

## **Dover PTO General Meeting September 17th, 2010**

A general meeting of the Dover PTO was held in the Chickering Elementary School cafeteria, starting at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 17th, 2010. Ms. Anne Nolen and Ms. Megan Field, PTO Co-Presidents, presided. Ms. Pam LoDato, Secretary, recorded the minutes. There were approximately 30 people in attendance. Ms. Nolen and Ms. Field called the meeting to order and welcomed all the attendees. The PTO's theme this year will be "A New Beginning". Dr. Terry Nugent, the new principal of Chickering, was introduced and invited to make opening comments.

### **Principal's Report**

Dr. Nugent started by saying how struck she has been by the level of caring in the Chickering community and by the enthusiastic parental involvement. She quoted research that student performance improves in a school where there is parent involvement. Further, the PTO funded enrichment programs are just like having Christmas every month. Dr. Nugent encouraged the parents to go watch the students and the artist create the lobby mosaic mural over the coming weeks. The muralist, Josh Winer, has been talking to each art class about the creative process, while they work together on the piece.

The Chickering Open House will be on September 23rd from 7-8:30 in the evening. The format will change from last year. The presentation to the parents will center on the global school goals and the teachers' professional goals. There will also be 2 fifteen minute periods with the classroom teachers. Topics to be covered in the class will include the teacher's communication and teaching styles. Each teacher will do it her/his own way. There will be a 10 minute break between the classroom periods.

All schools in the Dover/Sherborn districts have new websites up and running. Chickering will begin to post the weekly newsletter on the website versus sending out the link, as has been done in recent years. The hope is this will push more people to go to the website. The PTO expressed some concerns about the change and the implications if less people were reading the information about events at the school. The school is willing to send out the first couple of weekly newsletters with a reminder e-mail which should acquaint parents to the change.

The individual 2010 MCAS data will be coming home via mail for privacy reasons. There was concern with student sharing if the information was sent via backpacks. The data includes a new student growth model. Mr. Bliss, Assistant Superintendent, has good information on the website to explain the different parts of the score.

Dr. Nugent said that the MCAS are a high stakes test but you can not rely on one data source to evaluate an individual or a school. Individual performance at the elementary level is very uneven. Some students develop difficulties in school but eventually get over it. By seventh grade, student abilities become more clear. At Chickering, student

evaluation includes teacher inputs and observations and tests such as Dibbles, DRA and Galileos. A key factor to a child's success is intrinsic motivation. At the elementary age, the children are more motivated by pleasing their teachers and parents. Chickering's goal is to help each child reach his or her potential.

Dr. Nugent said that the Dover/Sherborn Regional Schools excel at the MCAS. The high school was ranked second best in the state in the current issue of Boston Magazine. Despite this success the schools are always looking for ways to improve performance.

### **Co-Presidents' Report**

Ms. Nolen thanked Dr. Nugent for her comments. Ms. Nolen said that Dr. Nugent has made everyone at the school feel welcomed. She greets the students in the lobby in the morning, goes into classes and visits the cafeteria and playground. Dr. Nugent sees the PTO as a key player and the group that brings the community into the school to support the teachers and staff. Ms. Nolen described Dr. Nugent as a true leader.

Ms. Anne Nolen and Ms. Megan Field started a PTO powerpoint presentation. The Dover PTO's mission is to build the Chickering community. How this is done is through 1) enabling communications, 2) providing volunteer services, and 3) funding Chickering projects. Ms. Siobhan Doherty is the PTO volunteer chair and the PTO would welcome more volunteers from the community.

The PTO's annual budget of \$74,300 for 2010-11, on a percentage basis, is spent 43% (\$31,900) on direct classroom/teacher support, and 42% (\$31,200) on curriculum enrichment (CE) programs. The CE directly complements what is going on in the classroom. Ms. Mary Yanke is the chair for these programs, which include classroom author visits, hands on science programs, and visits by the Wampanoag Indians. Chickering community events represent 12% (\$9,100) of the budget for such things as the back to school picnic and other events at the school. The PTO administrative expenses are only about 3% (\$2,100) of the total. If there are any questions on the budget, the PTO treasurer, Ms. Barbara Dawley is available.

Dover PTO 2010-11 initiatives are being called A New Beginning, as the community welcomes and supports our new principal. The PTO will continue to sponsor community building events such as the Dover Day rides, new parent coffees and the October 22nd Fashion Show, to be held at the Dedham Country Club. The PTO will support new student driven community service, led by Ms. Kristin Brophy. This year, the waste free lunches will continue and the PTO volunteers will add composting to help teach the students about recycling.

The PTO will continue to sponsor monthly staff appreciation events, led by Co-Vice Presidents, Ms. Missy Gramer and Ms. Gina Doyle. This year each grade will sponsor a luncheon, coordinated through the room parents. Ms. Karen Baptista will be the volunteer leader to support the playground renewal initiatives. The PTO, through Ms. Sharon Paul and Ms. Wendy Darragh, will continue the METCO host family program to

help these students feel welcomed and supported. Fundraising this year will be led by Ms. Suzanne Nystrom and center on a check writing campaign. There will be no labor intensive auction event, which was such a success last spring.

The Dover PTO has contributed over \$184,000 to Chickering capital projects from 2001-2009. In 2010, the PTO bought new musical risers for the chorus for \$8,000. These risers can also be used for many other school assembly purposes and replace 40 year old, outdated equipment. Dr. Nugent has asked the PTO to fund new musical instrument storage, which should cost around \$6,500. The PTO is also looking at funding some playground improvements. There is an additional \$5,000 in PTO grant money that staff can apply for needed items.

Important dates for PTO events include the September 23rd - Back to School Night, and the December/January check writing campaign. As mentioned, there will be a community building event for parents on October 22nd - A Night at the Runway. In February, the PTO will again do the Books from the Heart Week. Teacher appreciation week will be May 10th-14th. The PTO is also considering a kids focused fundraising event, such as a fun run, in the spring.

Finally, as discussed earlier, the websites for the Dover/Sherborn schools has been revamped. Parents should go to the main website: [www.doversherborn.org](http://www.doversherborn.org) and follow the links to Chickering School. The goal is to have more communication driven through visits to the website, including viewing of the weekly Chickering Newsletter. Ms. Field demonstrated online how to find Chickering and the newsletter. The Dover PTO continues to have a separate website. Updates to the PTO website should be sent to Ms. Jody Shue, Communications Chair, and she will interact with our webmaster, Ms. Sara Muckstadt. Backpack flyers will continue where needed.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

The last order of business was approval of the minutes from the last general PTO meeting on June 11th, 2010. Ms. LoDato had distributed the minutes. Ms. Nolen asked if there were any changes to the minutes. Given that there were no comments, there was a motion for the minutes to be accepted.

### **VOTE:**

**To approve the minutes from the June 11th, 2010 general meeting of the Dover PTO.**

The motion was proposed, seconded and passed unanimously.

The next general meeting of the Dover PTO is planned for January 21, 2010.