

# **Bowman PTA Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 30, 2015, 6:30 - 8:30PM  
Cary Library, Large Meeting Room

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## **6:30PM Meet and greet**

*In attendance: Karen Thompson, Sarah Leveque, Ann Chan, Martha Rogers, Sarah Felton, Natty Bower, Andrea Re, Karin Ornstein, Christina Lin*

## **6:45PM PTA News**

- **Open positions**

*Not enough PTA members to discuss this. We did talk briefly about Safe Routes to School and that it would be nice to bring this program back to Bowman. Sarah Felton mentioned she might know a parent who would be willing to head it.*

- **Next Events**

- **Bowman Adventure Run**

*Run will take place on Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. Hoping to have PRIME back to do burgers and lots of fun for everyone all around.*

- **Big Map Night**

*This event was coordinated with the Book Fair again. Teachers were asked if they would find it useful to have access to book list in advance. They said yes, but also that they often don't have time to check out the books before bringing their classroom to the fair. They thanked the Book Fair team for providing the 'teacher wish list' board and appreciated having the opportunity to build their classroom library.*

- **New teacher representatives**

*Yes! We have 4 (FOUR) new teacher representatives (names are listed in attendance at top). Karen Thompson mentioned that teachers often want to extend a thank you to the parents and PTA for all the support, but were uncertain of who or how to send the message. Sarah Leveque also mentioned how grateful teachers are to have such a supportive PTA knowing that many of their colleagues who work elsewhere in other school districts are not as privileged to have the same level of support. Much gratitude from all the teachers for all the hard work from the Bowman PTA.*

- **Guest Speakers to invite? Topics to address?**

*Some PTAs model their meetings to have a handful of business meetings to cover PTA related operations, but also dedicate a few meetings to educated parents on relevant school matters. Dr. Czajkoswki would like to finalize a Homework policy by end of the 2015/16 school calendar so perhaps a PTA meeting reserved to discuss this topic and hear parent views on homework would be useful. Any other topics that anyone would like to see are welcome and can be sent to Christina Lin at [president@bowmanpta.org](mailto:president@bowmanpta.org)*

- **Membership enrollment status**

*Bowman has had lower membership participation levels relative to other elementary schools in town. NattyBower pointed out that parents from other countries often miss the importance of the PTA and how there can be misperceptions on what the PTA 'group' is. Karin Ornstein mentioned that many parents fail to discern the difference between PTA organized events from school events. Christina Lin mentioned that parents often take what the teachers say more seriously. Discussion on whether teachers could help raise this at Back-to-School night or perhaps encourage room parents to also remind parents to enroll in the PTA. Teachers seemed willing to consider new ideas on promoting participation on the PTA –perhaps even at parent/teacher conference. Also talked about finding a way to let parents know how much teachers*

*value and appreciate the PTA so parents could understand that the organization provides valuable and important contributions to the school.*

- **Homework policy - feedback from parents wanted** (Covered under Guest speaker/topics to address)

#### **7:05PM Overcrowding update**

*A recap of the school committee meeting from 9/29/2015. The town (Board of Selectmen and School Committee) would like to acquire the property on Pelham Road currently owned and up for sale by the Armenian Sisters Academy. The current plan is to have town and voters approve purchase of the property and then renovate it to accommodate a 7<sup>th</sup> elementary school that holds 10-12 sections. The SC want to build a new Hastings to be a 30 section school. MSBA were just given a tour of Hastings and the SC hopes to hear a decision from MSBA by the end of the year. Pre-school is slated to move to Minuteman highschool for 3 years and potentially free up 3 classrooms at Harrington that could be filled up by redistricting. Dr. C would like to have a redistricting plan that covers a first wave in 2016, 2<sup>nd</sup> wave in 2017, and final wave in 2018. The SC would also like to have a back-up plan should the property at Pelham road be delayed for opening as a 7<sup>th</sup> school by Fall 2017 or if the property does not become approved for acquisition by Town members or voters. They have discussed implementing standard modulars (not pre-fabs) as a back-up solution so that space will be available at Bowman/Bridge/Fiske whether or not Pelham is built or able to open on time.*

#### **7:20PM Budget Review**

- **What has our PTA dollars been spent on so far**

*not discussed*

- **Proposed 2015/16 budget**

*Sarah explained how money was allocated from fundraising events. Some fundraisers sponsored/organized by companies like Wilson Farm and Box Top specify that the monies raised be used at the discretion of the school. She would like to enforce this by allocating all those monies into a restricted account specifically to be used at the school's discretion. She would like to pool expenses like 'Star Student Bears', playground supplies, and student planners to come from the restricted account. Teachers didn't know that star student bears were purchased by the PTA.*

- *Sarah shared the budget from last year and discussed her concerns about having a budget loss two years in a row. The PTA budget reserve is nearly a year's worth of PTA expenditure so it was agreed that it would be tolerable to have another year of loss despite not wanting this to become normal practice. The Bowman Auction would normally have happened this year to generate income for 2015/16 – 2016/17. However, though we recruited a volunteer to head the auction, there wasn't enough lead time to allow the volunteer to properly organize an auction in this school year so the auction will be postponed for the following year.*

*The ACT budget encompasses programs like Museum of Science and bringing Ruby Bridges to Bowman. Last year we had \$14K in reserves. This year, we are down to \$7K. The ACT budget needs to increase to cover the expenses of all the current programs – may need to suggest \$25/student donation to cover the costs of ACT. Teachers mentioned how much they valued ACT and felt the programs were excellent.*

*Christina asked whether it would be possible to have some kind of feedback from teachers/ students about ACT programs. Teachers asked where the feedback would be shared and what the purpose was for. Christina explained that parents pay for ACT with the expectation that the programs enrich the student experience at school, but that they never hear about ACT programs unless their child chooses to share some information. If a student could write a short 3line summary of their take on an ACT program to be printed in the Broadside, that would encourage parents to see the value of the programs. Teachers said they fill out an electronic*

survey about ACT performances but didn't know who received them. The assumed the PTA received them as a way to evaluate the program and passed the information on to the parents. PTA members present said they never heard or read about ACT performances and didn't know about the survey.

Sarah mentioned wanting to raise awareness of mini-grants to the teachers. The teachers said they were uncertain of what requests would be mini-grant worthy and how to do it. There was more information about it in the past, but they did not have much access to information about mini-grants beyond a sense that it does exist. It was agreed that a pamphlet explaining the parameters for submitting a mini-grant and guidelines on what the PTA would like to fund through mini-grants would be appreciated by the teachers. Andrea Re is an LEF liaison for Bowman and reviews LEF grants. Those grants are also available to teachers, but again, the parameters for what is LEF grant worthy was a bit ambiguous. Andrea Re said she would send guidelines to the teachers for the LEF grants. Martha Rogers suggested that the PTA consider phasing mini-grant award periods such that everyone would have opportunity throughout the year to apply for some funding and avoid using up the mini-grant allocations all at the beginning of the year. This way, a need that might arise later in the year doesn't always lose to needs that arise earlier in the school year.

- **Vote on budget**

Not possible because not enough members present for a quorum.

#### 7:45PM Any other business

Karen Thompson mentioned that Chief Corr would love to increase visibility of the police department for the children and that he would like foster a positive relationship with them. If opportunities arise through PTA events/activities we should keep him in mind. It was suggested that we consider tapping the police department for Safe Routes if the program gets resurrected.

Just a reminder that teachers had raised questions about how and who to contact within the PTA when they have questions for simply to provide comment/feedback. We should provide better information to our teachers so they know how to reach the PTA. Christina to touch base with the exec board on this.

#### **Upcoming events**

Oct 7 School Picture Day

Oct 15 The Big Picture -Rethinking Dyslexia, LHS science lecture hall, 7:30PM

Oct 18 Bowman Adventure

Oct 21 Next PTA meeting

Nov 4-10 Book Fair

Nov 9 Big map Night

Next PTA meeting October 21, cary library

#### **Action items from meeting**

1. Start promoting the PTA during the LexFun Kindergarten connections – idea from Karin Ornstein (raised post meeting, but am placing it here anyway)
2. Mini grant/grade level grant description and application (possibly also for LEF) – Sarah F. to do for Bowman mini-grant and Andrea Re for LEF

3. Blurb about PTA membership for teachers to put in folders during conference time – for exec board/VP recruitment to follow up on
4. Sarah to look into possible SR2S rep
5. Improve communication of PTA events to teachers - to do for Christina L.
6. Develop an informative feedback protocol for ACT events to be put into the Broadside - Christina to follow up with
7. Provide an informative flyer for teachers on how they can communicate with the PTA - Christina and Exec board to follow up with