

**HILLSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTC**  
Meeting Minutes of February 29, 2012

The meeting came to order at 7:05 pm.  
Attendance was 17 members.

**Co-President's Report**

Beth Tallarico opened the meeting.

**The January 2012 PTC Meeting minutes were approved.**

*Calendar Raffle*

The Calendar Raffle Committee has been soliciting donations for this spring fundraiser. They have some different and exciting donations that will appeal to both parents and children. Jodi Rooney is redesigning the raffle tickets which are due out in early April.

*2012-2013 PTC Volunteer Positions*

At our next meeting in April, we will be discussing openings for next school year's PTC. Since the President position has a two-year term, we will be looking for a new co-president to join Beth Tallarico.

**Committee Reports**

*METCO Program*

This committee provided information on the upcoming METCO program to be held at Hillside on Thursday, March 8, 2012 (early release day) which will include a pizza lunch and a magician. This event has been communicated via email blasts and the weekly newsletter. Any Hillside student is invited to attend this free program but permission slips are required. Pick-up is at 3pm for students not in the METCO program. It was noted that the last two events have been incredibly successful and well received by both the students and the families that join them.

*Hillside – Eliot Basketball Game*

The committee provided information on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hillside-Eliot Faculty-Parent Basketball game which will be held on Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> in Needham's High School Gym, doors open at 6:30, tip-off is at 7 pm. Last year's fierce competition is being tempered this year, with the focus being on friendly camaraderie. Since the students seemed most excited when the faculty played, they focused on recruiting more teachers this year. To date, they've pre-sold over \$500 worth of tickets which will be sent home with students next Wednesday. We believe that will help streamline the process. Additionally, more volunteers have been recruited to assist with crowd control and concessions. The half time is being shortened to include a free throw competition for 10 5<sup>th</sup> graders (5 from Hillside/5 from Eliot). Students will be selected by a random drawing. Finally, they will hold a pep rally on Friday at the school.

Pre-order ticket forms are available on the PTC website. Seating is limited. All volunteers are welcome.

### *Used Book Sale*

Beth announced that the Used Book Sale will be held on March 20 & 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Jenn Sexton, event chair, has placed a box in the lobby for donations. Check your bookshelves at home and donate.

### *Talent Show*

The committee announced that the Talent Show will be held on May 11, 2012. Auditions will be held the first week of April. Auditions will follow the same format as last year. Students are encouraged to form groups. There will be one rehearsal at Hillside and one dress rehearsal at Pollard. Audition sign-ups will be via a flyer sent home which will incorporate a permission slip. The committee is looking for volunteers.

### **Treasurer's Report – Mary Buffinger**

Mary reported that the budget is on-track at this point. She highlighted the grants given out to date from both the Enrichment Grant and Margie Margolis Grant pools. It was noted that it is still possible to donate to the Margie Margolis fund. Mary shared that we earned \$256 from our Not Your Average Joe's fundraiser. Mary provided the Hillside PTC Income Statement for February 2012.

### **Principal's Report – Mr. Kascak**

Mr. K reported the following:

Mr. K shared that a group of people went on a trip to Rhode Island to see ideas for the Mitchell-Hillside Building project.

Mr. K repeated his interest in forming a new committee/group to explore the carpool initiative. As described in recent Hillside newsletters, there is a major problem with vehicle traffic at Hillside in addition to students being tardy for school. Mr. K would like to meet with people interested in handling this issue; anyone interested should email him as soon as possible.

Mr. K. mentioned the Family Portraits of Needham on display in the school. It was the catalyst for the wonderful conversations about the diversity of families held during February clusters. Students were encouraged to bring in a picture they've drawn or taken of their families.

### *Student Council*

The Student Council is up and running. Maria DeCicco and Raylene Roberts are running the council. Their first project was collecting over 200 pairs of pajamas in support of the Bruins/Cradles to Crayons partnership. More to come from this wonderful group of students.

### **Guest Speaker**

Dan Gutenkast, Superintendent, joined us for a wonderful conversation.

He shared that over the February break, he had the privilege of working on a Habitat for Humanity event in Florida with 21 Needham High students and 4 faculty members. He was very proud of their work, flexibility, resiliency and commitment to the community. He believes that

Needham students grow up and contribute in wonderful ways because we encourage and foster these habits at the elementary school level.

Dan wanted to share his thoughts on three key topics: school committee budget, the Mitchell-Hillside project, and more time in school.

#### *School Committee Budget*

The school committee worked hard with the finance committee to pass a budget. There were some funding shifts at the secondary level to match the population shifts. Dan shared that while it doesn't take away from the primary level or give us everything we want, it gets us what we need.

#### *Mitchell-Hillside Building Project*

The pre-feasibility study has commenced for Mitchell and Hillside. Planning meetings are ongoing. The Town will invest in necessary maintenance over the next few summers before the final plan is put together. Dore & Whittier Architects are developing multiple alternatives for the combined Mitchell-Hillside project by June 2012. Some challenges at Hillside include it being an EPA site, being surrounded by wetlands and the parking lot and traffic congestion. Needham will take their preferred alternatives to the MBSA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) to begin discussions next year. Dan feels good that the entire Needham community is supportive of this project and they are targeting an override request for mid 2013.

#### *Time*

Dan believes that as a community, we need to think about increasing the # of hours for our students and faculty. He is convinced that in order to prepare our children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have to give faculty time to collaborate and to more deeply delve into topics or add back topics to the curriculum. Needham middle-schoolers spend less time in the classroom than peer communities. Dan knows we will need to consider many alternatives, craft a compelling story and determine how to pay for it. He felt this forum was a good time to start the conversation.

#### *Questions for Dan*

Q: Have Needham middle school children always spent less time in school than their peers?

A: Yes, at least for the 6 years Dan has been here. State guidelines require 180 days and either 900 hours (elementary) or 990 hours (secondary) of instruction. Middle schools may be classified as either elementary or secondary and Needham defines it as elementary.

Q: Will we always have ½ day kindergarten?

A: This question ties to our "time" conversation. Dan believes that we need to have the capacity for full day kindergarten. Families would decide what it appropriate for them (e.g., 1 or 2 year transition kindergarten, 3 full days/2 ½ days, etc.)

Q: How does the district measure the success of the ThinkMath implementation? How do we plan to communicate that back to the community?

A: Dan is very interested in getting feedback. He's been talking to lots of faculty and observing math classes and 90% of the feedback is that it is the right program. It was mentioned that at Hillside we supplement the program with IXL and XtraMath. Faculty are

working parent letters to help them better understand the program. We will look into what's available on the school websites to support parents.

Q: Is redistricting going to happen in the next few years?

A: Dan is not aware of any plans or conversations about redistricting.

Beth Tallarico mentioned that Jillian Erdos will be chairing the Spring Fling scheduled for Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>.

The next PTC meeting will be held on April 25, 2012 at 9:00 am.