**NEWTON NORTH SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

1st meeting Monday, September 9th, 2013

7pm Room 103

1. **Attendance of School Council Members**

Jen Price, NNHS Principal & Co-Chair

Jo Doherty, parent representative & Co-Chair

Jean Wood, parent representative

Laura Holt, parent representative

Melissa Hanenberger, teacher representative

Jackie Gelb, parent representative

Bev Spencer, community representative

Irene Golden, student representative

Sonya Jampel, student representative

Patricia Muumba, student representative

Lynne LeBlanc, PTSO representative

Sally Brickell, PTSO representative

Margaret Albright, parent representative

Apologises in advance of the meeting were received from Chris Alberg.

1. **Acceptance of minutes from last meeting – June 10th, 2013**

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

**3. Opportunity for Public Comment**

Barry Hoffman, a NNHS sophomore parent, was present at the meeting but declined to make any comment.

1. **School Council Business for 2013/14 school year**

As usual to kick-off the School Council year, Jen Price gave an over view of her address to the NNHS faculty & staff. It clearly identified the strides made at NNHS towards increasing academic performance while also reducing the academic achievement gap across all groups of students. The presentation will be distributed to School Council members prior to the October meeting, including low-income & minority groups of students. NNHS is continuing its work towards providing these groups of students the same educational opportunities accessible to white student. This continues to involve work promoting & supporting Dover Legacy Scholars, the Global Educational Leadership Fund & the mentoring program, & the college handbook. In addition, a program called “CTC” has been established which seeks to support incoming 9th grade students already identified as needing additional assistance. Despite being only a few weeks into the school year the 9th grade teachers with responsibility for these students have already met. Also realizing that in previous years black students in upper & advanced classes tended to be the only one in their class & consequently felt isolated, an approach has been adopted this year to develop clusters of such students.

To summarize, Jen outlined some of the challenges currently facing teachers: the increasing burden of mandates; districts attempting to cap salaries; tying teacher salary to student performance; & the increasing burden of legislation. Her personal belief is that such issues promote an environment that only serves to constrict teachers & chips away at the level of regard they feel others have for their profession.

Jen emphasized that in contrast at Newton North she makes every effort to create an environment in which teachers know she believes in them & trusts them to do their job. To this end, & especially this year, she is concentrating on providing her faculty & staff with attention & support she has termed ‘tending’. She then asked the School Council to consider as part of it goal for this school year how it could assist her in achieving this goal.

**5. Update on the Pilot Mentoring program – Sally, Lynne & Jackie**

The second meeting of the mentoring program took place at the Newton Free Library in June where the mentees, rising seniors & their parents, had an opportunity to investigate Naviance & learn about the tools available to them. In addition, NNHS Alumni who had just completed their freshman year at college & who were the first in their families to attend college, came to address the meeting. In particular they talked about how they approached financing college & how it impacted their college plans. This gave our mentor families a great opportunity to see other students who have accomplished what they hope to have happen for their student & was a very positive & affirming experience. The group also reported that Patricia had come up with a name for the mentoring program, which moving forward will be called **“Transition Together”** or **“T2”**.

The division of responsibilities to ensure the future sustainability of the **T2** program has been organized as follows:

* the co-ordinator between NNHS & the mentors is Melissa Hanenberger;
* the co-ordinator between NNHS & the mentees & their families is Radna Grein;
* & the co-ordinator with responsibility for the content of the meetings is Sarah Hoffman.

Discussion turned to the meeting planned for September & the topic of organizing college visits. Jackie Gelb reported that UMASS Boston has an Open house on October 19th from 9am-1pm & they don’t’ have visits in September. North Eastern only has provision for visits on Saturday mornings & not in the afternoon. It was suggested that UMass Lowell & Mass Bay Community College could be interesting options for the mentees & their families. It was agreed that it would be useful to have some guidance from Sarah & Melissa as to the types of institutions the mentees would be interested in. So at the September meeting they will present some visiting options.

**Action** – Jackie to prepare a summary of the various colleges discussed with a brief summary highlighting what each school can offer & send this to Sarah & Melissa ahead of the meeting on September 19th.

**Action** – Laura to discuss with Sally & Lynne the best way to start ‘shadowing’ the T2 program in order to instigate the set up of the next phase of T2 for current Juniors.

**6. Update on the Progress of the Documentation Handbook – Melissa & Jo**

Melissa reported that the handbook now to be called “The NNHS College Guide” is in its final stage of editing & she passed round the meeting several copies for viewing. The general consensus of SC members was that the guide was an impressive & comprehensive effort that would help to make the college application process as transparent as possible & will prove to be invaluable to NNHS students & their families.

Plans to distribute the guide were discussed. Although initial plans were to make it only available on-line with necessary hardship copies Jen felt strongly that the guide should be made available as a hard copy. It was discussed & then agreed that one copy of the guide should be made available to junior & senior students & their families at Back to School night in early October via homerooms. That same night sophomore families will be advised they will be get their copy at Sophomore parent night held in January. Printed copies will be made available for a $5 donation at Back to School night for anyone wishing to have an earlier copy or more than one copy for their family. Then in subsequent years the guide would be distributed only to current sophomore families with copies available to be purchased. Any necessary updates to the guide will be published online each year & available to be downloaded free to augment the guide families already have.

Given this distribution Jen asked the PTSO if they could consider funding the printing of the guide & it was agreed the School Council would pursue the viability of securing adverts in future editions as a funding source.

**Action** – Margaret to draw up a list of possible advertisers.

**Action** - To discuss an agreement in principle with The Village Bank – Jen - & MEEFA – Jo.

**Action** – Sally & Lynne to advise about the logistics of distributing the guides to homeroom & to solicit help from School Council members.

**7. AOB & Next Meeting**

Jen agreed to provide, in advance of Octobers meeting, a communication draft summarizing the results of the School Council’s 2011/12 Communications Survey & the consequential improvements & changes to the manner in which NNHS communicates with families, faculty, staff & students.

During 2011/12 the School Council established on the NNHS homepage the ability for anyone to aska question. It would appear that the person who had responsibility to field those questions then left the School Council & arrangements to pass this onto to someone else were not made. Consequently no-one has been answering any questions that have been posted. It was discussed & agreed that Jen would raise this as an action that should be passed to the Student Faculty & Administration Board for their consideration as to whether it should continue & if so how it should be managed.

It was also agreed to discussed at the School Council’s next meeting in October the focus of School Council business for the remainder of the year, especially given that the college guide is soon to be published & that T2 is up & running.

The next meeting of the School Council is to be held on Monday, October 7th at 7pm in room 103.