

GN School Connections  
Meeting Minutes  
10/4/18, 4:15, Room 211

**Attendance:** Diana Fisher Gomberg, School Committee; David Stickney, Dir of Facilities  
Mindy, Joana, Skye Tausig, Heather Tausig, Mary (Newton Solid Waste Commission), Wendy, Alison,  
Karen Bray, Hilary, Reva (NCF), Marcia, Carolyn, Becka, Andy

Regular business

Need to further explore teaching green practices (and engaging parents) thru Newton's Creative Arts and Sciences program.

Per Mindy, Zeras principal is set to implement cafeteria composting. Planning 1st, then get teachers involved. 5th grade will run. Waneta is identifying a vendor to collect organics -- either anaerobic digester or commercial composter.

Joanna says awareness of the Green Team (GT) is growing at Bigelow. PTO is supportive, but no bodies yet.

Skye Tausig, a junior at NSHS, mentioned that Sally Rosen is the informal recycling coordinator. (Mom, Heather, conducted the survey at NS; was previously a GN Board member)

Wendy Sheu is starting up the Green Team at Mason Rice. She currently runs an afterschool environmental club for 3rd - 5th graders

Update on custodians per David:

They currently have a 1 year contract. From David's perspective, custodians must remove waste from schools. He suggests stronger education at the front end to improve the actual disposal of recyclables. Can Andy Gluck's model be rolled out? There is probably also some misperception among custodians, but they shouldn't make subjective decisions about recycling. The education piece is not there yet. Once it is in place, there will be support for it within the facilities.

Waneta shared models of signage. 2 sets: one for classrooms/offices and one for cafeteria. <How will these be delivered to schools? Installed?>

9 schools currently have to recycling in their cafeterias.

Waneta is in the middle of the 2-month residential education, so no ability to undertake additional projects at present.

When new schools, Angier and Zervas, get recycling rooms up and running, they will serve as models for other schools.

If school GTs register with state, they can get free recycling bins for every classroom. We need uniformity of placement in classrooms (next to trash) and uniform placement of signage.

Cartons (like milk cartons) are no longer accepted in recycling.

We need to get principals to buy-in, have them introduce new practices to staff. Current set up is what's easiest for custodial staff. Struggle is between what we want and what ISD allows. Issues about weight and lifting heavy items above a certain level. Need equipment that can lift and dump. NS has dock loaders. Challenge is moving recycling from A to B.

David Stickney reports that NNHS system works really well. (Anndy's response?)

Hilary reports that Williams custodians still don't have correct knowledge: they are placing plastic liners in recycle bins. No bags allowed in recycling!

David Stickney reports that Joe Crossen, the facilities manager, is doing new things with custodians. He is training them on safety. He can train them on recycling.

**Ask School Committee to dedicate resources to a Sustainability Coordinator. This Coordinator would be responsible for institutionalizing sustainable practices in our schools. We should draft a policy for School Committee -- with student involvement. Should include specific goals and needs.**

School Committee (SC) is responsible for policy, budget, not what happens IN schools. That's School Department. Policies are usually quite general: recycle AMAP.

SC's general budget cycle: June, figure out district-wide goals, where to set priorities (right now, probably full-day KG; they are committed to get to a decision)

Start with a proposal for a specific green goal. We also need buy-in from the School Dept.  
**Suggest that Superintendent make it a budget proposal for the year?**

**2-pronged approach:**

1. Raise visibility of grass roots piece (letters to School Committee, David Fleischman)
2. Draft clear guidelines of what we'd like DF and SC to do.

Target elementary schools. Students will carry it upward.

Another thought: Waneta needs more staffing. Advocate for her!

School solid waste removal isn't based on tonnage. It's based on # of pickups.

School Connections **GOALS FOR THIS YEAR:**

- 1) Develop Green Team at each school (As of 9/18, we have active teams or a champion at Burr, Mason-Rice, Peirce, Underwood, Williams, Bigelow, Brown and NNHS)
  - a) Contact Lincoln-Eliot to learn more about their effort/champion
  - b) Attend Green EXPO and drum up interest
  - c) Post School Connections info regularly on GN website
    - i) Possible to post school videos? Parental permission concerns....
  - d) Post School Connections info regularly on social media
    - i) Hilary B: Facebook group of Newton Parents
    - ii) Other?
- 2) Develop relationship with School Committee
  - a) Marcia will invite Matthew Miller to join us on 10/4
  - b) Advocate for School Recycling policy
  - c) Advocate for Green Wednesday policy
  - d) Study viability of applying for Mass DEP grant; how can we get there? (Green Teams at each school)
- 3) Explore developing standards-aligned curriculum
  - a) For Waneta to take into KG classrooms
  - b) For assemblies (similar to Understanding our Differences or Creative Arts and Sciences)
- 4) Examine how we can support not only recycling and composting, but also waste REDUCTION in schools

Individual Green Team **GOALS FOR THIS YEAR:**

Underwood: Recycling is well-established school-wide so move focus to "Reduce"

Other teams: If you have set a goal for this year, please let me know!