

**PVCICS Principal's Coffee**  
**January 6, 2017**  
**Notes**

\*\*Disclaimer: These notes are not official school or FA approved minutes. They are informational notes taken during coffee hour.

The Family Association announced that there will be a **Community Skate for all PVCICS families at the Mullins Center on Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 2:30**. Skates will be available to rent from the Mullins Center. More details to follow in the FA newsletters.

**The afterschool Lego Robotics Club** for middle schoolers has acquired four used Mindstorm kits, one donated and three purchased. If you find any Mindstorm pieces, they are always looking for more.

**The afterschool Ping Pong Club** for middle and high school students will start soon and meet in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor hallway of the new building.

A parent asked about the **afternoon pick-up procedure during inclement weather** and commented that children were **completely soaked through their coats** on Tuesday, January 3rd, when it was raining very hard at pick-up time. Kathy said that the gym would be used for dismissal only when there is a dangerous storm with lightning, not when there is only precipitation. Kathy said that students can bring umbrellas to school in their backpacks.

Another parent asked exactly when students are dismissed as their children report either waiting outside for a long time or are not yet outside when the parent arrives. Kathy said that the **students are dismissed at 4:10**. Parents may begin entering the lot around 4:05 but not much earlier. The pick-up line cannot begin until the buses have exited. Some middle schoolers take longer to gather their belongings and walk downstairs than others. If your middle schooler is often late for pick-up, please inform Ms. Hartman.

A parent asked that the school send an email to everyone reminding parents that it is **illegal to make a left turn exiting the school onto Route 9 during drop-off and pick-up times**. This occurs frequently and it causes significant back-ups in the parking lot. The "No-left-turn" sign is low and difficult for drivers to see.

Regarding parents picking up students from the mall, the school does not recommend or condone using the mall parking lot for picking up or dropping off students. However, the school would like to remind parents to **tell students to stay off the large snow and ice piles in the mall lot**. Climbing them is very dangerous.

**The winter music concerts are as follows:**

K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade concert is on January 25<sup>th</sup> from 8:45AM to 9:30AM. Parents may come to the gym after drop-off but students must report to their classrooms on time for attendance.

4<sup>th</sup> grade – 6<sup>th</sup> grade concert is on January 26<sup>th</sup> from 2:50PM to 3:45PM.

Some middle school parents thanked the administration for the **much improved lunchroom arrangements**. They reported that their children were very happy. One parent asked whether there are organized activities during lunch. Kathy responded that students informally play games and different teachers may provide materials for games and such, but there are not any formally organized activities. Kathy mentioned that students are not allowed access to cell phones during lunch.

A parent asked whether **the school is required to follow a certain academic calendar**. Kathy responded that students must attend for 180 days, but the choice of days is flexible. The school follows Hadley schools for about 95% of the calendar. There was a discussion about whether the school would consider aligning winter/spring break with the area colleges rather than local school districts. Other parents said that this would be difficult as winter and spring break camps in the area are scheduled with the local school districts and many families have children enrolled in other school districts. Kathy mentioned that some professors want their children at school during the college break.

A parent asked whether the school would coordinate **a presentation to parents on Response to Intervention (RTI)** and how it works at PVCICS, perhaps in conjunction with a SEPAC meeting. Kathy said that she has a Power Point presentation on RTI and that she would coordinate with Christie Fontaine and the RTI coordinators about scheduling something.

A parent asked how many **new applications for next year's ninth grade class** has the school received. Richard said that there were not many as they are not heavily recruiting for ninth grade given the physical space constraints for high school. They have 40 or more applications for kindergarten and almost 20 applications for sixth grade.

There was a lengthy discussion about the **timing of the Charter Renewal and Amendment application** that was submitted in August. It may appear on the Board of Education's agenda for the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, or it may be postponed until the February or March meetings. We won't know until the Board meets and makes a decision. Therefore, we won't know how many slots will be available for the future student population until that decision.

A parent asked about the **different high school diploma options** and mentioned that many parents are confused about how all students take the same IB courses but some elect to get an IB diploma while others choose to get a general Massachusetts diploma. Kathy explained that there are different levels of classes with different assignment and project requirements. Students going for an IB diploma may complete a greater number of higher level classes, or they may complete more projects than other students in the same class. Also, only students getting an IB diploma are required to take the Theory of Knowledge course. Typically, only

students trying for an IB diploma take the IB exam. And there are various other details that one could inquire about with the IB coordinator or by attending an IB presentation.

A parent asked why the **students who enrolled in sixth grade and ninth grade were in the same high school Chinese classes with students who have been enrolled since elementary school**. Kathy said that the high school classes are currently too small to have a meaningful language experience with only a few students in each class. Instead, they are learning together and from each other at different levels.