

PTA Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2019
8 Yellow 112

- I. Call to Order 9:08am: In attendance Chandra Ring, Laura Rowley, Donna Arnold, Kim Hall, Jen Acerra-Markey, Laura Rowley, Ginna Yerrall. Lisa Finn, Lauren Feltz, Christin Wallace, Amanda Patania, Carolyn Lyon
- II. Approval of March Minutes: Ginna Yerrall made a motion to approve, seconded by Jen Acerra-Markey. Motion carried
- III. Teacher Representative -- no report
- IV. Lauren Feltz - This is a very busy time of year. Standardized testing for 8th graders took place yesterday. Lauren will send a list of important dates next week in her Tuesday Newsday. Lots of field trips are upcoming, including a team of 6th graders at the Yale Art Museum today. Lauren is working with a consultant on classroom redesign for next year. Two classrooms will be redone this summer and there are plans to furnish one of the courtyards (furnished by the PTA). The official ribbon cutting of the new greenhouse took place on Earth Day. Kids have been working in it. Congratulations to WEF, Continuing Education and Heather Priest for this exciting opening. Poodle puppy Cricket has been here since Monday. She's 6 months now and is being socialized with students and staff at this point. It's been a real success so far.
 - A. Lauren was asked about recent Fitness Grams that were sent empty recently. Middlebrook can't interact with when that is sent or the timing of these emails.
 - B. 8th grade yearbook quotes and the process for the quotes this year was raised. There was a proposal to do away with yearbook quotes. Checking the quotes and their background can be a massive amount of work. The Student Yearbook is created by a club with one advisor. There was a decision made to exclude yearbook quotes. Students gave tremendous pushback and the advisor tried to embrace student voice and allowed them in this year. Following this was pushback on the timeline for students to submit yearbook quotes. Feedback offered was that students were given too short a time and that those who had quotes rejected were not allowed to offer another option. It was also discussed that reading quotes deemed inappropriate for the yearbook aloud in class was a confusing decision. The vetting process of yearbook quotes is a very hard and time-consuming task as administrators also need to look across patterns to be sure kids aren't using quotes collaboratively to send a message. Yearbook leadership is changing hands next year, which may result in changes moving ahead. Yearbooks can be very challenging at this age, with mean or inappropriate quotes which should not be distributed by the school. Middlebrook works very hard to eliminate this from taking place.
 - C. A question was asked regarding the process when a transportation issue arises at Middlebrook. For instance, there was a bus that broke down and students were assigned another bus to ride home yesterday. A factor is how this is handles is how much notice the school has that a change is necessary.

Yesterday students were notified of change on team and an announcement was made. Students call home to make alternate plan if there isn't a bus available to take them, as was the case yesterday. If students come down and have a cell phone they can call from that or use the office phone and call a parent to be picked up. Students every day can take any bus or get in any car at pickup so this isn't fully vetted. If a notification is sent to parents regarding transportation changes, it may come via text.

- D. Thank you from Carolyn Lyon for putting incoming 6th grade Orientation date out to parents now. This is very helpful for 5th grade parents.
- V. President's Report - Laura Rowley for Hillary Morrissy
 - A. Slate of Officers for 2019-2020: Vice President -- Donna Arnold; other positions remain unfilled. We really need help. As a result of not having a full slate to announce today for a vote at the May meeting, we will add a June 6 PTA meeting. The proposed slate of officers will be announced at the May meeting or via email and voted on at the June 6 meeting.
 - B. Request for Odyssey of the Mind: A seven-person team of 5th and 6th graders qualified for Worlds at Michigan State and their budget is about \$9,000 for this. We are asking for \$500 from Middlebrook for this. Motion to approve up to \$500 contingent upon the team going to the World Competition was made by Laura Rowley and seconded by Kim Hall. The motion carried.
- VI. Officer's Report:
 - A. Vice-President: Laura Rowley: \$2329.54 raised thus far from Stop & Shop rewards. Membership has increased by two parents, bringing total membership to 359.
 - B. Jen Acerra-Markey - Box Tops will no longer be placed on boxes starting at end of summer. This program is going electronic. This poses a fundraising issue as every parent will need to scan their receipts themselves so this will impact our earnings. Next year they will continue to accept labels but they are phasing them out. We may move the competition to the fall to try to capitalize as they dwindle. Lauren Feltz suggested we could setup registrations for the Stop & Shop Rewards Program at polling stations to try and increase the revenue from that program..
 - C. Treasurer: Laura Rowley for Jackie Shaw: Looking ahead one big change is Middlebrook will no longer require PE uniforms. This will hurt fundraising to the tune of about \$6,000 next year. The annual appeal was also down about \$4,000 this year and SEPTA getting donations from TurnOver Shop will impact their donation to MB PTA by about \$2,500 next year. Moving ahead the only gym requirement is that kids change, which is for hygienic reasons. Lauren Feltz suggested the PTA consider selling red, green and yellow t-shirts (team colors) with the school logo to recoup some of the fundraising money lost with spirit wear sales eliminated. This would also possibly eliminate the need for kids to tie dye t-shirts. The PTA has previously sold spirit wear that fits the required gym uniform, but as a fundraiser and not a required item. This is noted

during sales times at Meet the Teacher and on the sales form. Without the need for specific colored clothing for PE anymore it doesn't make sense to sell Spirit wear for the coming year. This clothing is a huge amount of work. If the PTA sells team-color t-shirts, an inventory could be purchased ahead and sold at Meet the Teacher or Open House. The profit margin on this wouldn't be as high. If the PTA doesn't take this on it would be offered to the school store. If we were to do this it might make sense to send a sales form to 5th grade parents when students learn their placements.

1. Cash in the bank eligible for spending is \$48,706 taking into account the \$20,000 reserve and a couple other restricted grants. Out of that \$48,706 there's \$16,000 which was proposed earlier in the year to be used for one large project. It's been discussed for use to spruce up the courtyard outside the LLC. Lauren's meeting with a consultant today to consider using these funds for a different courtyard, the one you see as you enter the building at the main entrance. The original idea was to put doors from the LLC to the courtyard. Lauren reported that this area would also require a patio and grinding tree stumps, totaling about \$100,000. The newly proposed area has two big sections and would accommodate even more people but would get much less use. The district is willing to put in the doors. PTA has offered to fund \$16,000 of this but furniture alone costs \$20,000 as currently proposed. It would be a grassy, unpaved area. Staff conversations have led to wanting it paved, something the front courtyard offers. This area also has some flexibility and enough room to seat a full class. An initial proposal from Lauren Feltz to the PTA was for the enhancing classroom libraries. The district was then going to fund these purchases, but that is no longer the case. Lauren thought there was access to \$50,000 that is no longer going through. She still has access to a smaller revenue stream for this. The idea behind these classroom libraries was to have enough copies of book club books so kids can take books home and read them and also to offer an enhanced selection of books when groups are choosing from within certain parameters. Right now kids are sharing books and/or can't bring them home. This is a multi-year idea to develop. She is funding 1 unit per grade with the smaller amount of money available. A smaller amount of this money is also going to non-fiction resources for writing workshop classes. Many teachers are hesitant to ask parents to purchase books, there are a few okay asking. The idea of developing a giving tree to slowly build the stock was suggested. Each grade level also has units that are not book club units so there are many options for this. It was asked if there's a way to have teachers rotate to we don't need all teams to have all books? This is not an option because the lessons and expectations are cumulative units building on prior learning and the movement towards summative

assessments across colors necessitates units progressing across teams a the same time.

- D. Expected expenses across end of year are listed. \$15,000 roughly remains for gifts and grants beyond the proposed outdoor space monies. There is not yet a Gifts and Grants meeting date, it's usually a few days prior to the May PTA Meeting and may take place May 14. There is also potentially a cushion built in for next year's budget, especially with projected fundraising and appeal dollars dropping.
- E. Lauren Feltz shared that the proposals received for Gifts and Grants may change this year somewhat as there's been a lot of discussion around lost teaching time at MB and there's some looking at moving assemblies currently held annually to once every 3 years so all students would participate once while at Middlebrook (ie, World Language, Visiting Author -- potentially with a week-long visit). Chariots of the Sun is no longer as relevant to the curriculum as in the past. Middlebrook is also discussing if field trips are still as relevant as they have been. They are looking at a balance of keeping other assemblies (music, performances, talent shows) that are a chance to motivate, enjoy and build community at school.
- F. It was asked why field trips aren't consistent across teams. It is at team leaders discretion to propose field trips. That they all align is something endorsed, but not required. Field trips should be a learning opportunity that cannot be replicated at MB and connected to the curriculum. If you're connecting to the same unit and same standards in different locations then that is an option. This is also a motivator/concern for where kids want to be placed based on field trips.
- G. Lauren Feltz asked what the earliest we can reasonably hold Soaring Ahead is? Probably 6:30 is feedback from parents.
- H. Parent at Large -- Kim Hall: This report covers meetings 3/21 and 4/11 (plus extra budget happenings at BOF meetings)
 - 1. Budget
 - a) BOF initiated a "surprise" cut of \$1MM after Tri-Board meeting. Was already lowest increase of DRG. Now is even lower. - at a flat vs. YAG budget amount.
 - b) Lynn and Chris presented an option to fund Alternative school next year in a tax neutral way by eliminating CM carpet bond and leveraging charter fund reserve, that was adopted unanimously by quorum of BOF on 4/23
 - c) In 4/11 meeting Chris and Kevin address the reason to summarize the BOF pointed out that we have the third highest average pay for teachers. They rebut that it is for good reason - education levels and experience. When you look deeper at the levels and steps, we are very competitive/efficient. But the overall cost reflects the commitment our seasoned teachers bring to the district and they are the heart of the district.

(1) Bachelor's minimum and 6 years min - within DRG A we are 7 of 9

(2) Bachelor's Max, Master's Min and Master's Max - we are 6 of 9

(3) 6 year max - we are 4 of 9.

d) Next steps, Budget goes to town meeting on May 7 where motions to further cut budget may be made and voted on, but no measures to increase budget may be made.

e) FAPA Review - surveys are out for feedback as they are beginning curriculum review. Two surveys are being circulated in one email to provide feedback and Art and Music Program. Please respond to surveys if you have a student in Fine and Performing arts and most at Middlebrook do.

2. 2020-2021 Calendar Revision to keep all of February break in one week was reviewed and passed. Net, they found attendance lower both weeks when February break crosses two weeks. They surveyed teachers and among those responding found that 69% voted to move to having the break all in one week. So break will be February 15-19 instead of 11-15 and a day will be added to the beginning and end of school. Start date now 8/24 (vs. 8/25) and end date now 6/10 (vs. 6/9).

A. Want more information on specific topics visit board docs (<https://www.boarddocs.com/ct/wilton/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>) or view specific meeting

<https://www.wiltonps.org/about/board-of-education/boe-meeting-videos-channel-7>

a. 3/21 Meeting includes

i. Ross Greene's approach to understanding and helping behaviorally challenged kids is part of the SEL professional development

ii. Readers' and Writers Workshop Presentation - insight on what we do, why and how. And gives insight on what universal design / differentiation looks like today.

iii. WHS Block Schedule - Q & A with Principal O'Donnell from the board.

b. 4/21 meeting includes conversation about budget and teachers as well as alternative school

2. Quick Bites / Miscellaneous:

a. Teaching and Learning

i. Beginning to review new Math 6 program. Overarching was approved earlier, now digging in and approving specific new courses.

ii. Still working on revising 6141 process of how new classes are proposed and approved.

b. Policy Committee

- i. Reviewed, Discussed, and Approved:
- ii. Reviewed, Discussed and on agenda for approval at tonight's meeting:
 - 1. Policy 5114 Suspension, Expulsion, Removal from Class - revised to fit new state legal requirements
- iii. Reviewed, Discussed and Retired: Policy 5131 Student Conduct, Corporal Punishment and the Use of Reasonable Force to Maintain Discipline
- c. Awards -
 - i. Odyssey of Mind teams lauded for their success, including the joint CM/MB team headed to nationals.
 - ii. Dr. Smith recognized as superintendent of the year from CABA
 - iii. Library Learning Commons won Library media program of the year
 - iv. Music program recognized by CT Association
- d. Revised Vision approved 3/21 perceived as a living document.

VII. Committee Reports:

- A. 8th Grade Dinner Dance: Holding a follow up meeting tomorrow at Comstock. Every committee is planning and all is on track. Ticket sales will take place mid-May at lunch. There will also be online sales. Ticket price is \$30 - the first price increase in 15 years. Jose is working with PTA to have tables moved by volunteers helping rather than increase cost for custodial changes.
- B. Soaring Ahead: on track. Information will be sent to 7th grade parents who are assisting.
- C. Ice Cream Socials: June 13 - 7th grade ice cream social; 6th grade ice cream social June 14
- D. WYC: Color Run next Thursday. Still taking registrations online. Block Party weekend -- June 8/9.
- E. New Business: Heather Priest started gardening club to help support greenhouse. It's slow getting started and a lot for her to manage. Seeking adults to help oversee

IX. Adjourn 10:38am