
Bigelow Middle School PTO

42 Vernon St., Newton, MA 02458



www.bigelowpto.org

Fall 2021 - Bigelow PTO Meeting
September 28, 2021, 7pm
Virtual

Attendance: See last page

1. Welcome: Introduction of current Board and all participants on the call.

2. Principal's Address: Great turnout – hoping to get some teachers involved next time. Thank you to the PTO for organizing dinner for her family while her mother is in the hospital recovering from COVID.

NOTE – questions raised by parents are included at the end of each topic.

a. Positive COVID case at Bigelow – Close contacts of the child have already been contacted and Nurse Sue Schy is monitoring the situation.

- Q. Was child sick at school? Found out while in school then sent home immediately.

b. Very important for families to self assess, monitor asymptomatic situations and keep school community safe.

c. Lurkers seen in school area – teachers have been made aware, NPS has been contacted and Bigelow's Community Officer Zoe is working with Newton police in patrolling the area. In addition, there is increased security during mask breaks and recess.

d. iReady - administered this week for diagnostic purposes. Currently being used to assess reading levels to properly serve student's needs. Principal Coston hopes teachers will be able to use lessons to fill any gaps or for advanced learning. Also hoping to use iReady for math assessment in the future.



e. Field Trips – have been approved by the district. Grade 6 parents should be on the lookout for permission slips and other requested items.

f. Back to School Bash – was a great success. A second celebration 'Picnic at Franklin Park' - October 17th @ 12:30 - is being planned by METCO families, FORJ and the PTO. PTO will provide food for the event.

- Q. Are parent volunteers needed? METCO parents are helping organize games. Other volunteers please contact Kelly at Kelly.Qian@gmail.com

- Q. Invite for picnic? Was included in Principal's newsletter plus there are flyers all over the school. RSVPs will be required.

g. FORJ – Principal Coston is in the middle of finalizing a collaboration with Urban Improv. 6th Graders will work on theater skits to enact racial issues they may face. The hope is that this program will be made available for all grade levels.

h. Courtyard Garden – May Chen and Elizabeth Apgar are working with Principal Coston to beautify Bigelow's Courtyard. Will be another outdoor place for the children to use. Volunteers with green thumbs please reach out to Elizabeth Apgar.

i. COVID testing – was a logistical nightmare this week for all Newton schools. Was only open to the 6th graders and took up a huge amount of time from the school day. The new testing agency NPS is using was very understaffed. Hoping that COVID testing will be extended to 7th and 8th graders in the future.

- Q. What % of the students have opted in for COVID testing? _____



- Q. Can we go back to 'at home' testing like last year? Right now the new company only offers in-school tests.
- Q. Can parents volunteer to help with the testing process? Thank you and Principal Coston will reach out to NPS's COVID task force.
- j. Directory – Anyone not receiving the Principal's or the PTO newsletter please let us know or add your information at bigelowpto.org/directory. Printed version of the directory should be out in the next few weeks.

3. Volunteers Needed for PTO: Gabriella: We need volunteers for a lot of different groups:

- a. PoPs - for parents of kids involved in band, orchestra, theater or chorus. Need parent volunteers for the theater and orchestra groups.
- b. Ten Tables – Looking for ideas on what format should be this year. Need a volunteer to manage whole process.
- c. Big Night –earlier format was a gala with auction. What should this year's format be? See end of document for suggestions.
- d. Trivia Night – introduced last year in a virtual format. Should it be held this year in place of the Big Night?
- e. 8th Grade Activities – Volunteer team is already in place – Additional volunteers welcome. Parents interested in helping out please contact Caryn Izhar.

May: Biggest shortage for the PTO currently is manpower. Even if you have an hour/week please reach out we will find something that interests you. We really want the community to engage and help out. It takes a village!



4. Masks & COVID testing: Already covered by Principal Coston. Please send extra masks with the children.

5. Fund Raising: Gabriella/Linda: We aim to spend all funds during the school year in which they are raised unless it is funding for a multi year project. The PTO budget is voted on at the end of the last school year. The PTO uses all funds raised to improve the school experience for the children.

- Current years budget allocates \$9,000 for CASC
- Some funds were used to update water fountains
- Other items that funds are used for –community events, teacher reimbursement, bringing in speakers, library books, gym/band equipment, teacher appreciation lunches etc.
- Ten Tables, Annual Gala, Annual Fund are the traditional fund raisers. Need new ideas for this year.
- PTO spends approximately \$90/student /year

May: PTO has a set budget and we fund raise to meet that and make the experience better for the children. We also get funds from certain business partners.

6. Back to School Night: Will be on Zoom this year. Scheduled for October 14th.

7. Science Fair: Lincoln Elliot had a virtual science fair last year tht was very well received. Bridgette can help organize something similar. PTO can help set up a committee to help.

8. 2021 Fund Raising Ideas From Community

- a. A different format for 10 Tables – Porch fest? One big outdoors event or multiple small outdoor dinners.

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- b. Chilly Cook Off in parking lot
- c. Trivia Night
- d. Cookie Swap
- e. Pie Promenade
- f. Bread BakeOff
- g. Ala Cake Walk

Attendees:

1. Gabriella Kroszynski (Co-President)
2. May Chen (Co-President)
3. Linda Bentley Gillespie (Treasurer)
4. Gwen Hautefeuille (PTO Newsletter)
5. Sukanya Ghosh (Secretary)
6. Chassity Coston (Principal)
7. Lanni Isenberg (FORJ)
8. Caryn Izhar (CASC)
9. Bridgette LeMarch
10. Amanda Nelson
11. Kelly Qian Tsuchida
12. Jason Strauss
13. Kalimah Knight

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14. Sandy Chin
15. Tui & Adam
16. Susan St. Pierre
17. Heather yu
18. Elizabth Apgar
19. Kwak Yu
20. Tina Simenova
21. Amy Holton
22. Hao Wu
23. Zlatena Simeonova
24. Valerie Cohen
25. Giulia Guffani
26. Linda Lee