

Middlebrook PTA Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2018
Library Learning Commons

- I. Call to Order -- 9:02am. In attendance: Jackie Shaw, Hillary Morrissy, Chandra Ring, Jory Higgins, Karen LaMantia, Amanda Patania, Laura Rowley, Ginna Yerrall, Lara Paschalidis, Barbara Massy Bear, Lisa McCarthy, Vanessa Elias, Pat Mulhall, Emily DuBrock, Carolyn Lyon, Beverly Brokaw
- II. Approval of Sept 21, 2018 Meeting -- Hillary Morrissy motion to approve; second by Laura Rowley. Approved.
- III. Teacher Representative -- Pat Mulhall
 - A. 8 Green will be ordering team t-shirts and is looking forward to their upcoming trip to Philadelphia. 8 Red is getting everyone and everything ready for their November 8 trip to Philadelphia. They've instituted a team level Student Advisory Council, which is already engaged in bringing the student voice to team decisions. 8 Yellow is gearing up for their big trip to the Big Apple in two weeks, learning about the city's history with regard to epidemics, immigration and the Constitution/Founding Fathers. Students just wrapped up personal narratives in writing and are learning about waves in science. Math has been busy, too: geometry students are learning about transformation, algebra students are learning about absolute value and pre-algebra students are working on solving advanced equations. 7 Green kicked off their Power of One unit with a look at changing our mindset with more positive language choices. They also created an art board out of a window that was replaced due to the building of the Greenhouse. 7 Yellow students will be working on organizing student chosen and run Flex time activities for upcoming Flex periods. 6 Green is looking forward to their field trip to the Bronx Zoo on 10/18/18. An important email was sent out with information about pick-up.
- IV. Principal's Report -- Jory Higgins
 - A. We're currently in midst of Team Read Week. There are lots of notes on lockers about what kids are reading this week. It serves as friendly peer pressure to put participate when kids see all their posts.
Thanks to the PTA for Jordan Sonnenblick recently coming in as Visiting Author. He was very well received. He was very real and told a few stories about where his inspiration comes from. Students offered a lot of positive feedback. Parents shared that kids came home talking about his presentation. He gave a lot of connections that kids clearly related to.
Middlebrook is working to continue to make positive student and adult connections. It's important for kids to find an adult they trust and make a

connection. Every time I talk to students I ask who the adult they trust is and share that with the teachers who are named.

Open Houses have all been completed and were very well attended.

- B. PSAT for 8th grade - questions arose about why and when we do that. Typically we are given a window by the state of when you can start and when you can finish and test must be completed within those date ranges. Teams also discuss who is giving what tests when, other expectation of kids and try to be aware of how tiring PSAT can be for kids. You fill in all your answers. This is a baseline and has a huge learning curve; even the test taking procedure is a learning curve. It's more about how the test is administered and taken, working within SAT limits of how the test is administered. Afterwards, kids were taken outside to play or watch something. Some kids are hearing that these test are very important for their future. PSAT is not used in any course recommendations. Students will take PSAT again in the spring. Parents offered a recommendation for teachers to roll out what the test is for but also what the PSAT is not (ie, used for placement). Are teachers, districts and scores being evaluated on these test results? School is unsure how this will be used as a measuring stick. PSAT is not taken on the computer and is not a test that adjusts questions to your results. We do need to look at where information for students and parents is coming from and how comfortable are parents correcting that information. Teachers walk a fine line of sharing importance for kids who won't take it seriously if they think it doesn't count and those that will stress too much can't put enough pressure on them. SBA will be in May and 8th graders will take a science test of common core state standards in the spring.
- C. Cafeteria Food -- There were social media conversations about cafeteria running out of food on the 8th grade level. Some parents reached out to Lauren who responded to those parents. In examining this, it seems some food options may have run out but not all. Sandwich station, hot meal, chicken sandwiches, burgers, hot dog, sandwiches are always all options. No students leave without eating although they may leave without their first choice. There were also questions regarding pricing. If a student doesn't get a full meal, are they still charged for the full meal? One milk, one fruit, one veg, one grain and one protein is included in a meal. Students may decline 1-2 of these options but must take at least ½ cup of fruits and veggies. If charged a la cart it would be pricier than to be charged for full meal. Students are saying they aren't completely out of food but I don't have time to get something else from a timing perspective. Admittedly it is a concern in the third lunch wave at times. With the volume of food options no kids are going hungry. Rain can also be a factor as sometimes kids go outside but when they're inside sometimes they go get more food instead.
- D. Lockers -- many years ago Middlebrook administration realized they were better off keeping 6th graders on or as close to team as possible. There are 90 lockers in some hallways with at least 120 kids on team. 6 Red fills their lockers then bumps into 7 Red for some of their lockers. Consequence of that is that about 70

kids from 7 Red and 7 Yellow have lockers off team. Teachers spend some time working with kids on managing their time. Every student, unless they have a special schedule of some sort, will have 3 classes in a row on team. It is a practice that has worked. There are a few lockers held on team for students with injuries, etc. If this is a major concern please reach out and it can be moved on team.

- E. A vaping uptick in 8th grade bathrooms is something students are hearing about. Also there are parent concerns regarding the Sexual Assault Report this morning. Vaping reports can lead to increased bathroom checks. There are times when bathrooms have been locked as crowds have been going in together or Middlebrook can ensure teachers or other staff members check in to wash hands, etc. Teachers are also very careful about sign outs for bathroom usage so if they are seeing if a student leaves consistently at the same time they will remind them to use the bathroom ahead of class. There is teacher education on what to look for in vaping. This is an ongoing and constant battle. It may also be good information for parents at Activity Nights if the school shared how to spot vaping. There are tips coming into the new tip line, mostly about how kids are being treated. Middlebrook responds to all reports.

V. President's Report - Hillary Morrissy

- A. 7th grade activity night will be postponed until after the new year. It's been taken off the MB Calendar for the present.
- B. 6th grade activity night is going forward tomorrow.
- C. Messenger -- Based on what I see from facebook questions on Middlebrook Facebook Page people complain it's too long and they don't read it. Any ideas for streamlining? Is shortening worthwhile or should people interested in the information read the existing publication.

VI. Officer Reports:

- A. Membership -- Laura Rowley: We have 35 new members since the last meeting for a total of 325 (17 new parents, 18 new teachers). Stop & Shop just started and has already earned \$326 with 227 registered cards. Next Week is Zero Waste Week in all schools. Heather Priest is looking for volunteers, as is CM.
- B. Treasurer -- Jackie Shaw: fundraising and annual appeal off to a slow start. Usually money comes in during the last 5 days. Update to PayPal is at \$2,500 for online donations and total so far is about \$3,000 for annual appeal. We got our first check from Mobile Arq which is on track. Got \$3,000 from the Henry Foundation for the second year which we are thankful for. Total income for this year is about \$8,000. There are not a lot of expenses to date. WFSAC is a scholarship fund for Wilton Students that we annually donate \$500 to. Registered for CT State Science Fair for 4 students. Total administrative expenses of \$2,000. \$6,500 of gifts and grants thus far. Running net loss of \$350 thus far. Have \$30,000 on hand.

- C. Parent-at-Large -- Kim Hall: report attached.

VII. Committee Reports

- A. Fundraising -- Hillary Morrissy -- people don't usually donate until they have a deadline. We're hoping for more donations coming in soon.
- B. Hospitality -- great first event yesterday.
- C. 6th Grade Activity Night -- Activity night is tomorrow. Artie has a fantastic night planned and has saved some money. All parent volunteers have been cleared via the new background check and should bring ID's.
- D. 7th Grade Activity Night -- delayed on finding chairs and then with new volunteer regulations there wasn't time to finalize all planning. We'll hold it in the New Year, possibly as a movie night.
- F. Special Education -- PAB was dissolved and now SpedNet Wilton and SEPTA is almost completed. Charter and membership sign ups will be ready next week and they're looking for volunteers. Smart Kids run is upcoming.
- G. WYC - Vanessa Elias -- Ross Green had great feedback and next is Nov 1 Teenageers Sexting and Pornography. Task Force on Free Play Block parties were huge a hit with 600 participants in June and 700 in September. The 2nd weekend in June will probably be next Block Party Weekend. There's been a documentary crew following our work for documentary on parenting and childhood in America. Had Julia Litcot Haynes here and meeting with Sonya Lutar Sunday in town. All schools except MB have been featured. They're very keen on filming here as well. Had PBS News Hour here last week filming one of the block party weekends for piece on community and creating free play opportunities for kids. Let Grow Project was a homework assignment at MD and CM and are keen to move to MB as well. Idea is for kids to try something on own their that they haven't done prior. It has been a very positive experience for kids and parents. Peer Connection, Jen Kaminsky as leader, for 7th and 8th graders. By invitation and also registration. Lake Compounce trip is tomorrow and registration is full. Red Ribbon Week is national week to promote abstaining from substance abuse. MB Theme will be "Go Above and Beyond" and "Not because you have to, because you can." James Orrigo will speak on Halloween for two assemblies. Hoping Youth-to-Youth members only have leadership opportunities with him during school day. He works a lot of what is your story, what will you give back to world. Theme for days will come out shortly. Working to get Dr. Michael Hynes, Superintendent of Patchogue-Medford, who is very verbal about changing testing. We have different laws in CT and NY. Looking at Tues, Nov 27 at 10am. Interested in what schools would like him to talk about and educate parents on what schools are trying to do. The Annual Appeal stuffing party next is Wednesday 10-12 at Vanessa's house. SKi trip sign ups will come out in December. Chorus teachers have asked Youth-to-Youth to join with MB Singers and hopefully take bus to Sounds Tigers game.

VIII. New Business: Blue Zone is here to discuss their event next week. Emily Mueller and Beverly Brokaw spoke to explain the upcoming community conversation with Tony Buettner who did original the Blue Zone research. If we look at Wilton as a community, what are we known for? It feels like Wilton is already doing a lot of these things. Blue Zones are a way to get credit for all beautiful things in our community (OLC) and hope to get known as a Blue Zone in the US. When original research was done it looked at what communities had the largest percentage of people who lived healthy lives over 100. Looked at Power 9 principles of these communities (1. Downshift, 2. Wake up with purpose; 3. Plant focus diet 4. Wine at 5; 5. Family first 6. Moving naturally 7. Right tribe 8. Loved ones first; 9. Right tribe) going ahead with Blue Zone project would mean citizens and businesses coming together to optimize residents health and longevity. This is not a case of reinventing the wheel, but Wilton making use of what we have. Younger generations care about these things. There are economic upsides of this as well and grants available. This is a way to focus on our community and to think about our place in the world. One can't do well unless you feel well. Blue Zones have a health, purpose and economic vitality component. This could highlight and designate many things we're already doing well.

Science Fair should roll out by teachers soon and packets available after that.

Adjournment - 10:42am