

Jerome Harrison School

PTO Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2017

- The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.
- Superintendent Schoonmaker and Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Tracy Wootton, gave an overview of the budget request for 2017-2018.
 - The status quo budget would be an increase of 2.89% (\$31,573,821) to stay at all current staffing budget. The proposal includes an increase to 3.69% (\$31,821,170) to accommodate a 6-12 ELA instructional coach, 6-12 Math instructional coach, a K-5 Science coach, and a paraprofessional at JHS in the Bridges program.
 - Major components of budget are salaries, insurance and special education tuition.
 - The state funding (ECSS) decrease in funding will cause about the town to absorb about \$700,000.
 - Enrollment in public education across New England towns has dropped considerably. The decrease from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 is from 1829 enrolled to 1767 enrolled.
 - Class size for K and first do not go over 20. Grades two and three are roughly 20 students in a class. Grades 3 – 5 range from 19 per class to 24.
 - Instructional coaches work behind the scenes on curriculum, instruction and assessment. The coaches help improve student learning by collaborating with teachers.
 - The instructional coaches attend professional development opportunities around the state and share the information back to the schools and teachers.
 - The Common Core State Standards were adopted recently and instructional coaches help to make those skills and content apply to daily instruction.
 - A science coach will use his/her content expertise to help the town/teachers meet the needs of the newly state adopted Next Generation Science Standards.
 - Connecticut's model for professional development includes the use of instructional coaches as embedded professional opportunities.
 - The middle school begins to prepare students for college and career readiness. About 86% of NB students attend college after graduation.

- When comparing the staffing numbers over the last 8 years there is a decrease in enrollment, but there has been an increase in staffing due to security guards, special education support, and technological support.
- Personnel changes from 2016-2017:
 - Reduced the teachers' work year by 2 days
 - Eliminated a grade 1 teacher
 - Some positions eliminated: NBIS science teacher, physical education teacher, guidance counselor, RTI paraprofessional, custodian, and part time special education teacher
 - Added a JHS special education teacher
- Eliminated, replaced, reduced and added positions from the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 years were shared.
- Consequences of budget reduction would come from certified staffing reductions. At the high school students pay between \$75 to \$200 to participate in sports and drama. In order to decrease the budget by 1%, six teachers would need to be eliminated. At this point there is only one known retirement in the district.
- NB is in the lower 50th percentile in the per student expenditures and is currently in District Reference Group E.
- Programs that are not in the budget include a grant application for pre-K four year olds. A librarian at JHS, K-5 Social Studies coach, expansion of K-8 world language, talented and gifted teacher, and increasing the substitute per diem rate.
- Capital project requests:
 - NBHS needs to be renovated and is the only district in the surrounding area that has not been renovated. Given the current conditions at the high school, students are performing well, but they deserve much better.
 - The auditorium needs waterproof brick.
 - JHS floor tiles have to be replaced.
 - TVES needs heating and cooling ventilators.
 - NBIS needs a roof repair.
- Thursday, February 9th is a BOE meeting to discuss the budget.
- Parents comments:
 - Praise to the NB school department on the accommodations and services provided to special education students. The special education needs continue to increase and it is important to understand the mandates that are placed on the towns.
 - A question was raised about including a future technology teacher at the

schools.

- Title 1 funding is federal grant that the district does not know the amount of until October and is given based on the economic needs of students. The amount given to the district varies greatly.
- Based on the location of the school, LED lighting is available in some areas and has been utilized when appropriate.
- The superintendent recommends coming out in numbers to BOE and town meetings in support of education. If less than 15% of townspeople vote, then the budget automatically passes. The actual discussion of the budget date will be shared when it is known. The PTO president advocates for parents to attend the budget hearings.
- I-Ready testing is mostly funded through Title 1 as a universal screener. It is given K-8 three times a year. Connecticut requires a universal screener three times a year, so NB had to purchase it through an outside source. This requirement has to do with the state teacher evaluation procedure. Unfortunately, state mandates place the majority of this expenditure on the local towns.
- The superintendent welcomes any parents to come into the schools for visits. Please contact him if you are interested.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- Congratulations to Carter on his recent award as a Connecticut Administrator of the Year.
- Congratulations to Judy Bannon for the "Rising Star" award in the town.
- St. Baldrick's is Friday, March 24th. It is a wonderful event to raise money for childhood cancer.
- The Mixed Bag fundraiser went home Friday and is due back March 3rd.
- There are positions open on the PTO board this year. There will be a post on Facebook to let you know about a meeting to discuss the positions.
- Please make a copy for the office of any flyers that are going home with students.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- Box tops are due by February 24th. Please make sure they are sent in as soon as possible. Room parents please contact the families to let them know.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- The budget shared reflects deposits from Square 1 Art, Box Tops, Quinnipiac University, Night to Care and PTO Membership dues. Expenses include Cultural Arts, Quinnipiac Hockey Game, Father/ Daughter Dance, field trips and business filling/ insurance.
- Budget Approval and Treasurer's Report from December 1st thru December 31st and January 1st thru January 31st.
 - Danielle Pannone
 - Sarah Siegel

SECRETARY'S REPORT

- Minutes were approved from the December meeting.
 - Sarah Siegel
 - Ashley Fernandez
- There were about 19 parents in attendance as well as Ms. Lake, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Aiken and Dr. Welch.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- The Father and Daughter dance is Friday, February 10th. There are about 190 people that will be attending and the event will be held only in the gym.
- March 16th is the Mother Son event. Please volunteer to be on the committee. The event date is negotiable.
- Read Across America Day is Friday, March 3rd. The theme is undisclosed.
- Bingo Night is April 27th. All volunteers are welcomed. This year the second book fair will also be held the night of Bingo Night.
- The Fun Day committee will hold its first meeting immediately after the March PTO meeting. If anyone has any ideas for entertainment and crafts, please contact Liz. Fun Day is on June 1st.

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.
 - Ashley Fernandez
 - Sarah Siegel