



## January 13, 2017 – PTO General Body Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Commenced:** 9:31 a.m.

**Board Members Present for General Body Meeting:** *Ezili Mayo-Joseph, President; Jane Archer, VP; Kristen Kenny, VP; Elise Calisi, Secretary; Lin Zhang, Treasurer.*

**Teachers, Parents, Others Present for General Body Meeting:** *Lyndsay Robertson, Michelle Manchanda, Missy LoPorto, Archana Barry, Mallkarjun Kile, Michelle Brown-Droese, Peter Droese, Debbie Dawson (staff), Damian Sugrue (Principal), Nima Gutakatta, Varsha Kulkarni, Durga Nirgudkar, Harima Sharma, Meena Ramakrishnan, Veena Kesavapillai, Mads Srinivasan, Sophia Park, Inbal Worcel, Hechter Makris (nurse), Shanti Vasan, Cini Kannan, Ranjini Reddy, Rashmi Muralidhar, Sara Wilcox, Sanjay Lall, Meghana Nagavkakarti, Mary Tsacoyeanes (teacher), Loretta Crumlish (teacher).*

**Welcome** – *Ezili Mayo-Joseph* welcomed the group.

**Approval of Month Year Minutes** - The minutes of the *December 2016* meeting were presented for review and approved.

First motion to approve minutes – *Sophia Park*

Second motion to approve minutes – *Rashmi Muralidhar*

**Superintendent's Update** Dr. Glenn Brand addressed the group. The ABRSD experienced a loss which has affected all. Emphasis on communication and resources. Maria Trozzi spoke on Wednesday. Dr. Brand realizes there's no way for his office to responsibly communicate to families ahead of social media when crisis communication is needed. He asks families not to expect his office to disseminate information prior to social media reporting. The district carefully plans responses which takes time. Staff is notified first, then families. The district will continue to work on bringing agencies together such as The United Way, local Clergy, Riverside Trauma Center, Danny's Place, and others. The emphasis is on mental health and well-being and awareness.

The new **Strategic Plan's** focus is on social and emotional well-being. The need is critical. It is forthcoming and on website. The importance of sleep in children is a consideration for schedule. Too early start times at the Jr. High and HS are not good for health (7:15 a.m. is too early). Busing is the reason. Recommendation is to change start times at secondary level. There are budget issues. Changes will implement next school year at earliest. Decision will be made next school year. Work continues next year's budget. Request presented to school committee next Saturday. Capital improvements are identified. This is on the website.

**Q&A:** Change timing is welcomed by the group. Q: Should parents talk to very young children? 4<sup>th</sup> grade? Parents wonder what the reasons are behind suicides. A: Teachers at affected school communicated it to students with guidance from experts on this issue. Teachers at all other schools are ready to respond to questions if needed. Drawing attention to the issue is not advised by experts. Q:

CDC “suicide cluster” in AB? Town response? Focus on boys? A: This is not identified as a cluster now. There is no known connection between the deceased. The district is not moving on, they’re finding avenues to understanding and help. It is a nationwide health epidemic. It is a community, not just a school, issue. Asst. Superintendents working to form coalition. Mass Suicide Prevention is a resource.

**Acton Finance Committee Update:** Bob and Mike gave the update. Town meeting is in April and town budget is decided on. 9 members present to selectmen and school committee. Where are needs? No operating over-ride. Cost is more than desired. Compare AB to other towns: Median Family Income=\$149,882 (40% county, 73% state); Avg. house price \$502,000. Unemployment down 3.2%, taxes up 4.7%, housing value up 0.6%. Thank you to the committee. Involvement is highly encouraged to all members of the community. Find your voice and take advantage of opportunities. School committee needs more diversity. All of Acton needs to be represented.

**Principal’s Update:** Damian Sugrue addressed the group. MCAS is approaching. 4<sup>th</sup> grade will access test on computer. Parents make sure kids eat, get enough sleep, and feel supported. Teachers look more for progress with work, social, and emotional life at school. School Committee website has information on budget. ELL need at Conant has increased.

**Games Night** (Ranjini and Sara) Gamewright Jan 20 at 7:00 p.m. It’s a community building event and attendees can bring their own games to play. Change to purchase games too. Teachers will get one game for their classroom with PTO money (vote to buy the games for teachers – pass). **Kids Protection Planning Workshop** (Ranjini) – Thursday Feb. 2, parents only, RSVP needed. Great resource and important information for families who have recently moved to this country. **Kindergarten Tours** (Ezili) – Different format this year, parent volunteers will only greet and answer questions, not lead the tour. **Picture Day Contract** (Ezili) Vote to do 2-year contract approved. **Open Positions** (Jane) Flyer going home soon—*Craft Fair (need 2), Book Fair, Games Night, Bowling, and Grants.*

Meeting Adjourned: 10:37 a.m.

Minutes Typed By: *Elise Calisi*