

## **Middlebrook PTA Meeting Minutes September 21, 2018**

- I. Call to order 9:03am in the Library Learning Commons. In attendance were Chandra Ring, Jackie Shaw, Hillary Morrissy, Laura Rowley, Jen Acerra-Markey, Yim Lai, Suzanne Hagmann, Ginna Yerrall, Lara PAschalidis, Kim Hall, Nicola Davies, Cristin Wallace, Nicole Wilson-SXXX, Madhavi S. Vallabhajosula, Vanessa Elias, Lauren Yoon, Elizabeth McKay, Lisa Finn, Pat Mulhall, Karen LaMantia
  
- II. Approval of May 17, 2018 Minutes - Ginna Yerrall motion to approve, seconded by Jen Accerra-Markey. Minutes approved. Welcome to first PTA meeting, usually best attended. Excited for this year, Hillary's last year as PTA President. Big plans for the year as a result of successful fundraising last year.
  
- III. Teacher Representative - Pat Mulhall of 8G: All of Middlebrook's Open Houses are coming up (9/24 for 6th grade, 9/25 for 7th grade, 9/27 for 8th grade). We had a fantastic beginning to the school year. Students are getting around well, asking adults and each other if they need help. The transition for 6th graders has been quite good. They're doing team building activities and made tie dye t-shirts to represent their colors. They're busy getting to know the school and one another. Sixth graders are also setting up accounts. Seventh grade is off to a great start. Having goals is very important in Middle School so 7th grade teams are actively helping kids create goals (what went well last year, what could be tweaked, what improvements can you make and how can you grow in areas of strength?). Eighth graders have field trips setup and are all going to Philadelphia or New York City in October. Teams are looking for parent chaperones for these field trips.. To chaperone, parents need be cleared to chaperone or do work in schools. It takes about 2 weeks to get an approval badge so if you're thinking you'll want to do this or any other activities where you'll be with students without a teacher please be mindful of time. 8R is doing an Odyssey project. 8Y and 8G are creating taem t-shirts. 8G has trolls as their mascot.
  
- IV. Principal's Report -- Lauren Feltz was unable to attend.
  
- V. President's Report - Hillary Morrissy:
  - A. Last fall the PTA voted to approve a budget addition for Words on a Wall. To complete this project, volunteers will be installing inspirational quotes on bathroom walls this Monday in all of the boys and girls bathrooms. If want to help, show up after school Monday afternoon. We're hoping for 6-8 volunteers to complete the project fairly quickly.
  - B. We continue to seek an additional co-chair for the Science and Engineering Fair. This spectacular event showcases quality projects, especially in the engineering category. 140 kids participated last year so there is lots of prep work.

- C. We have secured a 7th grade activity night chair but really need a co-chair. The event is on October 26.
- D. Volunteer Vetting: The school district now requires a background check for volunteers that will be with students without a district employee present. The form only takes a few minutes to complete. Email confirmation indicating you have been cleared comes roughly 48 hours later and a badge arrives in the mail about 2 weeks later. Maria Coleman is the district point person and the only person who finds out if someone is not approved. A week before events take place committee chairs must submit list of volunteers to Karen LaMantia who submits the list to Maria to confirm that all volunteers are approved. Examples of who needs to go through this check include those volunteering at activity nights, field trips, and the 8th grade dinner dance.
- E. Last year got surprise grant from Henry Foundation of \$3,000 (a family foundation) which was used to train staff for Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) training. We are extremely thankful for another \$3,000 grant this year from the Henry Foundation..

VI. Officer Reports:

- A. Vice President -Laura Rowley: As of today we have 269 parents members and 21 teachers (290 members). Last year ended with 367 members. To match last year, we need roughly 75 more members and haven't had Open Houses yet so this is good. Another membership push is coming. This year we are requiring teachers to join PTA to be eligible for Gifts & Grants monies. Reminder to register for Stop & Shop rewards for Middlebrook. You do not need sign up annually. Registration is open now. From October thru mid-March purchases earn points that translate to check for school.
- B. Treasurer's Reports - Jackie Shaw: Last year we did well with fundraising, bringing in \$51,000 from the annual appeal, membership, gym clothes sales, chromebook cover sales, TurnOver shop donation and the Henry Foundation donation. For program expenses we spent \$13,000 for dinner dance, hospitality, activity nights, ice cream socials, Odyssey of the Mind, Science Fair and team grants. Administrative fees totalled XXX. A total of \$21,481 was approved for gifts and grants. The cash balance at year end was \$16,000 which carries over to this year. As a non-profit, the PTA generally needs to spend money brought in rather than save it, unless it's earmarked for large project.  
For this year's budget, we've budgeted to bring in about same as last year from the Annual Appeal. Nothing is budgeted for corporate matching which happens occasionally nor for fundraising sales of wrapping paper or the like. For PTA Membership, we're looking at about the same number of parent and teacher memberships as last year. The Interest Income is conservative. Photographs brought in \$6,200 last year but put in \$5,000 this year using the 5 year average as last year was higher than the norm. We did not sell chromebook covers this year. Gym clothes also forecasted similarly to last year which is very close to the

actual money taken in. The donation from the TurnOver shop is expected to go down this year as monies will this year be divided between 5 PTA's rather than 4 as in past. There was also a \$3,000 donation from Henry Foundation. The total income is estimated at \$42,996.

Once the budget is approved all committee chairs will get a copy of their budget as well as actual expenditures from last year.

A new budget item was added this year for the March 14 Pi Day Contest, a new contest. Students buy entry tickets for \$5 and recite Pi as far out as possible.

Every participant gets a slice of pie and the winner will receive a prize.

The 5 year average for hospitality and teacher appreciation expenditures was used for this year's budget..

The Ice Cream Socials budget is set the same as last year. Actual numbers were low because so many students weren't in school with extended school year.

Odyssey of the Mind we've assumed 5 teams for this year.

The Science Fair budget has a slight increase as every year participation numbers are increasing.

Soaring Ahead's budget is the same as in past years. Last year we paid slightly more to buy decorations and storage bins for the decorations that will be reused this year.

The PTA will help sponsor the International Food Competition this year so is an addition to the budget.

Team Grants, \$300 offered to each team annually, will remain the same.

There is a slight increase in both insurance costs and for taxes.

The Web Hosting cost is slightly down.

The Outreach fund is a constant at \$1,000 that we give to Middlebrook to assist families needing help with various costs (ie, field trips)

Wilton Youth Council will again receive \$500.

\$100 has been budgeted for remembrances and retirement gifts.

Budgeted Gifts and Grants for this year are at \$40,000 (\$25,000 remaining plus \$16,000 from last year). Hillary and Lauren are discussing a potential large project for this remaining \$16,000 and can push in annual appeal to increase money to spend on this project.

Ginna Yerrall made a motion to approve the budget. Laura Rowley seconded the motion.

A suggestion to ask for \$5 donations of Science Fair participants was made. The PTA pays for table rentals and t-shirts for this event and WEF covers the prize money. The PTA Board will discuss this idea.

The 2018-2019 budget passed unanimously.

As a reminder to all chairs or co-chairs, Hillary must sign every contract for the PTA.

Jackie revamped the reimbursement form and it will be on the website. A line item is now on there for donations so Jackie can send a tax donation form. It is also important to know what was spent even if it's donated so we can track

expenses and also to provide future chairs this information. To be reimbursed or receive a tax letter, a receipt is required..

- C. Parent-at-Large - Kim Hall: This report will focus on what's relevant to Middlebrook parents only. Today's report will cover the September 6 and September 20 meetings. District enrollment as whole was 1 person different than estimated for this year. The district hired 21 new teachers and 9 long term subs from pool of over 900 candidates, including 3 teachers (1 shared with the High School), 2 long-term subs (1 shared with the High School) and 1 secretary at Middlebrook. 4% of applicants were hired.
- Middlebrook has a new elevator running, new carpeting in the entry, inspection and some work on basketball hoops was completed. Lots of work on the greenhouse was completed. Wilton Public Schools have saved about 66% on power so far by using solar power. Google maps allows you to see the installed solar panels. The District is working on long ranging planning initiative, revising the vision and mission statement then working on the long range plan for the district. Social and emotional work in the schools is ongoing.
- Mark Brackett spoke at convocation on this. He does work on emotional intelligence at Yale, working on his ruler method on emotional intelligence (recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing and regulating emotions). This looks at how you feel versus how you want to feel and build bridges to get there. The math curriculum review is winding down and in a good place.
- Social-emotional learning is currently in progress. FAPA is next in the cycle for review. 2019-2020 tentative school calendar has a return to August 27, 2019 start date. This isn't approved so there's still time for feedback. The calendar also adds the Wednesday off before Thanksgiving and another day in February. It also moves 2 teacher professional days to half days on Wednesdays.
- Technology and Digital Learning update -- switch and core upgrades took place. AV and WiFi were also upgraded. Parent workshops launched last year will continue. There's a new App/Process for reporting threats anonymously (such as students in crisis, bullying, weapons in school).
- Zero Waste reported that Middlebrook had over 5 tons of compost and 6 tons of recycling removed last year. This must be a continuous process so the team is focusing on habit change and use of recyclable gear. Many places are seeking to replicate this work elsewhere.
- Beverly Brokaw presented on Blue Zones. There is a presentation coming October 23 at the Clune Center at 7pm. The group is seeking district support. It's important to fill Clune Center if Wilton wants to be considered. We'd be the first in the Northeast to do this. Chuck Smith gave an overview of test metrics. Showing more growth rate than DIRG, but need more work. Will continue to dig in to these results at the next meeting. AIM students and program showed exceptional growth, especially in 6th and 7th grade. A change in policy to include vaping in the alcohol drug policy was approved.

VII. Committee Reports:

- A. Gym Clothes Sales came in around \$6,000. There's some remaining inventory that will carry over until next year. Sales were successfully moved online to streamline the process.
- B. 6th and 7th grade activity nights: 6th grade has a community contact for DJ so will pay nominal fee for that.
- C. Fundraising will begin shortly
- D. Photo Day went off without a hitch. Thanks to all who volunteered to help.
- E. Box Tops will hold a competition in January.
- F. Hospitality's first event is a back to school October 17. Winter Solstice in December.
- G. Special Education: There's a meeting September 26 at the Zellner Gallery and need input. They're still planning the transition to a SEPTA as there's some dialogue on what it will be. PAB was disbanded at end of last year. SPEDNET Wilton and SEPTA offer two different routes to get support.
- H. Wilton Youth Council - Vanessa Elias: Big Block Party weekends under Free Play Task Force were a two-pronged effort to create old fashioned neighborhood play and build neighbor connections. There were over 800 participants in June and over 600 in September. WYC will do this annually but probably as one June event. This gave people excuse and permission to organize and can be done in any number of ways. People have done them in many ways (at a house, on cul-de-sac, etc). Amazing feedback has come in from kids and adults alike. Other towns are asking how we've done this. The Free Play Task Force's goal is to inspire and educate parents, community and schools on the importance of free play. Looking for help with the sub-committee on community level to create free range law. The laws in CT are very flexible in interpretation. Kids can take the American Red Cross babysitting course at 11 but are not recommended to babysit until 15. Parents are often okay with kids doing something but worried about judgement of others. Spoke with Gail Lavielle and Toni Boucher who are both in full support of amending legislation.  
Lenore Skenazy, Free Range Mom, was here in April and Cider Mill and Miller Driscoll ran with it. They're working on Let Grow Play Clubs with nobody directing students but there for safety reasons. Students will get a Let Grow homework assignment where kids ask parents for something they think they can do but haven't been allowed and report back on this. Kids and parents both have had lots of joy in other districts from this project. Committee members are taking a field trip to Adventure Playground ( ages 6-12) at Governor's Island this Sunday. Registration for WYC programs usually opens about a month in advance. It's open for How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Tak, a free program offered by district staff to parents. Limited spots are available and details are in Middlebrook Messenger. This will be offered in the at a evening later time. College Frenzy will be October 2 for kids and parents.

Ross Greene being brought in by schools on Columbus Day, speaking to all district teachers and staff then open to parents in the evening. His basic tenant is a shift mindset that kids want to do well and if they aren't they have lagging skills or unsolved problems. Ten staff members in each building are being trained on this approach.

Youth-to-youth is a Middlebrook Club that has kicked off. It's run by Tanya Leonard. Holding 7th and 8th grade lunch meetings and after school meetings for grades 6, 7 and 8. The next meeting is October 24. October 19 there's a Lake Compounce trip and they do ski trips as well.

Class Projects -- 2023 kicked off their class project, selling slides from islides until September 30. The slides are offered in 3 design choices and can be personalized.

WYC is raising funds for a part-time executive director. \$10,000 for next 3 years has been secured but need \$20,000 for the next three years. Anyone with ideas on raising these funds please reach out. The Stroup family has been one source of funding.

8th grade dinner dance plans to clean the hut where items are stored for their event and PGP. The Board of Education wants enhance the appearance in this are so conversations about how to so and where to store materials are in progress.

VIII. Adjourned at 10:20