

Business Updates and Approval of Minutes:

- International Festival Organizational Meeting will be held Tuesday, January 11 at 6:30 in the Burr Library.
- Volunteers needed to put out cones at the Blue Zone.
- The October minutes were read, there was a motion to accept, it was seconded and they were approved.

Newton Public Schools Progress Reports

Lisa Mirabile introduced Cindy Bencal to give an overview of Standards-Based Education and the new Progress Reports that will be issued at the end of January. Massachusetts Standards-Based Education says that curriculum is to be focused on standards which are presented in the State Frameworks.

In 1999, Newton created Grade Level Benchmarks based on the State's Standards-Based Education.

A Progress Report Committee recommended:

- 1) District-wide Progress Reports - issued at midyear and end of year.
- 2) Parent Conferences – at least twice a year
- 3) Progress Portfolio – to be developed district wide.

Progress Report – Year 1

- Reviewed drafts of reports
- K-5 teachers gave feedback
- Shared feedback with PTO council
- Redrafted the reports
- Piloted Progress Reports in some schools with volunteer teachers

Progress Report – Year 2

- Implement Progress Report in all elementary schools
- Professional Development for teachers
- Gather feedback to refine reports

Progress Report – Year 3

- Web-based Progress Reports – blank version on computer for teachers.

Cindy then introduced Janet Buerklin to further discuss the specifics of the grade level benchmarks and the grading system teachers will be using.

Janet explained the two portions of the grading system: **Performance** vs. **Progress**.

- **Performance** is based on how the student compares to a specific standard with levels ranging from
 - a) Developing: student demonstrates progress toward the end of the year level benchmark.
 - b) Proficiency: student has demonstrated the targeted degree of knowledge and skill in the identified area.
 - c) Exceeds: student applies or transfers knowledge to other situations beyond the identified standards.

- **Progress** is based on how much growth and movement a student has made toward reaching the standard and becoming proficient.
 - a) Minimal: student demonstrates little or no progress during the reporting period.
 - b) Consistent: student demonstrates moderate progress during the reporting period.
 - c) Substantial: student demonstrates significant progress during the reporting period.

The teachers will only be writing specific comments on the “Personal and Social Growth” page for the first Progress Report.

More detailed information will accompany the Progress Reports as well as a feedback form for parents to complete to help make revisions as needed.

Tsunami Relief

Cindy discussed that teachers have been “listening” to students to see if there is talk about the recent Tsunami disaster in Asia. If so, teachers are talking with the class to inform and reassure them.

It was decided that each school can decide what they would like to do to help. Several ideas were discussed:

- long-term help for a school or classroom
- Hat/slipper day – pay \$1.00/ticket to wear hat and/or slippers to school and then donate money to a designated relief organization.

Meeting was adjourned.