
Bigelow Middle School PTO

42 Vernon St., Newton, MA 02458



www.bigelowpto.org

PTO Fall Meeting Minutes

September 25, 2018, 7:00pm

Bigelow Library

Attendance: Jessica Gilmartin, Jennifer Weber, Michelle Welford, Una Simmons, Joana Canedo, Kara Peterson, Todd Harrison, Giulia Guffanti, Megan Flynn, Miriam Alandydy, Gabriela Kroszynski, Allison Penn, Teresa Carmona, Siobhan Wheeler, Shital Gandhi, Betsy McSheffrey, Kristin Golden, Madeline McNeely, Ning Pan, Matthew Kane, Erika Holumberg, Michael Badman.

1. Call to Order

Jessica called the meeting to order.

2. Welcome and Introduction

The 2018-2019 PTO Board was introduced:

Co-Presidents – Jessica Gilmartin and Jennifer Weber

Vice President of Fundraising – Una Simmons

Treasurer – Michelle Welford (bigelowtreasurer@gmail.com)

Co-Secretaries – Joana Canedo and Kara Peterson

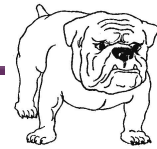
Nominating Committee – Tracy Carroll

To contact any PTO officer, please email BigelowBulldog@gmail.com

3. Principal's Welcome and Update

Social Media Presentation – Researchers from Wellesley College came to Bigelow on 9/7 to present preliminary results of a study that they did with Bigelow and other schools last year. Not only did they present interesting data about the students, but they also had good recommendations and suggestions to parents. The most important one is to keep an ongoing conversation with the children. There's a 45' video of the presentation that will be published on the Bigelow website this week.

Backpacks – There's a new policy at Bigelow that backpacks need to stay in the lockers at all times. The main reason is concern about the weight students are carrying, but also no cluttering on hallways, and avoid thefts. New lockers were installed that fit backpacks. It's



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an adjustment for the children, but it seems to be working. Classes are less cluttered, there were no thefts this year, no phones ringing in class. Teachers are allowing time for students to go to the lockers between classes. It's a change and they will work for everyone to get adjusted.

Parents brought up that some students have been complaining. A few students wrote a petition. One of the issues is time to drink water, because students have to go back to locker to get their water bottles. Another parent say backpacks are still too heavy to take home.

Mr. Harrison responds that another water fountain was installed in the 2nd floor (thanks to the PTO). The school and the teachers are helping the children to get organized and find the time they need. We need to find ways to make this work – bring ideas, like other bottle alternative.

Homework Policy – There is a new homework policy that the Bigelow school council has been working on for the last 2 years. The homework policy had not been updated for 15 years. The school council used new research to design the new policy, considering better study habits and health. It is going to be unveiled at Back to School Night. The maximum amount of homework will go down. Teachers are now communicating between them in order to give the right amount of homework.

4. Introduction to the 2018-19 PTO

1. What the PTO supports

CASC - the Newton Public Schools Creative Arts and Sciences program is solely funded by the PTO and it is the biggest budget item for the organization.

The PTO also funds: Field trips, One book One school Program, Teacher grants, and much more. ([Check the PTO website](#))

- 8th grade funding is different, it is done by 8th grade families and goes to their specific fund.

2. CASC Schedule

CASC is an enrichment program for students that are usually linked to the curriculum. There are at least 2 activities per grade - [here is what was offered in 2017-18](#). This year, the first activity for all students will be around Poetry and it will take place October 30th, at 8:30am, 9:30am and 10:30am, one hour for each class

3. PTO events: social and fundraising

The PTO promotes lots of events, some are adult only, others are for families. Most of them have both a social and a fundraising component.

