



Bancroft PTO General Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2021 - Virtual

PTO Board Attendees:

Sara Wells
Sandra Adourian
Christina Baker
Sandis Wright
Katja Maravelias
Stephanie Barry
Rebecca Peterson
Amy Hamilton
Jayashree Mohandas
Rodney Johnson
Amy Whitehead

Other Attendees:

Interim Superintendent, Dr. Claudia Bach
Principal, Michelle Costa
Assistant Principal, Kimberly Rabold

17 Bancroft Parents representing K-5

Sara called the meeting to order at 7:05

Update From Interim Superintendent, Dr. Bach

Dr. Bach gave a brief summary of her history. Dr. Bach started her superintendent career in 1998. She has worked in urban, suburban, and rural districts over the years. Dr. Bach was superintendent in Andover for 12 years making it a smooth transition into the interim role.

Parents were given the opportunity to ask Dr. Bach questions.

Q: What are the top 3 things you've been surprised by given your time in this role so far?

It has been a relatively easy transition. There is a very positive relationship with the current town manager. This town manager recognizes the support the town needs to give schools. In addition, the town IT team has been amazing. The IT team is working around the clock to make sure teachers and students have the resources they need.

Q: There has been chatter in other school districts about potentially converting back to full time in school before the end of the year. Is this something our district is considering?

President Biden and the Secretary of Education want all children in school (full time), within 100 days, but that is very open ended. Dr. Bach asked parents to hold steady during this scary time. Currently, the curve isn't being "flattened" and numbers are on the rise. That said, Dr. Bach has asked every school to begin gathering data on what is needed to reopen. Each principal will work with their teachers to identify both the big and small steps that need to be taken to reopen. Every school will be different. If each school is able to adjust a little bit now, it will be a much easier transition back into full time.

Q: Is it possible to start a committee now that will plan for reopening?

Yes, it has already started. Dr. Bach sent out her action plan to principals and the school committee to start the work around a reopening plan.

Q: Curious how you would leverage your relationships and prior experience to build better relationships with the Town/SC/AEA?

Dr. Bach believes that there is a good relationship with the town in place. Parents need to remember that 70% of town residents don't have children in schools so it could be difficult to engage that population. As for teachers, Dr. Bach wants them to be in charge. The district is about to enter union negotiations which is always tricky, but Dr. Bach will make it a priority to keep an open door policy with teachers.

Q: What is the plan to improve hybrid education before we can get back to in-person education (can we increase synchronous learning/reduce reliance on applications/independent learning)

Every parent has a different experience and opinion. It will vary teacher by teacher. Teachers are exhausted and they all can't wait to get back in school 100%.

APS Service Day

Michelle Costa recognized all the hard work Sandis Write and Stephanie Barry put in to make the first APS service day a success. While the event was district wide, it originated at Bancroft. The pictures and feedback prove that it was wildly successful.

Update on Teacher Morale

Teachers are exhausted. While the increase in synchronous learning did come as a state mandate, it has gone very well for Bancroft. Michelle and Kim are taking the time to interview each teacher to see how they are handling synchronous learning and if there is any support they need.

In addition, Michelle (and teachers) are very grateful for the culture fund. This fund has become essentially in helping keep teachers morale high.

Kindergarten Registration

It will likely start in February, but instead of just being a few days in which parents can come into school to drop off forms, it will be spread over a longer period of time. In years past, over 100 people would stop into the office over the 2 day registration period. That method is not safe for the current times.

Tools for Parents

Parents are requesting more tips and tricks to make at home learning better. Michelle promised to resend a document with at home expectations, but reminded parents that they should only have 1-2 goals for their child. She also reminded parents that every child is unique, so if something isn't working then the school will be flexible. Michelle also encouraged parents to reach out to her directly for specific suggestions for their child.