**NEWTON NORTH SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Seventh meeting Tuesday March 8, 2016, 7:00AM

Joint meeting with SFA

1. **Attendees at School Council meeting**

Mark Aronson, NNHS Interim Principal & Co-Chair

Jean Wood, parent representative & Co-Chair

Kathy Baron, parent representative

David Bedar, teacher representative

Sally Brickell, PTSO representative

Albert Cho, teacher representative

Jenny Chou, parent representative

Rex Clark, PTSO representative

Laura Holt, parent representative

Max Kozlov, student representative

Liam Macintyre, student representative

Joanna Mandinova, student representative

Vicki Ritterband, alternate parent representative

Irene Wu, student representative

Jeff Zabel, parent representative

Mark Aronson and Bev Spencer did not attend the meeting.

1. **Growth Mindset**

The purpose of the SC/SFA joint meeting was to have a student discussion about how the growth mindset is being used in the classroom.    Irene Wu, SC student representative, moderated the discussion.   A summary is below.

All students had heard about growth mindset (GM), although it seemed to be more pronounced last school year than this year.  (This isn’t really a surprise given that Jen Price introduced the concept during her last year as principal.)  Several examples were given about how GM is used in the classroom.  In chemistry, for example, students are encouraged to do test corrections and those corrections are factored into their grades.  Retakes are optional—up to the student.  In some classes, the teacher takes 2 out of 3 test grades.  Although this isn’t explicitly called “growth mindset” by the teachers, the students see that it is geared to allowing the student to learn over time and receive credit for it.

Students thought that it was easier to incorporate GM in math and science courses rather than in English and history, for example.  However, in English classes, students submit drafts (sometimes multiple drafts) before a final paper is submitted.  This is also incorporating GM.

To the question:  Have you ever done something “risky” academically to push yourself?   Although it wasn’t academic, one student talked about going out for the track team and doing something she had never done before—and getting better at it.  That was a positive experience.  As she put it, there is “lots of opportunity for growth” on the track team.  Regarding a math class, a student talked about having his teacher encourage him to move up a level after freshman year.  Another student recalled an English teacher recommending that the student take AP English rather than Honors.  *There were not, however, any examples of a case where a student took a risky class (risky in the sense that they were really pushing themselves and risking getting a less than great grade).*

An interesting story was about a new organic chemistry class.  Students talked about not taking it because it was an ACP level course and they were on the Honors or AP track.  Although the course was something they wanted to take, they didn’t because it was at a lower level.  They were striving for Honors and AP courses because of college admissions.

Student said that attitudes of teachers paly a big role.  Some really “want” to help the students and others are “available” for help.  There is a real difference, say the students and it impacts whether or not they seek help from a given teacher.

Students say they “tune out” when GM is mentioned.  They have “heard it before”.  Better to “just do it” rather than talk about it.  First impressions about GM weren’t great.  It got “hammered” into them.

*GM was summarized as “working hard in a healthy way”.*

***Suggestions going forward:***

***-  Introduce Growth Mindset in Freshman orientation  
- Talk about it during course registration***

***- Have mandatory counselor meetings for course selection***

Next School Council meeting:

Monday, April 4, 2016

6:30PM, Room 103