**Middlebrook PTA Meeting**

**February 19, 2015**

1. **Call to Order – Middlebrook School at 9:09 a.m.**

* **In attendance:** Savet Constantine, Stacy Crameri, Vanessa Elias, Kristin Fasano, Laurie Maggio, Karen Murchison, Kim Rogg, Liane Roseman, Laura Rowley, Lisa Smith, Julie Stevenson, Kim Troy, Sujata Vemuri, Maria Wilcox

1. **Approvals**
   * Nov. 20, 2014 minutes approved – motion by Stacy Crameri, seconded by Kim Rogg. None opposed.
   * Jan. 15, 2015 minutes approved with minor corrections – motion by Maria Wilcox, seconded by Savet Constantine. None opposed.
   * Approval for a budget up to $40,000 for playground equipment (as further detailed in Treasurer’s report) – motion by Vanessa Elias, seconded by Kimberly Rogg. None opposed.
2. **Superintendent’s Budget Presentation**

* Dr. Smith presented the proposed 2015-2015 school budget, which is currently under review by the Board of Finance. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.wilton.k12.ct.us/pages/Wilton_School_District/Board_of_Education/Board_of_Education/Budget/Budget_2015-2016>

* Highlights include an overall increase of 1.98%, driven, in part, by contractually required salary increases and SPED costs.
* There was also discussion regarding school procedures and information made available to parents regarding how to talk to children about the situation with Dr. Leonard.

1. **Principal’s Report – Maria Coleman**

* Middlebrook has been selected as Creative Connections’ 2015 USA Art Partner of the Year, and will be honored at the opening of the Children’s Art Exhibit at the Maritime Center in Norwalk this May. Nine students will have their work displayed from May until August.
* On February 3, seventy students participated in the annual Science and Engineering Fair, co-sponsored by the PTA and WEF. Award details can be found in the Feb. 16 Messenger.
* During February, students participated in the PTA’s Reflections Contest in Visual Arts, Photography, Literature and Film Production. Award details are in the Feb. 16 Messenger.
* Ten students qualified to represent Middlebrook at the Southwest Regional Math Counts Competition, with one team advancing to the state competition held in Hartford in March. Additionally, two students placed among the top ten scorers. Finally, the top twelve competitors competed in a countdown round, with one of our students taking fourth and another winning!
* At the 2014 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, one student earned Honorable Mention for writing, and six students earned awards ranging from Honorable Mention to Gold in art. This is the nation’s longest-running, largest, and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens.

1. **Teacher Representative – Marnia Kiernan**

**Sixth Grade**

Green

* In science, students are researching in class to become experts on one of the Five Kingdoms of Life. Next week they will teach their classmates about their kingdom.
* Despite weather obstacles, King Tuts Tomb was hugely successful! Now students will begin studying Ancient Greece in preparation for the Greek Theater Festival.
* Students in English are reading short stories and will soon begin reading Ulysses.

Red

Despite the freezing temperatures and deep snow outside, on 6 Red we have been warming up with some great activities:

* We recently celebrated our second quarter outstanding achievements on team. We have such a wonderful group of children on this team and are so thankful for your help at home supporting them.
* Coming up this third quarter we will have our Greek Festival, I.O.P. project, Poetry Festival, New Haven field trip, various World Language celebrations and other special events. We look forward to seeing parents at these events and encourage families to contact any of the teachers with questions or concerns.

Yellow

* This month the team kicks off the interdisciplinary Mysteries of Egypt unit. Each class will make connections to the Egyptian civilization through lessons, activities, and projects. For example, in social studies, students will research and create Egyptian artifacts, and in science, they will learn about mummification while conducting a lab experiment mummifying oranges! We look forward to our team’s special “Mysteries of Egypt” day on March 13th.

**Seventh Grade**

Green

* English students have started reading Robert Lipsyte’s The Contender, a whole class novel unit which focuses on analysis of character development, conflict, symbolism, setting, and theme.
* Spanish students are collaborating on videos demonstrating the use of command verbs.
* Social studies classes recently completed a unit on modern revolutions.

Red

* In World Geography, RWW, and English, students are participating in the TOD (Tolerance of Differences) project in which they study the causes of intolerance in dozens of situations around the world.
* Science students are studying seismic-safe buildings and starting an earthquake preparedness building project.
* In World Language, students are studying various present-tense verb forms and using them in a project connecting a house and household chores.

Yellow

* Factoring equations is just one of the current fun events happening in math!
* In French students are practicing information used while traveling. Spanish students are actively writing scripts for their video projects on "Los Quehaceres en la Casa." They will be filming each other performing chores, enacting a sort of "Cinderella" scenario. The students are having fun ordering each other around as they practice their newly acquired Spanish informal commands.
* The challenging map of Africa is being worked on in Social Studies as students share earthquake preparedness presentations in Science.
* Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and Macbeth are current literary pieces in the language arts classes where our team theme of “Change” will be integrated repeatedly.

**Eighth Grade**

Green

* In Social Studies, students have begun studying economics. They are currently learning basic principles of economic theory, and in upcoming units they will apply this understanding to different periods in U.S. history.
* In Science we are studying physics, including concepts such as: speed, acceleration and momentum. Next week we will begin to discuss Newton’s Laws of Physics.
* In preparation for an upcoming unit on To Kill A Mockingbird, students are studying Dr. MLK’s “I Have A Dream Speech” to study the beauty and power of good speech making and language. This is a nice transition from a study of propaganda on Animal Farm.

Red

We appreciate all the hard work that's being put in at home to keep the continuity in our learning despite all the weather disruptions!

* In RWW, students are delving into Shakespeare with A Midsummer Night's Dream.
* In English and Social Studies students are moving forward in their interdisciplinary project, "Independent Fairfield."
* Students will begin studying physics in science classes.

Yellow

* In RWW students completed their unit on short stories with a creative writing assignment. Students reflected on their learning and it to their own stories.
* French students are celebrating Mardi Gras this week! A few students from WHS will be joining them to add some excitement to their celebration; Spanish students are simulating a Mexican Open-Air Market this week.
* In Social Studies, students are completing a unit on Economic Theory and will begin studying the Gilded Age next week.

1. **President’s Report – Savet Constantine**

* Reminder of author Gordon Korman’s visit to Middlebrook tomorrow, February 20.
* The Turnover Shop made a very generous donation of $10,000 to the PTA. They are also seeking additional volunteers to help out once a month at the store.

1. **Officer Reports**

**Treasurer – Maria Wilcox:** Focus was on playground equipment, and a summary was given showing available cash of $36,778. It was proposed that a $40,000 budget be approved, as this will still leave us with a reserve of $16,778 for next year, and we are hopeful that additional gifts may be received this year. The reserve will be replenished next year to its regular $20,000 level.

1. **Committee Reports**

* Nominating: Jeanette Calabrese has volunteered to chair Spiritwear.
* Reflections: Award details are in the February 16th Messenger.
* Science Fair: Great turnout with 70 students participating. WEF generously donated cash prizes for Best of Fair and top three winners of each category, putting the event within its allotted budget. Lots of positive feedback from parents, students and teachers. Award details are in the February 16th Messenger.
* Wilton Youth Council: Teaming up with Weston to bring in Dr. Robert Brooks to talk on “Raising Resilient Children” on April 27th: 11-12:30pm at Weston Public Library and 7-8:30pm at WHS Little Theater. Next session for Peer Connections starts February 21st.
* PAB News: They are working on Disability Awareness Month activities for April, and hope to include TIMS visits during lunch. Activities will focus on accepting differences and including others. Also, attorney Bett Gailor is coming to Wilton to discuss 504 plans – March 11th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the library.
* 6th & 7th Grade Activity Nights: Both are making progress in lining up volunteers and activities.

1. **Adjournment 10:59 a.m.**