

EWG Minutes

Monday, March 11, 2019; 9am; Underwood School

Present: Kerry Prasad, Orla Averill-Higgins, Andrea Steenstrup, Christine Dutt, Maggie Schmidt, Kathy Shields, Kathleen Smith

### **Research on other districts across the country**

Evanston, IL- Andrea contacted them and reported the following:

Similar district to Newton in size and number of schools (17 elementary schools,) the PTO does not pay for teachers and staff

They have a centralized fund; they will send their info to us

Their advice:

- First year- share people/resources, made meetings more inclusive

- Second year- started centralizing money

  - Focus on how much you raise, not how much you spend

  - Restaurant month- money went into school fund for seed money

  - Focused on schools they would target for the first year

- Messaging is very important. Their PTOC drove the initiative

Palo Alto, CA- Maggie could not get through yet

Seattle, WA- Kerry spoke to Hayden Bass; their district is much bigger than ours, PTOs pay for staff, mixed results, ended conversation by saying they could learn a lot from Newton

### **Petition**

The School Committee will respond to the Letter and Petition by Newton Parents for Excellence in Education

Kathy is working on a response from the SC, send her any thoughts you have on ideas that could be included.

The misinformation in this letter is frustrating to us; silver lining might be that it brings attention to equity- now people are interested and might pay attention to what we say; also, it might lead people to learn about how the School Committee works

**Motion:** Public release of all EWG Minutes with corrections provided by the group

In Favor: All

Opposed: none

Kathy is in touch with Lisa Mazzola to see if we can post these minutes on SC website

**Treasurer's Survey:** Christine will send it out through PTOC

**Goal:** We are looking for financial facts

We will have to send out a unique survey to each school so that we can associate answers with schools

Send link to survey ONLY; NOT with editing privileges

### **Board Leaders' Survey:**

**Goal:** We are looking for information that is similar to what we got in the focus groups, but this is a bigger sample size; also some initial feedback about potential options for how to structure a solution to the inequities

#### *Logistics*

GoogleForms- Has a format; graphs response for you

We will ask the PTO CoPresidents to distribute this to their PTO Board

We would have to send out a unique survey to each school's PTO so that we can associate answers with schools

Send link to survey ONLY; NOT with editing privileges

Create an opening paragraph setting the tone

#### Questions

School \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel like your PTO dedicates too much, too little or the right amount of time and energy on fundraising?( What is the impact on your community?)

Scaled question: 1.Too little----- 5.Too much

Comment space

What is your personal understanding of the impact of fund-raising on the culture of your school community?

Comment

Do you currently feel your PTO is able to raise enough money to fund the projects your PTO wants to do?

Yes/No

Comment

What is your highest priority in spending?

Prioritize your PTO spending by rank

MATRIX: community events? Creative Arts & Sciences? Technology? Field Trips? Library?

Principal discretionary fund?

Teacher appreciation? Classroom supplies? 5<sup>th</sup> grade activities? Building and grounds?

Playground? Other (with comment box)

Who do you think should pay for the following curriculum-related support items?  
MATRIX: Tech? CAS? Field trips? Library? Small group staff development? Teacher classroom support (classroom supplies)?  
PTO?  
NPS?  
Combination of PTO and NPS?  
Each family for their own child  
I don't know  
Other

*Several themes for ways to address inequity emerged in the focus groups. We would like your feedback on these ideas. What is your reaction to the following?*

Scaled question      1. No interest---5. Great idea  
Comments box

**One Newton Fund**- centralized fund-raising option;  
City-wide centralized fund-raising option to help fund crisis (Curriculum-Related Items) across all elementary schools

**Raise-the-Bar Contribution**- for every dollar your PTO spends above the equity cap, a percentage goes to a central fund to help fund crisis across all elementary schools

**Flat Percentage Contribution**- Each PTO donates a small, set percentage of their total fund-raising (eg: 3% or 5%) to a central fund to help fund crisis across all elementary schools

**Curriculum Enrichment fee**- Each family receives a bill for \$80/pupil for curriculum-related items; families can apply for a waiver

**Voluntary Equity Fund**: All PTOs voluntarily contribute a self-determined amount to a central fund to help fund crisis across all elementary schools; the total received will be divided per pupil and distributed to the PTOs based on enrollment. That per pupil amount will be the only crisis spending allowed for the year. The incentive is the more everyone contributes, the more everyone is allowed to spend.

Christine, Maggie, Andrea and Kerry will meet on Thursday, March 14 at 1pm at Andrea's house to create and distribute the finalized PTO Board Members' Survey.