

PTO meeting
June 11, 2014

1. **Co-presidents greeting and Welcome of Jud Pierce**
2. **Jud Pierce—Our School committee Representative**

Report:

-2013-2014 was a good year.

--The staff has excelled with all of the new state requirements

--next year, there will be over 507 kindergarten students (470 last year—also a spike). Already over expectations and more are expected to enroll over the summer. To account for this---high class sizes. Not sure if 2 and 3 classes at Peirce. (Mrs. Hartley said right now it looks like 2 classes of 25 and 26).

--The town will appropriate \$880,000 for a budget boost this year which will be in the base going forward. Should mean more teachers, new cluster at Ottoson, technology

--SC happy with the 2015 budget—unanimously passed.

-- Delayed HS openings next year instead of early release

-- School calendar getting out June 17, It is on the website

--School is starting September 2nd

--One less early release day.

--Looking for feedback about how to make these days easier for people

Q&A

Q: Is there a cap at which another class would need to be added?

A: No set # as a cutoff--but they know K-2 class sizes need to be lower than the higher grades. Some schools have 26 in the K this year.

Q: How is the HS affected with the growth bubble coming through the system?

A: A rebuild is needed. Cost is a big issue, but there is a risk jeopardizing accreditation if not updated. Ottoson is now approaching capacity and the bubble hasn't even hit.

Q: HS—if there is a rebuild, what happens to the kids who are there?

A: Too soon to plan. Would happen over a 2 year periods—kids would be there learning. One possibility is to have split-shift (some students attend in the morning, others in the afternoon).

Q: Is there a plan to maintain the new school buildings—paint, etc. Peirce is 10 years old.

A: Yes, Peirce should be painted next year. There is a schedule for updates, but it often gets delayed. There is also a facilities subcommittee.

Q: What is the best way for parents to communicate with Jud/SC?

A: emails/texts are best. All of emails and numbers are on website. Feel free to contact.

Q: Can there be email blasts from the SC like they are for the town? Parents could then subscribe

A: Meetings are open to public. Agenda is on website posted at least 48 hours in advance. Can attend or watch on TV/online. Minutes are also posted. Could be blasted as well—Jud will look into this. Jud wants to do away with parents being the last to know about big issues such as testing. Suggesting more town meeting type formats.

Items up for discussion with the School Committee:

Eliminating Feb and April vacation and having a longer break in March

Adding 30 minutes onto the day

Stay with MCAS or move to Park (Another assessment test.) Next year would be a pilot program and the scores wouldn't count. Park is online, 4 more days of testing, timed. (9 days), Decision will be made at SC meeting tomorrow night, Park is being recommended. SC doesn't have much data to make the decision.

--the kids would need to be given chance to gain keyboard skills—very slow to do any writing. Would we want to spend class time teaching kids how to type? Would it cause more stress for the kids? Will we have facilities for the test?—yes—will be enough iPad carts by next year with kid-friendly keyboards. Prediction that kids will be taking the Park on iPad.

There is a great cost associated with changing over to Park.

Some districts have been pushing back on Park, SCs have been writing letters

Gains—with MCAS results don't come in until fall, with Park, info comes more quickly so data can be used.

3. **Principal's remarks and update from the Advisory Council:**

Advisory council—(mandated group advises school-teachers and parents) school improvement plan.

The goals will be posted on the website. In September they will decide if goals are met—

1. Student achievement goals (based on MCAS scores we don't have yet).
2. Teacher achievement goals

The incident at Stratton—Mrs. Hartley reiterated the safety of children during the incident and priority of safety as a whole.

A new parent representative to advisory council is needed. There are 4 meetings a year. Work on school improvement plan

4. **PTO protocol:**

A. 2 or more names on financial account (Co-treasurer and/president). Both co-presidents are willing. They will decide which one will have her name on the account.

B. Inclusive communication cc: president/v.p. on emails so they are informed

5. **Spring fair debrief:**

The fair did very well. Some of the new games worked better than others. Great turnout including a lot of incoming kindergartners. Many volunteers. Some people had asked about the ticket pricing. Some confusion how ticket and food pricing arrived at. Maybe should be discussed at PTO meeting to help eliminate confusion. Until this year was \$.50/ticket. Some events are very expensive ex. Moon bounce. The price was raised to \$.67/ ticket. Pricing raised to cover costs and make a bit of money. People wanted more consistency with pricing.

A suggestion was made to give people pricing information ahead of time

Q: time of spring fair—reasoning? Many kids miss out because of sports

A: used to be 10-2—really difficult to get set up by 10—would need twice as many volunteers.

6. Confirm continuing committee chairs and welcome Molly as fundraising chair

Thanks to everyone who is staying on

7. Vote on 2014-2015 budget

(memory books—new photographer giving it to us for under budget—have a 3-year contract Geskus Photography. Emo will be the liaison with the company)

Joy got a \$500 donation from Cambridge Savings bank

Not much change to next year's budget

The budget was passed.

-Peirce pride savings bank closing next Friday.

-Volunteers needed for Field Day

Question about what field day is. Outside games for 2 hours. 6 stations. Will add information about it to future correspondence. Not a PTO event—helping out Mr. Morrison

8. Vote on Nominees:

Co-presidents: Angela Snyder and Chris Martin--passed

Vice President: Patti Conti--passed

Treasurer: Lori Pescatore--passed

(Erin Whalen on deck—being trained starting in March for next year)

Co-secretaries: Emily Aiken & Anne Dixon—passed

Amy—will continue to be involved in PTO and in transitioning

Emo—will also continue to be involved with PTO events and transitioning and Emo will be the liaison to Geskus Photography.