

Middlebrook PTA Meeting
February 14, 2013
Minutes

- I. Call to Order - Room 115 in 6-Yellow, Middlebrook School @ 9am: -
Beth Johnson
- II. Approval of January 17, 2012 Minutes - Aileen Senneff: Maria Wilcox moved, Sharon Kress seconded. Minute approved.
- III. Principal's Report - Julia Harris:
Thank you to Co-Chairs Victoria Madden, Anne McCann, and all of the volunteers who made this year's Science Fair the best ever! Congratulations to all of the participants and the winners. Congratulations to the 56 Middlebrook chorus students who performed in the "I Dream a World" Concert sponsored by A Better Chance of Wilton at the Clune Center on Sunday, February 10. Our students had the opportunity to learn four songs based upon the poetry of Langston Hughes and Paul Laurence Dunbar. The songs were composed and conducted by renowned musician Dr. Roll Dilworth. Our students also had the opportunity to hear the Songs of Solomon Gospel Choir from Harlem, NY perform. Congratulations also to our three talented artists whose work was selected by the ABC committee for the program covers: Katie Callaghan, Natalie Patnaik, and Sarah Nachbar. Other Middlebrook artists' work was projected on the wall during the concert and on display in the gallery during the reception. We are looking forward to the annual Student Faculty Basketball games on Friday. This is a favorite Middlebrook tradition. Coffee with the Principal on "Internet Safety" will be held on Tuesday, March 12 in our Media Center from 9:00 - 11:00 am. The presenters will include the Senior Assistant State's Attorney Richard Colangelo, School Resource Officer Rich Ross, and Director of Technology for the Wilton Public Schools Matt Hepfer. This promises to be a stimulating conversation regarding the latest in technology that is available to our students and your children. Our Middlebrook Technology Instructional Leader will also be available to talk about the implementation of the new Bring Your Own Technology practice at Middlebrook. Happy Valentine's Day! We love our Middlebrook PTA!

IV. Teacher Representative - Tara Peterson:

- a. **6 Green** is in the process of producing their annual King Tut's Tomb Project. Students are researching an artifact that was found in the tomb, building a replica, and presenting it in the tomb. It will be open to the public February 25th-27th during the school day. All are welcome! Six Green students are practicing their research skills through an author study in English, and a Survival Research Project in RWW.
- b. **6 Yellow** students are delighted that the team's interdisciplinary unit on the "Mysteries of Egypt" has kicked off this month. In social studies, students will learn all about the history of the ancient civilization and create an artifact to display in an Egyptian Museum on March 15. In their language arts classes, they will read Egyptian myths and create postcards from modern day Egypt about their imaginary travels there. In science and Spanish, they will learn all about how the pyramids were built using simple machines and make connections to the pyramids of the Mayans.
- c. **6 Red's** second "All A's" breakfast at the Phoenix Cafe was a success. Thirty students filled up with waffles, bacon, pancakes, whipped cream, and other delicious delights to honor their wonderful academic success. Additional students were honored for remarkable contributions within individual subject classes during a team meeting. English students are gearing up for a Poetry Festival on Friday, March 1st, and RWW students are starting the novel Ulysses! Ms. Leen's Inventive Organism Project is almost complete; they are looking forward to seeing some creatures they hopefully never run across in the wild! Social studies are about to begin a study of Greece, which will culminate with a Greek Cultural Arts festival in late March.
- d. **On 7 Green**, our Power of One work is moving forward. Students will identify and research issues that they care about, which will lead to a sharing of knowledge that will bring our students together around topics and challenge them to work together to impact change. Currently, in social studies and RWW, students are keeping a "good deeds" log where they can capture the power of one in action.
- e. **On 7 Red**, English students are doing presentations and essays on ROT, HMC; RWW students are immersed in Shakespeare's

world of Macbeth, and World Geography students are studying Southeast Asia.

- f. On 7 Yellow students are busy studying the Middle East, angles, verbs, French butterflies, and Macbeth. Additionally, a student led service project to benefit the Heifer Fund has been successful and students are enjoying their new PTA funded SSR books - so a special thank you for them!
- g. On 8 Green, RWW students are spending their days getting to know Scout, Boo Radley, Atticus, and all the other legendary characters of Maycomb as they begin reading of To Kill a Mockingbird. Meanwhile, Science students have been having "Fun with Physics," fitting in with their field trip to Lake Compounce in May. And English students will be writing their first poems for class.
- h. Excitement abounds on 8 Red, where the transition process to entering high school has started, students are involved in a mock congress, enjoying the twists and turns of Shakespeare, and coming to understand the ins and outs of our global weather system.
- i. And finally 8 Yellow students are acting out scenes from A Midsummer Night's Dream, enjoyed a visit from Seniors from Wilton High, who did a Mardi Gras presentation for the French Classes on Tuesday, and are looking forward to competing against three of their own 8Y teachers in tomorrow's student/faculty basketball game?

V. President's Report - Beth Johnson:

Letters are posted on Edline regarding Middlebrook's new principal, Maria Coleman. The 2013-2014 district calendar has been approved. The major changes are making our February break a 5-day weekend instead of a full week, and four instead of 5 conference days.

VI. Officer Reports:

a. Vice President - Stacy Cramer:

One additional staff member joined, bringing the staff membership to 50, and 586 total.

b. Treasurer-Maria Wilcox:

- i. Final fundraising total was \$31,699.23, an increase of 4.5% from last year. 5/9 teams have responded to requests for their \$300 grants. The remaining 4 need to submit requests to receive their \$300.
- ii. Current financial status: Cash balance is \$78,000. We need \$25,000 reserve, and we have \$14,000 in expenses remaining. Therefore, we'll have a \$37-38,000 surplus. This year's gift to the school will be sizeable due to cash left from prior years. The last couple of years, there was more money being retained versus donating down the reserve level. We also had large donations from the PTA council and Turnover Shop this year.

c. Parent-At-Large - Savet Constantine:

- i. Still encourage everyone to email their opinions and support for the budget process.
- ii. School Budget Update:

Overall, there are two main points on the budget. The 2013-14 budget stands at \$76,890,105, which is a 3.83% increase over last year. After budget talks with the BOF, the BOE trimmed the budget lines for textbooks, general supplies, and dropped three technology projects (Wi-Fi at Miller Driscoll, Wi-Fi at Cider Mill, and the iPad cart) in order to bring the increase under 4%. The BOE budget outlines that almost all of the 3.83% increase covers mandated services and previously negotiated contract increases (health benefits and salary for existing staff).
- iii. Upcoming Budget Meetings:

The Board of Finance needs to hear from Wilton residents about their opinion on the budget. Residents can email the BOF and the BOE at: boardoffinance@wiltonct.org and boe@wilton.k12.ct.us. In addition, residents can also come to hear the budget presentation and voice their opinion at the Public Hearing at Middlebrook Auditorium on Wednesday, March 27th starting at 7:30pm.

VII. Committee Reports:

- a. Wilton Youth Council - Maria Wilcox for Nancy Gany:
If you'd like information on joining the WYC, contact Maria Wilcox at sigwilcox@yahoo.com. 3/12/13 from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM: **Parent Connection's Parenting Book Group Series** with Dr. Susan Bauerfeld: "*That Crumpled Paper Was Due Last Week: Helping Disorganized and Distracted Boys Succeed in School and Life*" by Ana Homayoun. At the Wilton Library. Admission is free, reservations are highly recommended. 3/20/13 from 7 -9 PM: **Task Force Panel Event.** The Task Force to Reduce Substance Abuse wants to do more with the results of the Youth Survey taken among Wilton students (7th - 12th grades) and is working to put together a panel (to include the WHS outreach counselor, HS resource officer, mental health professionals, attorney, Positive Directions reps) to address survey findings and further the conversation. Liz Jorgensen will be the keynote speaker.

4/23/13 from 6 - 8:30 PM: **No Kidding, Me Too!** Documentary showing at WHS. This film was originally aired to the Wilton community in 2009 and is Joe Pantoliano's directorial debut about his fight against the stigma and shame of mental health disease. May 2013 (Date TBD): **HS Transitions Program for Parents of 8th Graders.** We will host this 2nd annual program at WHS for parents of 8th graders who are new to the high school. A panel of HS students, guidance counselors (from both MB and WHS) and WHS administrators share important information and answer questions.

- b. Nominations for 2013 - Beth Johnson for Michelle Doggett:
We are seeking people to fill the roles of President, Vice President on the executive board, as well as many committee positions.
- c. Science Fair - Anne McCann:
We had 89 participants and 22 judges including high school students from the Science Olympiad and AP students. We are talking to Mr. Lucey and Mrs. Renaldi at the high school about incorporating mentoring of the science fair into the AP classes.

4 students are going on to the state science fair at Quinnipiac March 12-16.

d. Activity Nights - None present.

6th grade activity night is March 1st, the 7th grade activity night that was scheduled for February 8th is being rescheduled.

e. Special Education -

We are still working on Disability Month in April, and the TIM's are coming to Middlebrook to talk to the 8th graders about joining.

f. 8th grade photo - Beth Johnson:

The picture will be taken April 9th during lunch. The PTA will no longer be paying for the photos for each student as was decided in the September, 2012 PTA meeting. The cost of the photo is \$24.99 for a student to buy one directly, or \$6.00 per photo if the PTA buys one for each student. Beth Johnson proposed that the PTA buys them all for \$6 each to obtain the lower price, and then sell them to students at a price to be determined. They can be sold at lunches and possibly during the Soaring Ahead ceremony.

g. 8th grade dinner dance - Anna MacDonald:

The dance is taking place on June 7th, 7:00-9:30 pm. Tickets are \$25. The kickoff meeting was in January, and the next meeting will be March 5th at 10:30 am at Trackside. The critical item right now is food, we are hoping for a parent with "food connections" to provide food at or below cost. The theme has been chosen but is top secret!

h. Soaring Ahead - Chris Winrow, Laurie Collins, and Katy Foster have met with Karen and Janet Nobles to begin planning, and also working with the Wilton Sport Shop.

VIII. New Business: None brought.

IX. Adjournment