draft description of the role of the Mentee

Attachment 3 Draft description of the role of Newton Mentoring Alliance

Attachment 4 Draft calendar list of topics for mentoring group monthly meetings

Attachment 5 Draft of the role of the mentor meeting planner