



# McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

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## McCarthy-Towne School Council Report

by David Krane, McT Principal

Each year the McCarthy-Towne School Council submits its report to the School Committee describing the work accomplished on the current School Improvement goals. This year's goals and a brief summary of the work are listed here.

### Goal #1 McCarthy-Towne's Place in a School-Choice Community

We have continued to reach out to the larger Acton community in the same manner as the other four elementary schools in the Acton Public Schools, through School Tours and Kindergarten Information Evenings. McCarthy-Towne, though unique in many ways, has a particular distinction in that we are the only elementary school to have a staff Parent Involvement Coordinator. This is a crucial part of our school as the Parent Involvement Coordinator manages all of the community events within our school but takes on a tremendous role in the Kindergarten Tours and the presentation of our school to the families who are entering Kindergarten or who are considering our school as they make a move into Acton. We will ensure that McT's values are supported and remain the foundation of the school's programs and articulate that to the Acton school-going public. We are proud of how we integrate the arts into curriculum and how we consider the academic and social needs of the whole child, and we will continue to welcome children of all abilities to our school.

### Goal #2 Math

By not making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) in a student subgroup in the Mathematics portion of the MCAS in the spring of 2010, a number of state imposed sanctions were put into place in the fall of 2010. The school responded by establishing study groups to perform data analysis and forming professional development goals around the teaching of mathematics, among other approaches to addressing the needs identified by the Massachusetts DESE. McCarthy-Towne School Council

also amended its School Improvement Plan to reflect those actions taken by the school. In January 2011, the DESE "recalculated" it's scoring of how this student subgroup performed and found that AYP had actually occurred. The sanctions have been lifted, but the School Council believes that it is beneficial to keep the approaches taken in response intact for next year.

### Goal #3 Bullying Prevention and the Responsive Classroom

The McCarthy-Towne School faculty and staff have made a concerted effort to learn more about using the Responsive Classroom model in our classrooms and in our community. The entire school took part in a site-based professional development day in the fall, directed by a trainer from the Northeast Foundation for Children in an all day workshop. A year-long, teacher-led, study group used this day as the foundation for a careful look at teacher practice using the book *The Power of Our Words* as we explored "teacher language that helps children learn" and take responsibility for their academic and social behaviors. The trainer returned for a day in the spring as he observed teacher practice, provided feedback, and spoke about his school-wide observations. There will be five teachers attending a week long training workshop this summer in Responsive Classroom techniques. This social competency model will take a pre-emptive and proactive approach to preventing bullying at McCarthy-Towne.

### School Improvement Plan Goals for 2011-2012

**Goal #1:** Explore ways in which McT can celebrate its unique qualities in a school-choice community. We will:

- Ensure that McT's values are supported and remain the foundation of the school's programs.

## Mark Your Calendar

### JUNE

#### 5, Sunday

Re-scheduled Parker Damon Clean up Day, 2-4 PM

#### 8, Wednesday

Community Assembly  
PTSO Meeting, 7PM

#### 9, Thursday

Parent Appreciation Reception, 9:30-11:30 AM  
CPAC Performance

#### 14, Tuesday

Scrip orders due by 10 AM

#### 16, Thursday

Ice Cream Social, 5:30-7:30 PM

#### 21, Tuesday

Last Day of School, Early Dismissal (1 PM), No PM Kindergarten

### AUGUST

#### 19, Friday

Student Placement available online at 3 PM

#### 26, Friday

Class lists available online

#### 30, Tuesday

First Day of School, 8:30 AM

### SEPTEMBER

#### 2-4

NO SCHOOL, Labor Day Weekend

*continued on page 2*

- Enhance and continue communication of McT values and strengths to the school community, including families and students, the APS District, the Administration, and to the greater Acton community.
- Underscore the critical importance of the integration of the visual arts into the classroom curriculum.

**Goal#2:** Focus on advancing the mathematical concepts and skills of the students at McT. The faculty will:

- Continue grade level discussions and study to refine and increase the understanding of the level of student concept/skill mastery and how these are assessed.
- Participate in professional development activities in order to improve instruction and support curriculum.
- Integrate personnel and resources recently made available by the APS into mathematics instruction and curriculum.

**Goal #3:** To incorporate and integrate the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy into McCarthy-Towne's current policy regarding behavior. We will continue to:

- Take a pro-active, educational approach to creating a positive social environment that fosters respect and compassion for all.
- Train the faculty and staff in the methods and philosophies of the Responsive Classroom social curriculum using peer-to-peer coaching, in-house and off-site workshops.

**Goal #4:** District Literacy Goal

Election of new faculty and parent representatives of the McCarthy-Towne School Council for the coming school year usually takes place in June, before the end of the current school year. Please talk to Patty Lee if you are interested in becoming a member of the School Council.

I would like to thank all the members of the School Council for all of their hard work in what could have been a trying year. Their unflagging enthusiasm and clear commitment to our school made this a very suc-



## from Tammy Sarnelli and Michele Caterina, PTSO co-chairs

We'd like to extend a big thank you to all those who kindly donated to the Spring Emergency Appeal! **We raised \$6,991** to date and donations are still coming in as of this writing! Our children benefit directly from these funds in the form of classroom assistants and cultural activities. They will have a fun and productive year next year thanks to your generosity! **The Yard Sale was also a big success and raised just over \$3,300 for our school.** We extend a big thank you to the Yard Sale chairs, as well as all those who volunteered their time to sort, price, sell, and clean up after the event.

Assistance to run the school is required in many forms at McCarthy Towne—sometimes it is monetary help that is needed, sometimes we need volunteers. Speaking of, **we are still looking for people to chair a few of next year's committees.** The Junior Chair position is also open, who would work directly with Michele Caterina to help run the PTSO. Can you spare some time to help? If you are interested in chairing a committee, please contact Stacy Harris, the PTSO Nominations Chair ([askquixote@verizon.net](mailto:askquixote@verizon.net)), Tammy Sarnelli ([tammy.sarnelli@biogenidec.com](mailto:tammy.sarnelli@biogenidec.com)), or Michele Caterina ([michelecaterina1@gmail.com](mailto:michelecaterina1@gmail.com)). We will gladly explain any position you might be interested in and we'd love your help! **Look descriptions of the current open positions on page 5.**

The June PTSO meeting is an important one, since we are approving budget items for the 2011–2012 school year. Your input at this meeting and every one is essential. **Please join us on June 8 at 7 PM** in the Faculty Lounge on the 2nd Floor of the Parker Damon building. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**Finally, the Ice Cream Social will be held on June 16 from 5:30–7:30 PM.** We all look forward to this enjoyable community time together for McT parents and kids. For anyone who has not attended yet, the night is focused around ice cream sundaes with yummy ice cream from Kimballs! There is also pizza available for purchase and lots of fun games set up in the gym for the kids. This year, there will also be a few fun surprises. It's a great night for all and we hope you can attend.

We look forward to seeing you at any and all of the school and PTSO events this month.

## Second Chance for Garden Clean-Up!

Due to the rain a couple weeks ago, the Parker Damon Grounds Cleanup is rescheduled to **Sunday, June 5th from 1–4 PM**. Make a difference to the outdoor gardens and grounds your children enjoy EVERYDAY! The landscaping of the grounds is done only by volunteers and we need you.

McT families are important to this effort. We would love YOUR help us this year! We need help cleaning up the garden beds and grounds around the school and play areas. Bring your rakes, weeding tools and wheelbarrows... The whole family is welcome! Come help can make our school grounds look beautiful!

Can't help Sunday? Contact us to find out what other days we will be out there weeding or planting. Contact Karen Dean (dkdean83@gmail.com or 978-274-2084) with questions or for more information.

## 2011–2012 Student Directory

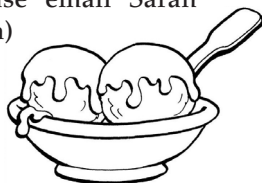
The PTSO will once again be offering the placement of business and personal ads at a discounted rate for parents of McCarthy Towne Children in the upcoming Student Directory to be distributed in the Fall. If you have a personal business you would like to advertise (construction, consulting, finance, etc.) or would like to place a personal ad for your child/children (Congratulations, Happy Birthday, Good Luck, etc.) please contact Lauren Richardt (laurenrichardt@yahoo.com) for personal ads or Kerstin Mendelsohn (kerstin@mendelsohns.net) for business ads and further information. The deadline to submit ads will be Friday, September 30.

## Ice Cream Social: Tickets on Sale Soon!

Keep an eye out for summer-starting fun! **Tickets go on sale this week for McT's annual Ice Cream Social, Thursday June 16 from 5:30–7:30 PM**. Watch backpacks for advance ticket sales forms, which will save you time at the entrance that night. You don't want to miss a moment of the end-of-the-year socializing with family and friends!

\$3 buys you a scrumptious Kimball's ice cream sundae with your favorite toppings. \$7 earns you a sundae plus unlimited fun activities and crafts, carnival games, face painting, and tattoos. Tasty pizza slices will be on sale at the social for \$2 each.

We still need volunteers for this event—for planning, setup, during, and after—so please email Sarah Auerbach (sbauerbach@gmail.com) if you're interested in volunteering. You can also contact Tracey Smith (tracey@gristmillmedia.com) with any questions.



## Last Chance for Scrips



Thank you to all the families that ordered Scrips in May; **we have made about \$3,800 already this year!** This program really does make a financial difference for McT!

This is your **LAST** chance to stock up on Scrip cards for those merchants you shop every day. This order will have to hold you through the summer! And don't forget the weddings and graduations you have coming up over the next few months. Also, with so many people to thank at this time of year what better way to thank them than with a gift card to a local merchant. We have so many to choose from. The specials this month are highlighted in bold on the order form.

Are you ready for summer vacation? Are you looking for some creative things to do with them and maybe their friends? Going on a long plane or car ride over the vacation? Are YOU ready for the never-ending questions:

"Can we go to the movies?"

"Can I get a new book?"

"Can I buy a new PlayStation game?"

"Can I download some songs?"

"Can we get some ice cream?"

How about starting summer off by creating a "summer bucket" for your child(ren). You can fill the bucket with gift cards that they can redeem all summer long. Tailor the bucket for each child. How about giving them a movie ticket or a Barnes & Noble card or a Dunkin Donuts card or a Baskin Robbins card or maybe a Toys 'R Us card?

**The June orders, and the last order of the year, are due on Tuesday, June 14th at 10 AM.** Sorry, we cannot take late orders. Orders should be in backpacks by Friday, June 17th (plenty of time if you are ordering as a group for a teacher gift). Please contact Lynne Densen (lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978-266-2952) or Maureen Jones (maureen.jones1@verizon.net or 978-266-2874) with any questions.

## Wanted: CD Players

The McT Reading Program is seeking donations of gently-used portable CD players. Please contact Sharon Ryan (sryan@mail.ab.mec.edu) if you are able to make a donation.

# Tidbits from Tina

from Tina Morgan, McT School Counselor

## Making Your Own Tidbits

Since I am retiring at the end of June, this will be my last “Tidbits from Tina”. Many parents have expressed appreciation for the years of “tidbits”, so I thought it only fitting that I leave you with some resources where you can collect your own tidbits about parenting.

My recent favorite resource is *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, by clinical psychologist and parent educator Wendy Mogel. Growing out of Jewish teachings, Mogel blends warmth and humor to address some of the sticky issues of parenting. I am not of the Jewish faith, but I found universal wisdom in the author’s messages, and I laughed out loud as I identified with the parenting challenges she describes. Here is one example (with my editing) to whet your appetite.

### “My Children Always Want More!”

I am often struck by the amount of “stuff” our children accumulate and I get a bit annoyed when they don’t appreciate the gifts they receive. While I am bothered by the never-ending requests for more “stuff”, Wendy Mogel explains that it’s OK for a child to long for things. She states,

“Just because he wants a pair of Air Jordans or a TV in his room doesn’t mean that he is a bad person, greedy or already ruined.” The problem seems to come when we satisfy those longings and buy him the shoes/TV/video game/Lego set. As Mogel explains,

“Children who get most of their desires satisfied right away don’t have a chance to appreciate what they’ve already got...”

“The sooner a child gets what she wants, the sooner she’ll use it up and move on to the next desire...”

“Getting one’s wishes granted immediately doesn’t make a child more grateful or content. On the contrary, it makes her less appreciative and more acquisitive.” Mogel goes on to talk about specific actions we can take to deal with the longings of our children.

What I learned from Wendy, now feeling a kinship that allows me to call her by her first name, is that I needn’t put energy into trying to make my children not want “stuff”. She freed me from that impossible burden. I can instead focus on actions that I can control, my own choice of when to give to my children and when to simply say, “No”. What a wonderful tidbit!

Other books where you can gather parenting wisdom, along with some humor are *Positive Discipline* by Jane Nelson and *Parenting with Love and Logic* by Foster Cline and Jim Fay. I recommend these resources as well.

My last message to you is a sincere thank you for the support I have received from the McCarthy-Towne community over the years. It has been wonderful and both you and your children have been gifts to me. Thank you and best wishes for a wonderful parenting journey with lots of “opportunities” that you will look back on and smile!

## Grade K–5: Not at McT Next Year?

from the office

Are you moving out of Acton this summer? Is your child going to a different school next year? You should complete a “Release of Records” form as soon as possible. The school office is open for limited hours during the summer, so call ahead to make sure someone will be available, 978-264-3377. Since the Health Office is closed, health records will not be available during the summer.

## Summer Reading Program

The theme for the 2011 Summer Reading Program at the Acton Memorial Library is “One World, Many Stories”. Fun activities are offered this summer to motivate children to discover the personal joy of reading. Pick up your reading logbook at the library starting June 20th.

Summer hours for the Acton Memorial Library are Monday–Thursday 9 AM–9 PM, Friday 9 AM–5 PM, Saturday 9 AM–1 PM.

## PTSO Open Positions

**There are still some open PTSO positions for next year. WE NEED YOU!** If you are interested in any of these positions, or if you want to be involved but are not sure which position would be the best fit for you, please contact Stacy Harris (askquixote@verizon.net).

**Junior Chair:** (2 year commitment) Learn the co-chair job by shadowing the senior co-chair for a year and assisting as needed. Move on to senior co-chair the following year.

**Buddy Family:** Coordinate volunteers to welcome new families to McCarthy Towne.

**CPAC** (Cultural and Performing Arts Committee) (1 position): Help the existing co-chair reserve or contract performances at McCarthy Towne (3 or 4/year). Meet with CPAC representatives from the other elementary schools, and occasionally preview performances at other area schools and venues. Apply for grant funding of performances through the Acton Boxborough Cultural Council. (Must be available during the school day.)

**Grant Writing:** Do you have grant writing experience? The McT staff occasionally needs assistance with writing grants.

**International Liaison:** (2 positions) Serve as a liaison to the international community. Plan and execute International Night with Merriam School.

**Parker Damon Building Lost and Found:** Work with Merriam Lost and Found chair to organize the building's lost and found items.

**Family Photo Day:** Plan, publicize, and execute the annual Family Photo Day.

**General Mills Box Tops:** (2 positions): Coordinate publicity of GM Box Tops for Education program in school community, collection of Box Tops from classrooms, and then submission of Box Tops to General Mills.

**Publicity/Shopping Service Coordinator:** Share information regarding McT events—e.g., Yard Sale, PDB International Night, community outreach programs: Cradles to Crayons—with broader community through publicity or articles to the Beacon. Provide publicity about OneCause, Amazon.com and Target programs.

**Yard Sale:** (1 position) Plan, publicize, and execute the annual yard sale in the spring with help from parent volunteers.

## You're Invited— Parent Appreciation Reception

*All parents are invited to attend the annual  
McT Parent Appreciation Reception*

Mark your calendars for the **Parent Appreciation Reception on Thursday, June 9th from 9:30–11:30 AM in the McT Lobby**. As a thank you to all parents for your support, we invite you to come and enjoy some breakfast goodies prepared by the teachers and staff.

No need to RSVP, just stop by the lobby anytime between **9:30 and 11:30 AM**. More details to follow as the date gets closer.

## School Committee Update

*by Chris Hanlon*

The Acton Public School Committee met on May 19th. The APS School Committee supported several purchases presented by members of the superintendent's staff. After budget reductions and the settlement of several labor contracts, approximately \$575,000 was available in the Fiscal Year 2011 budget. Science, social studies, and math textbooks are included in the purchase. Also, Smartboards for all Grades 1–2 classrooms that don't already have them are included. Dr. Mills described this purchasing opportunity as a rare occurrence given the budget constraints the district is currently experiencing.

At the June 16th meeting, the superintendent will present the details of a math specialist/coach, who will work with teachers in all the elementary schools, as well as math and classroom assistants for each school.

On June 6th, the School Committee along with the Board of Selectmen will be determining which applicant will fill the School Committee vacancy created by the resignation of Terry Lindgren. This vacancy is for the remaining year of his term.

To e-mail all members of the Acton Public School Committee, write to [apsc@acton-ma.gov](mailto:apsc@acton-ma.gov). To e-mail all members of the Acton –Boxborough Regional School Committee, write to [abrsc@acton-ma.gov](mailto:abrsc@acton-ma.gov).

## Thank you from Hospitality

Thank you to everyone who either baked or brought something for an event this past year; Kindergarten tours, School Committee, Teacher Luncheon, Fall Social, Game Day, Lip Sync, and Yard Sale. We really do appreciate it!

## Placement for Next Year

*from the office*

Parents/guardians of students in K–5th grade recently received a letter at parent-teacher conferences with their child’s user name and password for access to “PowerSchool”, the school system’s on-line emergency card. You will need this to access class placement information, to be posted on Friday, August 19 at 3 PM.

Please keep this letter in a safe place where you can find it. Your child’s user name and password stays the same through high school graduation and you will need to update emergency information, medical authorization and school/PTSO contact permissions every year until your child graduates from high school. After submitting this information on or after Friday afternoon, August 19, you will see a screen with your child’s teacher for the 2011–12 school year. Class lists will be available on PowerSchool Friday, August 26.

If you will be on vacation and want to access PowerSchool away from home, remember to bring your access information with you. We cannot give you this information over the phone or by email.

Also remember to update PowerSchool any time your address or contact information changes, or if your child’s health information changes.

## Extended Day at McCarthy-Towne

A-B Community Education, a department of the A-B Regional School District, has an Extended Day Program at McCarthy-Towne! We offer before and after school care for children in All-Day Kindergarten and Grades 1–6. September, 2011 will be our third year at McT.

Our program opens at 7 AM for Early Morning childcare, and then again from school dismissal until 6 PM for Late Afternoon childcare. We follow the Acton-Public Schools calendar.

The Extended Day program at McCarthy-Towne is located in the Multi-Purpose Room. The program is designed to allow children the opportunity to choose activities such as arts, crafts, nature, science, games, cooking and sports. Outdoor play, weather permitting, is scheduled every day. A quiet space, when available, is used for those who wish to do homework.

Our staff consists of an on-site Staff Leader/Head Teacher, as well as adult Assistant Teachers. A High School Aide may assist under the direct supervision of the teachers.

There is still space in the program for the 2011–12 school year. You may register for one or more days/week, for morning, afternoon, or both. Tuition is based upon the number of days you are registered to attend. Please contact Sally Cunningham at the A-B Community Education office, (scunningham@mail.ab.mec.edu or 978-266-2525) for further information.

## Last and First Day of School

**The last day of this school year will be Tuesday, June 21.** Please note that it is a ½ day and all elementary schools will follow the regular Thursday dismissal schedule. Dismissal time for McCarthy-Towne on June 21st will be at 1 PM with no afternoon Kindergarten.

**The first day of school for the 2011–2012 school year will be Tuesday, August 30.** McCarthy-Towne will be on the early elementary school schedule: 8:30 AM–2:45 PM (Thursday, 12:15 PM dismissal).

The 2011–12 school calendar is available online at: <http://ab.mec.edu/about/aboutpdf/schcalendar11.pdf>

## Notice to 6th Grade Parents

*from the office*

Before the sixth grade students’ files go to the junior high school, Principal David Krane will go through and purge them of extraneous papers. These papers are destroyed unless parents would like to have them. For some students, there will not be any extraneous papers.

If you would like to have the papers from your child’s file, please notify the office in writing by the last day of school, June 21st. The school office will let you know when you can come in to pick up the papers.

## Thank You

*from Patty Lee, Parent Involvement Coordinator*

Thank you to all the people who volunteer and help make McCarthy-Towne School such a special place for children, including (but not limited to):

Sue Donahue for observing at the Kindergarten lottery;

Allison Hammer and Rebecca MacNeill for photographing students artwork for portfolios;

Olena Murzin, Joan McCaffrey and Shellie Barton for laminating materials for teachers and the PTSO;

Tina Vanasse Narbonne, Nicole Lippa, Kerstin Mendelsohn, Shannon Callison, Tracey Smith, Tina Watlington, Julie Brown-Cook, Elizabeth Crowley, Gail Gecawicz, Petra Charisse and Joan McCaffrey for being the office volunteers who process dismissal and bus passes, sort all the mail from classrooms and help in a myriad of other ways during the busy mornings at McT;

Ann-Marie Sweeney and the Safe Arrival volunteers who check attendance against the Safe Arrival messages and make sure every student is accounted for.

And a special thank you all the parents and guardians whose children move on to other schools next year. You have supported the school, teachers and staff, and your children as students in countless ways that help make McCarthy-Towne School the special community it is.