

**Minutes**  
Parents' Representative Council Meeting  
Friday, September 18, 2015  
Central Office Hammonasset Room  
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Beth Skudder & Maureen Lewis, Co-Chairs

**Attendees:** Tom Scarice, Superintendent, Beth Skudder, Co-Chair, Maureen Lewis, Co-Chair, Melissa Gulish (TCLC), Christine Piteo (TCLC), Katie Bonito (Island), Linda Paine (Island), Nicole Wiles (Jeffrey), Tina Phelan (Jeffrey), Diane Infantine-Vyce (Ryerson), Carol Ahlijanian (Ryerson), Katy Wallace (DHHS), Claudia Dunsmore (DHHS), Carolyn O'Connell (Brown), Jen Thompson (Polson)

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**1. Welcome/Introduction of New Members**

Beth Skudder called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. and asked each person to introduce themselves. Beth introduced those new to the PRC and gave a brief history of the council, stating it provides a great opportunity to communicate with parents. Beth stressed to all members of the PRC to contact her with any personal issues.

**2. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Scarice began his report with a discussion on the new Board of Education Homework Policy. Last year, Mr. Scarice asked a volunteer group to examine the literature and research related to homework practices. Over 800 teachers, parents, and students, through focus groups and meetings, had input into the new Board of Education policy.

Kathryn Hart, Principal of Jeffrey Elementary, David Buller, Math teacher at Daniel Hand, Kristen Cinque, Language Arts teacher at Polson and Gail Dahling-Hench, Assistant Superintendent, joined Mr. Scarice.

Mrs. Dahling-Hench stated the committee was dedicated and focused and made decisions with integrity. The research was thoroughly reviewed and summarized; the committee debated the findings and began collecting themes to help guide the document. Each of the 800 voices was important, from student experiences to teacher's opinions to parent's feelings. Julie Johnson, Daniel Hand Social Science/History teacher, was very instrumental in collecting an abundance of data.

Mr. Scarice provided the following additional updates:

- Construction on Green Hill Road - actually Route 79 that is causing us problems right now. We have no control over that because it is a state road. Buses have been late because of the traffic. Sidewalks are coming.
- The Facilities Study is underway and mentioned the two upcoming public forums. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Board of Education met September 15<sup>th</sup>. We are looking at a 3-5 year window and are still discussing a possible school closure. There are 3 options on the table right now, with room for a 4<sup>th</sup>. Doing nothing is still an option. The new board will make the

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decision. Mr. Scarice asked the PRC if they can provide assistance on the evenings of October 19 and November 9 for childcare, as this is the number one reason cited for non-attendance.

**Action Item: PRC to look into tying childcare into community service.**

- Carolyn O’Connell asked about new legislation regarding 10 absences. Mr. Scarice stated this is presently being reviewed by the Policy Committee.

### **3. Approval of minutes**

**Motion to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2015 minutes by Carolyn O’Connell, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Diane Infantine-Vyce. Approved. Unanimous.**

### **4. Members List and Meeting Representatives** were reviewed.

### **5. Committee Selections** were reviewed.

### **6. Meeting Participant Expectations were reviewed;** Beth Skudder referred to the refresher in the handouts. PTO meetings should have established agenda items and questions should be brought back to the PRC meetings.

### **7. Requests for Topics and Presenters** – Maureen Lewis would like to schedule guest speakers and is welcome to new ideas.

### **8. PRC Website** – a discussion ensued regarding schools having separate websites and it was mentioned that each school has its own tab within the district website.

### **9. Roundtable**

- Sub-committee list was reviewed.
- **M.A.D.E.** – Jen Thompson provided an update. Focus this year is on student stress and the stress task force. Would like to reinforce positive family communication before a student requires a substance abuse program. Trying to be more visible in Town. Also working with Youth and Family Services.
- **Political Action** - Tina Phelan spoke about the need for additional “voting” signs. A discussion ensued regarding the number of signs and budget.

**Motion to approve purchase of additional “voting” signs, 10 per school, maximum budget \$600, (to be shared with TCLC). Motion by Diane Infantine-Vyce, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Carolyn O’Connell. Approved. Unanimous.**

Nicole Wiles gave an update regarding the Candidates Forum. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Board of Education will deliver opening and closing statements. An ENotify is ready. Nicole talked about the need for donations - baked goods, water, coffee, tea, flowers, etc. It was decided Nicole will purchase these items and the bill will be split amongst all schools. Thirteen candidates are coming, as follows:

#### **First Selectman**

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Tom Banisch (R)  
Joan Walker (D)

**Board of Selectmen**

Al Goldberg (D)  
Scott Gyllensten (D)  
Bob Hale (R)  
Bruce Wilson (R)

**Board of Finance**

Mark Casparino (R)  
Bennett Pudlin (D)  
Jason Ulstad (D)

**Board of Education**

Galen Cawley (R)  
Seth Klaskin (D)  
Happy Marino (R)  
Katie Stein (D)

- Carolyn O'Connell mentioned that Brown needs a PTO secretary.
- Jen Thompson reported the Polson PTO held a kickoff back to school lunch in August. The general board met yesterday, and the back to school night will occur on Thursday, September 24. The PTO is also sponsoring a visit with S.A. Bodeen, author of the 2015 Teen Nutmeg Award winning book *The Raft*, on October 5. General board meeting is October 26, 2015 beginning at 7:00 p.m.
- Carol Ahlijanian reported the Ryerson PTO held a kickoff back to school lunch in August and the first general PTO meeting will take place Monday evening. Ryerson's book fair will occur in October.
- Nicole Wiles reported the Jeffrey PTO held its back to school luncheon and a fundraiser is underway. Author Alan Katz is coming on October 2. Nicole also reported the PTO has switched to Guilford Sporting Goods for school items. Parent letter verbiage changed to "donations" as opposed to "dues".
- The Island Avenue PTO held its back to school lunch, orientation, and is preparing for its upcoming pumpkin fair. Open House occurred on September 10.
- Beth Skudder encouraged all to read the letter in the September 10, 2015 edition of *The Source* regarding PTO donations.

**Motion to adjourn by Beth Skudder, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Maureen Lewis, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.**

BS/ML/wb

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