

Manning Elementary Parent Council Meeting

10/9/2018

Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 6:30-8:00 pm (Meeting #2 of year)

Attending:

- Marty Mitchell (Special Education Director), in place of Mr. DB
- Parent Council Co-chairs: Beth Schwartzapfel, Malikka Williams, Amanda Lapham
- Other executive committee members present: Letty Storm (secretary), Carin Allen (co-secretary), Victoria Woodward (treasurer), Gabe Shapiro (co-treasurer), Maura Tsongas (school site council rep), Hez Norton (school site council rep), Ian Rea (social media chair), Aimee Rives (citywide parent council rep)
- About 10 other parents – thanks to everyone for coming!

Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions and icebreaker
- Principal check-in (Mr. Mitchell standing in for Mr. DB)
 - Status of new homework policy
 - Developing recess policy
 - Expansion
- Speaking of expansion: Advocacy at the School Committee (Erin Anadu)
- Election and class parent recap. Citywide Parent Council seat election!
- Treasurer update
- Fundraising committee update, including check-in on 501c3/fiscal sponsor (Lisa/Laureen out of town; Maura on 501c3)
- Firm up dates of remainder of fall events
- Proposal: a new community-building/events committee?
- What should we put on future agendas?

Principal's Check In (via Mr. Mitchell)

- Manning has been awarded the title of "Commendation School". There are 52 schools in state. We did great on test scores last year! We are rocking it.
- **Expansion update**, i.e. expanding Manning to Grade 6 or beyond
 - Working with the Boston Schools Fund. Looking to do it in a more strategic way. We have talked with commissioner, and superintendent, but it's not going anywhere. So, we are "going political." *We are looking for parent voices of support!*

- *What does Expansion mean?* This means making the Manning bigger. Expanding to 8th grade (2 strands?), or 6th grade only. We want to create an environment where our students can continue in a supportive, inclusive environment. Some of our students get sent back to in 'substantially separate settings' in middle/high school, which is both "ineffective and immoral".
- The Manning is unique; we work with emotionally-impaired kids in an inclusion setting, no one else is doing it.
- This is in BPS' control but we need to advocate.
- So, how to lobby for this? Mr. M says he is trying to make a case.
- We investigated changing our school status to charter (Horace Mann), but we wouldn't have control over our enrollment. It's an open lottery, we can't designate seats for EI.
- Marge says: What about the concern about facilities? If we ask BPS for something want to make sure that we are clear what we are asking for.
- **Recess Policy**
 - *Issue is:* School practices of withholding recess due to behavioral issues. PC feels there are problems with this approach and wants to be part of writing a fair, balanced policy around this.
 - *History:* PC started a discussion of this last year but didn't get to a written document. Major feedback from last year is that Paraprofessionals in the school need more training.
 - Mr. DB recommends (via Mr. Mitchell): At the next PC meeting (November), we will create a system for feedback. By December, we can have a plan to implement; can be voted on by Site Council in Jan meeting
 - Multiple parents express concern about how long this is taking to resolve. Recess is being taken away now, and a policy that is not getting decided until December is too long. Malikka says: we need to expedite this! Jane: there is a real difficulty of kids resenting each other if they are kept from recess. Beth: Can we ask Mr. DB for a statement of intention/policy to tied us over? Hez: I can take this to Site Council meeting this week or next and work on expediting it.
 - There was a handbook distributed 3-4 years ago, with policies. Why aren't using that? (It is unclear whether this has a recess policy in it).
 - Point: there is some redundancy in these discussions. Same conversation from last year, déjà vu -- why isn't this improving?
- **Homework Policy**
 - *Issue:* what is the purpose of homework at the Manning, and what policy do we have for it?
 - *History:* Last year, PC did a survey on homework but there weren't enough responses. The survey needs to be re-done, needs to reach more people.
 - Then, can put that up against BPS policy and see how it fits; BPS says 30-60 minutes of homework
 - Parent asks: Who is going to write this policy?
- **Questions** for Mr. DB from PC can go to Carin (PC secretary)

Parent Update on Expansion (parents: Jane Miller & Erin Birmingham Anadu)

- Mr. DB has been working hard about expansion for multiple years.
- It is becoming clear that this needs to be a political process; we need to do something to make this happen. Mr. DB ask parents to become political advocates for this issue.

- Looking for parent involvement and new ideas. Also - help from families: Using journalists, political contacts, etc. to engage support.
- We need to do a PR campaign; we need to do a positive/uplifting PR campaign
- **Boston Schools Fund (BSF) has allotted \$722K to the Manning for expansion;** but they can't release these funds until BPS School Council approves it.
- Models from BSF: upper school/lower school; trailer vs. addition
- Maintaining the culture of the Manning: single vs. double strand
- BPS already made this decision in 2004; but it hasn't happened yet. We need to move this forward!
- There are 4 schools looking at expansion from the BSF: Another Course to College (9-12), Boston Immigrant Newcomers Academy; Harvard Kent College
- Case for Manning: There is no Tier 1 option for 6th grade in JP/Ros/Roxbury (there is some in west Roxbury)
- Looking for someone to go to the School Committee meeting tomorrow night to advocate for the Manning. Amanda & Letty volunteer! (Jane & Erin to send them talking points)
- Carin: need to engage more families, esp. new families, or parents of younger grades
- Amanda: needs to be for students who aren't going to BLS/BLA. For those who aren't represented
- Access to bulletin board to post information on this issue.
- Malika/Beth to draft up something about history of this issue

More Elections/roles

- City-wide Parent Council: Aimee volunteers with Paige as alternate. Thank you!
- Social Media co-chair: Andre to take on this role, Aimee to give it up.

Upcoming Events

- Election Day bake sale: Need signups! Malikka is coordinating this.
- Square 1 art: Should we do this before holidays this year (November)? Parents say: Yes!
- Fall dance-a-thon: Friday October 26th. Erin is organizing this.
- REMINDER: Tea clothing school days order: SDF18JPMANNING // website - teaschooldays.com

Update on making Parent Council a 401c3 non-profit (parent: Maura Tsongas)

- 501C3 - IRS changed the restrictions for this
- Question: Does someone in BPS need to bless that? Probably won't get a tax-deductible contribution? Can our PC Exec Committee be a board of directors?
- There is a legal organization (name?) that can guide us on all these questions.

(more next page)

Actions for Parent Council

- Figure out how to engage more support in the community for expansion plans; Draft a PR sheet on expansion issues. Could post on bulletin board outside? (Beth/Malikka)
- Create a new homework survey (Beth/Malikka)
- Ask Mr. DB/school site council to draft an interim recess policy and put pressure on them to move this forward. (School Site Council, along with Beth/Malikka)
- Get passwords to website (Ian, Social Media group)
- Maura to coordinate with Fundraising committee over 501@3
- Contact Catherine Evans about Square One Art program. (Fundraising committee?)

Actions for Manning Community

- **Help with the Election Day Bake Sale.** Tuesday November 6th 7am – 8pm @ school lobby. This is a major fundraiser for the Manning each year. We need your help! We are looking for baked goods contributions and also help with running the sales. Contact parent organizer, Malikka Williams (malikkac@yahoo.com) if you can lend a hand. Note: if making a baked good contribution, it is helpful if the item can be delivered to Malikka the day before the sale.
- **Tea clothing school days:** Shop for our school! Visit the website - teaschooldays.com and use the code SDF18JPMANNING. A portion of the sale will go directly to the Manning.
- **Come to the next Parent Council meeting!** Tuesday November 13th, 6:30-8:00pm @ Manning cafetorium. Childcare & pizza is provided. The Manning Parent Council is a parent-run body that engages in fundraising and support for our school community. It is a fun and meaningful way to be engaged with the school. All are welcome!

Upcoming Calendar Events:

- **Scholastic Book Fair:** Monday Oct 15 – Friday Oct 19. A wonderful reading event for the whole school! Ms. Cahill is still looking for volunteers--contact her at cahillfour@aol.com or 617-635-6831 if you can lend some hours to help.
- **Fall dance-a-thon:** Friday October 26th. Dance your heart out! DJ by Ms. Lubin, K1 teacher.
- **Election Day Bake Sale,** a school fundraiser organized by the Manning Parent Council: Tuesday November 6th 7am – 8pm
- **Parent Council Meeting:** Tuesday November 13th 6:30-8:00pm @ Manning cafetorium.
- **Thanksgiving Recess:** Early release on Wednesday Nov 21, and no school on Thursday 11/22 or Friday 11/23. See you on Monday 11/26!
- **Parent Council Meeting:** Tuesday December 11 6:30-8:00pm @ Manning cafetorium.
- **Holiday Sing Concert:** Friday December 14, 2:00 pm.
- **Winter Recess:** No school, Monday December 24th through January 2nd. See you back at school on Thursday January 3rd 2019.