

Middlebrook  
PTA Meeting April 25 2013  
Minutes

- I. Call to Order - Middlebrook School @ 9am in the Media Center: Beth Johnson
- II. Approval of March 21, 2013 Minutes - Aileen Senneff: Maria Wilcox moved, Kim Troy seconded. Minutes approved.
- III. Principal's Report - Julia Harris:
  - a. Congratulations to eighth grade student Katie McAdams who earned recognition as one of 10 Connecticut writers in The School for Ethical Educations' (SEE) *Laws of Life* essay writing program. *Laws of Life* is a writing assignment designed to help students think, reflect, write, and discuss the core values they believe can help them live their lives successfully. All eighth grade students at Middlebrook School participated in this essay contest. Katie will be honored with Mrs. Candels, her English teacher, and her parents at a Character Celebration on May 1 in New Haven.
  - b. Congratulations also to eighth grade student, Emily Mitrione, who qualified for the final round in the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual State Geography Bee and placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the state! Emily remembers the question, "Which African country borders Burkina Faso and Libya?" (Niger) Emily hopes to do something with the United Nations when she grows up.
  - c. The Top Inclusion Models (TIMS) visited each of the Middlebrook teams on April 5 and presented on a variety of topics involving inclusion. They encouraged the students to Mix-It-Up at lunch and joined them in the cafeteria during the lunch waves. The reviews of the visit were overwhelmingly positive. The students look forward to seeing the Top Inclusion Models again at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade dinner dance in June.
  - d. Middlebrook celebrated World Language Week during April 8-12 with special events such as the International Food Competition and the Dance China NY performances. The Dance China NY artists are a diverse collection of master award winning dancers and musicians from China and New York. This

performance would not be possible without the support of funding from our PTA. Thank you!

- e. The annual talent shows on April 12 involved over a hundred talented students! Several acts involved students from different grades, and these groups performed for more than one talent show. In addition to showcasing their exceptional talents, our students impressed us with the respect and appreciation they demonstrated for the performers. Those who attended the talent shows were invited to vote on their favorite acts, and the winners will be announced on Friday. These students will be invited to perform in the All Star Talent Show to be scheduled later this spring. Thank you to Mr. Gordon and the talented MAVEn (Music, Audio, Visual Enrichment) students who provided all of the audiovisual support. Thank you also to Mrs. Nobles and Mrs. Kelly for the hours of auditioning, organizing, staging, and directing the performances. Again, we appreciate the PTA stipend for this event.
- f. On a personal note, I was surprised on Tuesday morning by the special delivery of bouquets of flowers and handwritten notes from groups of sixth grade students. I understand that the PTA supported this lovely gesture, and I would like express my heartfelt appreciation for your kindness.

IV. Teacher Representative - Tara Peterson:

- a. **Six Green's** students have been studying ancient Greece in social studies. Today their Greek Festival is taking place with a reception to follow. The annual sixth grade Walk-A-Thon will take place tomorrow. Students chose Make A Wish as their charity to sponsor.
- b. **The 6 Yellow** students are exploring many different organisms and discussing their adaptations during their trip to the Bronx Zoo. Additionally, they raised over \$2500 for the American Cancer Society and are looking forward to walking alongside their fellow sixth graders for good causes during tomorrow's Walkathon.
- c. **6 Red students** have chosen the Sandy Hook Workers' Assistance Fund as the group they are raising money for this

Friday, April 26th during the 6th grade walk-a-thon. Also, they have started the end of the year Independent Student Project. Students are selecting topics of interest that they will begin researching over the next three weeks. Projects will be shared at the 6th grade Closing House this spring. They are proud to announce that a group of children spontaneously initiated a Wednesday lunch group to talk about things they could do to spread the message of kindness in our school community. In the wake of the violence in Sandy Hook students came to team teachers asking if they could meet at lunch to discuss ideas. The group has met each Wednesday for the last month.

- d. **On 7 Green**, RWW and SS students created scrapbooks commemorating their journeys through the Po1 so far this year. English students are creating films based on the memoir Cheaper by the Dozen. RWW students celebrated poetry month by reading, performing, and discussing several poems designed to elicit multiple interpretations rooted in text evidence. We are proud of our many talent show participants and we enjoyed a team day the day before break, which included many great activities to further our team spirit.
- e. **On 7 Red**, English/SS/RWW students are making their presentations for the TOD project as they strive to understand the causes of intolerance. In science they are learning about cell processes and in World Language they are performing skits in Spanish to discuss buying gifts for friends.
- f. **On 7 Yellow**, after a successful wrap up of *Change Agents*, students are launching the United Nations Project this week. In Science, students are making elements enticing through informative and beautiful brochures and World Language classes will have student led warm up exercises to start class.
- g. The **8 Green** team has been getting ready for their annual field trip to Philadelphia scheduled for today. This field trip ties into their curriculum nicely as the students have studied the US Constitution in Social Studies. They are visiting many exciting exhibits including the National Constitution Center, Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and Christ's Church.

- h. **8 Red** is gearing up for a busy spring, which will include a field trip to Lake Compounce, a memorial site restoration service project, and The Next Best Thing "project zero" unit.
- i. **And lastly 8 Yellow** proudly reports that Andy Cloutier has finished his graduate work and is now Dr. Cloutier! 8Y students will begin their team project on conflict next week, which includes a unit on propaganda and Hiroshima.

V. President's Report - Beth Johnson:

- a. Jory Higgins contacted me to see if the PTA wants to claim the unclaimed items from the PE spring cleanup. Michelle Doggett suggested possibly donating to Minks to Sinks or the Turnover shop and designate the proceeds to Middlebrook. This job may also be handled by the student government or recycling club.
- b. A reminder that the board of education is now on Facebook and Twitter.
- c. Maria Coleman, the incoming principal of Middlebrook, will be attending the PTA meeting in May.

VI. Officer Reports:

- a. Vice President - Stacy Crameri:  
No report, except that total membership for the year is at 586. Beth Johnson recommended continuing to offer the combined PTA membership and school directories.
- b. Treasurer-Maria Wilcox:
  - i. It has been a quiet month; there is a reminder in the Middlebrook Messenger for everyone to submit any outstanding expenses. A check for \$145.90 was received from Box Tops and passed directly to the school.
  - ii. Current financial status: To summarize the financial statement, there is approximately \$77,000 in the bank right now. Working with a recommended reserve of \$25,000, our current surplus is about \$37,000.
- c. Parent-At-Large - Savet Constantine:
  - i. School Budget Update: There is a current proposal of a 2.81% increase in the budget from last year. Beth commented that there was an editorial in the local newspaper questioning why the budget needs to go up if

enrollment is down. People do not understand that it is mainly mandated expenses that comprise the budget increase, like contracts that must be paid and special education mandates that are not optional. Also, a small fluctuation in enrollment does not have a significant impact on the budget. A portion of the last \$750,000 cut was technology. Middlebrook will lose a couple of co-curricular activities and there is a new \$25 fee for co-curricular activities. (The new fee structure will be \$25 K-8; high school is \$50/activity and \$100/sport).

- ii. Upcoming budget meetings: the Town meeting is May 7 at Middlebrook for meeting and vote.

#### VII. Committee Reports:

- a. Wilton Youth Council: Maria Wilcox: We had a great mental health fair featuring Joe Pantoliano's movie "No Kidding, Me Too". It was very well attended. We are always looking for volunteers, contact Maria Wilcox if interested.
- b. Special Education - Patti Sylvia: The TIM's gave bookmarks to Middlebrook students and did skits and improvisations at Cider Mill. Todd Kellogg is coming today and tonight to talk about social skills. Inclusion posters were made and hung on each team.
- c. 8th Grade Dinner Dance - Anna MacDonald and Carla Quigg: We had a committee meeting this week and would like to thank you for the increase in our budget. Invitations have been printed and the entertainment is set. At the next meeting, all the final details should be in place.
- d. Soaring Ahead - T shirts have been ordered and received and will be distributed soon for the music adjudication trip. They are light blue with navy lettering.
- e. Hospitality - We are in great shape for teacher appreciation next week.
- f. 2012-2013 PTA Gifts and Grants - Beth: Maria Wilcox moved to give the gifts and grants committee the authority to spend the funds given them by the PTA as they see fit. Bev Hermann seconded. No discussion, motion approved. Maria Wilcox moved to give \$35,000 to the gifts and grants committee. Bev

Hermann seconded. No discussion, motion approved. Last year the committee had about \$21,000. 100% of funds raised this year are being given back to the school. Stacey Crameri suggested the PTA write a thank you letter to the Middlebrook Community explaining how the funds were used and distribute the letter through Edline.

- g. Nominations - Michelle Doggett: Michelle will be emailing out job descriptions for each board member to update as needed. Copies will be maintained by the nominations committee and the secretary.
- h. Election of 2013-2014 Executive Board - Robin Paradis moved to nominate the 2013-2014 executive board as follows: Savet Constantine, President; Pam Hickey, Vice President; Maria Wilcox, Treasurer, and Aileen Senneff, Secretary. Kim Troy seconded. No discussion. Board approved as nominated.

#### VIII. New Business - Guest Speakers

- a. A Better Chance (ABC) of Wilton: Robin Fields: A video was presented explaining the program and its impact on the participants. This program is a huge part of WHS and a major benefit to our students as well. The WHS Homecoming king was an ABC scholar this year. The program is funded 100% through private donations. We are having a tour of Wilton homes on May 31, 2013 as a fundraiser. Brochures have been provided. Please encourage your children to reach out to the ABC scholars, 8 boys and 6 girls who live in 2 homes in Wilton. The boys' home is supervised by the Gordon family and the girls' home has a female resident director.

#### IX. Adjournment: Beth Johnson.