



# MERRYMOUNT PTO

General Meeting  
October 5, 2017 | 7-8PM



## Meeting Minutes

- I. **Call to Order** - The General Meeting of the Merrymount PTO was held on Thursday, October 5th, 2017, at 7:00p.m. at the Merrymount Elementary School, on 4 Agawam Road, Quincy, MA. It was presided over by Co-Presidents, Alexis McLean and Stephanie Gallegos and recorded by Secretary, Jen Andre.
- II. **Welcome and Introductions** – Mrs. Pegg welcomed parents, faculty and Mayor Koch to the first Merrymount PTO meeting of the school year.
- III. **Mayor Tom Koch** – Mayor Koch greeted and thanked the PTO for inviting him. He shared that Merrymount is the third school PTO meeting he has attended this fall (preceded by Squantum and Wollaston). Mayor Koch then welcomed questions from the PTO:

***PLEASE NOTE: Prior to and throughout answering questions, Mayor Koch reiterated that he represents one seat on the School Committee. He encouraged parents to raise such concerns and topics during Open Forum at the beginning of each School Committee meeting. He also shared that Citywide PTO is another great forum to collaborate with other schools in the district. Both [School Committee](#) and [Citywide PTO](#) schedules can be found on [QPS Website](#). Maren Heise is Merrymount's Citywide PTO Representative.***

- Jen Chen inquired about the impact of Quincy development on our schools. Mayor Koch said they are cognizant of the impact and are planning for it. He also shared that substantial upgrades and improvements are to be made to the Squantum School and that the capital plan includes a new elementary school at the site of the former St. Mary's School in West Quincy. He said this will alleviate overburdened schools and once underway, we will be in a position to discuss effective redistricting.
- **Driveway/Parking Area:**
  - Maren Heise raised that the School driveway/parking area is in disrepair and inquired whether plans were underway to address this.
  - Mayor Koch shared that the City Council approved a major road improvement plan, which would include resurfacing.
  - Laurie Giza explained that the driveway/parking area serves as a recreational space, and the PTO/School Council would like to paint the pavement with activities (e.g. State Map). She requested that the city work with our administration/School Council to plan the resurfacing project.
- **Recess:**
  - Kristin Healy raised concerns about the lack of dedicated recess time at Merrymount and asked about district policies regarding recess.
  - Mayor Koch explained that there are currently no formal citywide policies. He explained that educational reform shifted power from school committees to the individual school's principal.

- Several other parents shared their concerns about the lack of recess and outdoor time.
  - Mrs. Pegg explained that school scheduling must abide by Time on Task and other contractual requirements and that the staff does whatever they can to encourage gross motor development, free play and outdoor time within the scheduling requirements allotted. She explained that teachers also try to incorporate it into their lessons (e.g. Science, GoNoodle).
  - Jennie Torres suggested that given limited time allotted, that Active/Facilitated Recess activities, such as those provided by PlayWorks be considered
  - Paige Reilly praised the efforts being made by Merrymount teachers and faculty to enrich students' experiences, feels that most go above and beyond and truly care about the best interest of the children.
  - Mayor Koch said this is the first time he has heard concerns about recess and that he would discuss it with the superintendent, and about whether there is a need for standardization.
- **Lead Pipes**
    - Greg Whitman inquired about lead pipes and lead pipe remediation.
    - Mayor Koch acknowledged that the buildings are old, but the city is ahead of the curve in remediation. He stated that all bubblers have been replaced, but would need to review reports and speak to public works staff about the specifics of Merrymount.
    - Greg, asked if there are any federal/state grants available to aid in remediation; Mayor Koch stated there are none known at this time.
  - Greg Whitman questioned, given the recent roof work at the school, if the City had considered renting out the roof for film production or events as another means of income. Mayor Koch said they have not.
  - **Perkins Field Playground**
    - A few parents asked for clarification about use of the Perkins Fields Playground. They explained that students are not allowed to use the playground during school hours because they were told it does not belong to the school.
    - The Mayor confirmed that Perkins fields is not under the jurisdiction of Quincy Public Schools (under the Superintendent). It is under the jurisdiction on City Parks and Recreation
    - He said that even though it is not under the jurisdiction of the Schools, there is no reason that the playground can't be used the by school. The playgrounds are for use by the children.

**IV. Review of PTO Financials** – Jen Curran reported that the due to the purchase of Chromebooks over the summer (~\$13k) the PTO Budget is depleted. The Fall Fundraiser is critical to replenish funds, which will allow the PTO to continue to sponsor enrichment activities and support school needs.

**V. Review of PTO Event Calendar** – Link: [PTO Event Calendar](#)

**VI. Upcoming Event Updates:**

- **Fall Raffle** – Fall Raffle is intended to be the major fundraiser to replenish PTO funds.
  - Flyers and tickets were sent home with each child; the goal is for each child to sell 10 tickets
  - Cash prizes will be awarded and winners will be drawn at Breakfast with Santa (12/9)

- Incentives will be offered to top selling classrooms, grades and children; Look for more information about incentives in coming weeks.
- **Square 1 Art** is a way to raise funds, while supporting the arts and children's creativity.
  - The Children create artwork in Media Center, under the direction of Ms. Bina (the librarian) and consultation with Mr. Boughton (the art teacher), which can then be made into a variety of keepsakes for purchase.
  - Artwork will be submitted to the Square 1 by Oct 20th. Square 1 will create proofs for parents to preview and order. Orders will be delivered prior to December break so would make nice gifts.
  - Laurie Giza asked about how this was being explained to the children, if all children are participating, what guidance they are being provided and if/how parents will be informed.
  - Alexis and Mrs. Pegg explained that all children are participating as part of Media Center, under the direction and with the assistance of Ms. Bina (the librarian), who has worked with the art teacher for ideas and suggestions for the children. Alexis explained that extra art sheets are available if children would like to work on them at home or for siblings. Parents will be receiving a notice about ordering in coming weeks.
- **Halloween Howl** – This event was extremely successful and well attended last year. As a result, a DJ has been hired and there will be games, dancing and crafts. Ticket price is \$5/child or \$10/family for advance purchase and \$6 /\$12 at the door, ticket includes pizza and water. This year siblings are also invited.
- **International Night** – Paige Reilly shared that that this will be the 5<sup>th</sup> year of this popular event. It brings the school community together to celebrate our diversity. Families and teacher's set-up tables sharing their backgrounds, customs, food and crafts. Each year students/families perform (dancing, singing) and there's lots of yummy food to try. Stay tuned for notices about the event in coming weeks.
- **Fun Run/March Madness** – Alexis explained that the event will take place at school in the gym. We are partnering with fundraising company *Boosterthon* who will be on-site to coordinate, promote and run the event. Students raise funds by getting sponsored for each lap. There are fun social media activities to assist in fundraising and generate competition. There will be activities throughout weeks leading up to the run and ALL students will participate in the Fun Run (even if they don't raise money). The run will be in the dark with glow sticks and black lights.
- Parents inquired whether they could attend the event. Alexis and Stephanie will research and clarify in future event communications.

**VII. Announcements:** Citywide PTO School Committee Candidates Night – Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM

**VIII. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:05p.m.

To submit future meeting topics email [secretary@merrymountschoolpto.com](mailto:secretary@merrymountschoolpto.com)

For meeting minutes, click: <http://www.merrymountschoolpto.com/pto-resources/meeting-minutes/>