

Newton Elementary
School Organizational Team Minutes
1-30-25
3:30

The Newton ES School Organizational Team meeting was called to order at 3:30 on 1/30/2025 by Kasey O’Horo. The meeting was held in the Newton Library.

Voting Members present:

Kasey O’Horo, Parent

Gina Topor, Parent (Online)

Rebecca Hickey, Parent

Kristan Sanchez, Parent

Pulamahaheo Berg, Licensed Staff

Samantha Olson, Licensed Staff

Lindsey Douglas, Support Staff

Meaghan McGowan, Principal

Non-Voting Members present:

Ms Yelton, Staff

Ashley, Johnson, Staff

Lisa Ashby, Parent

Janelle Willis, Parent

Amy Riggs, Parent

Ms Scow, Staff

Ms Martin, Staff

Paige Martin, staff

Ms Southam, Staff

Members absent:

None

Online:

Kerri Leonard, Christen Campbell, Stefani Glines, Robin Anderson, Lauren Stacy

Agenda Items

1.0 Welcome, Roll Call, & Approval of Minutes The minutes from the meeting dated 12-5-24 were presented and motion to be approved “as presented” by Kasey O’Horo and Samantha Olson seconded the motion.

2.0 Old Items

2.1 Winter MAP results

2.2 School Performance Plan

2.3 Code of Conduct review and Feedback

2.4 School Events/Updates

3.0 New Items

3.1 Budget Review & Vote

OVERVIEW: Meaghan reviewed and gave further explanation of the budget per the “SY Projected Budget” document. The school’s projected budget amount is much lower than last year. (See document for exact details). Demographics are usually fairly close based on taxes and who moves into the area. School currently has 545 students. No change to budget for special ed. Projected loss of funding breakdown: 17 kids less than last year, which accounts for 1 teacher. Loss of at-risk funding, 1 teacher. \$300 less per student, 1 teacher. 2.5 positions were covered that we were aware would be a loss. Which

accounts for about 6, but to make sure we have support staff and money for the cost of running the building and other programs with some wiggle room, 7 total teachers were cut. When considering which teachers would be lost, it is about seniority.

GOING FORWARD: There are several positions that are NOT part of the school's funding, but are centrally funded: Heller's position, IEDE - special ed, GATE, food. We are hoping to add some hours back in for special ed in the fall, get resource aides up to 6 hours (vs 5), have a full time sub, keep 2 CTTs, 3 teachers per grade level, higher class levels. 3rd grade will need another teacher if there is more funding. So far, teachers that are NOT on the surplus list are planning to stay. Our numbers for recommended class size is right on - which is probably how it was budgeted. Pua asked if teachers that are on the surplus list transfer, are they able to come back/change their mind if we get more funding later? Per Meaghan, no. Current teachers are committed to the end of the school year and teachers on the projected plan have committed for next year. We are starting the year with about \$40k. It is recommended to have \$80-100k. Meaghan is working to have a carryover of current funds to bring that amount up. It goes towards paper, cleaning, opening the building, programs, etc.

CONSIDERATIONS: Meaghan considered splitting counseling, it was agreed to not split. We will have 3 specialists (wanted 4). It was suggested to have only 2 teachers for 5th grade, which would put 39 kids per class. It was agreed to keep a 3rd teacher for 5th. Losing the Assistant Principal was considered, but with the school size it was agreed an AP is needed OR possibly could be shared. Schools that are getting rid of APs are schools that have multiple APs. Some programs/positions cannot be cut: Art, PE, Library, Music. However, the music teacher, Ms Wagstaff is part of the lower 7 for seniority. While the music program will stay, it may be another teacher. However, the school is earnestly working on options to keep Ms Wagstaff specifically and find funds to keep her as the music teacher. But it is unknown now what that will look like.

DECREASE IN FUNDING EXPLAINED: Less students enrolling, less people are having kids. Overall in the area, there are 10 less kids per school. Schools are given per pupil funding for students. Funds given per class size recommendations. However, it is funded every 2 years, and bills are always paid first by the district (including lawsuits that arise). THEN, it is divided up as evenly as possible. So by year 2, less funding is available. As a comparison, during COVID, cost per kid was between 10-12k. The minimum base is 6k. Right now, we have been given \$7,749 per student. Meaghan addressed some of the things that affect funding: star rating, at-risk students (socioeconomic, not on track to graduate), special needs, etc. Weighted funding is adjusted every year. Everything is PROJECTED, so decisions have to be made based on this funding, but figures could change up or down. The school has to balance the funds and vote to approve before we (and the district) can move on. There is always hope that the amount will increase.

BUDGET SUGGESTIONS

- Can music specialist and AP's be split among schools?
- Per Samantha Olson, teachers are able to split a contract if both parties agree and work part time.
- Can we start music as a SOSA?
- Can the office aide position be cut or shifted to give more academic support to students? If additional office help is needed, see if parents are available to volunteer?
- Can we do another Penny Wars at the beginning of the school year?
- Can PTO activities focus only on what brings in the most money to cut down on regular financial requests to parents?
- Can parents help to pay for Lexia?
- Fundraising, Pua has a flyer about selling popcorn online
- Business sponsors, Gina was going to check on a source

- One custodian quit, is it possible to eliminate that position? People already complain about cleanliness at the school, what other obligation would that add to teachers?
- Rebecca asked about the 2 CTT positions; teacher's reinforced that those could not be cut in addition to the loss of teachers. CTTs work directly with students in need.

FOLLOW UP: Meaghan will look into the following options before voting:

- splitting APs
- cutting the office aid position OR shifting the position to work directly with students/ in-classroom
- splitting a music specialist
- staff meeting about eliminating a custodian's position
- splitting a custodian

REMARKS: Time was short so we will reconvene to vote, before February 7th. Kasey stated that she is sad about the situation and the music program is a stressor. She appreciates the flexibility of the teachers. The plan is as good as we can imagine under the circumstances.

3.2 School Events/Updates

GROWTH MINDSET School Counselor, Ashley, presented about goals and goal setting. This month is focusing on a growth mindset with each grade level. The continuous improvement plan talks about a goal of improving the data by 30%. Last year, about 20% of kids felt they had a growth mindset. Currently, about 80% of kids have a growth mindset. Goal achieved!! Ashley gives credit to teachers that are reinforcing this in the classrooms daily.

CAREER DAY Coming in March; Ashley only has about half of her speakers. More people are needed and anyone that wants to come in on Thursday for pre-K kids. It was asked if animals are allowed, Ashley would have to check with teachers and parents about allergies.

COUNSELOR'S WEEK Next week is counselor's week. See flyers that will go home with kids for more info.

4.0 Information

4.1 Next Meeting: Newton Elementary, February 4, 2025 Tuesday 3:30.

5.0 Public Comment Period (Two (2) minutes maximum allotted)

Janelle Willis, parent, wants to go on record to say music is very important. Evidence shows it improves learning across the board. She hopes we can find ways to save and have a true designated music program. Seconded by Lisa Ashby.

6.0 Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 4:37 pm by Kasey O'Horo, 2nd by Samantha Olson.