

**Middlebrook PTA Meeting
January 21, 2016 – Minutes**

I. Call to order -- 9:15 a.m. in 7Y Spanish Room

Attendance: Jacqueline Jackson, Laura Schwemm, Kim Lynn, Maria Wilcox, Pam Hickey, Jessica Garcia, Kim Rogg, Laura Rowley, Alison Rubin, Maria Coleman, Sujata Vemuri, Laurie Maggio, Nadine Wilf, Rocio Fields

II. Approvals

- November 19, 2015 minutes with a correction requested by Maria Coleman and made by the secretary to change the word “dedication” to “celebration” in regards to the George Washington statute event last month – motion by Kim Rogg, second by Kim Lynn, all in favor.
- Funds approved for MAVENs equipment (up to \$3,904), playground equipment (up to \$250), additional expenses for Science & Engineering Fair (up to \$1,500), and for an internet safety assembly (up to \$3,000), as detailed in later sections.

III. Principal’s Report – Maria Coleman

- On January 20th, Heather Priest was recognized by Wilton Go Green as “Outstanding Green Teacher, 2015.” Heather was selected due to her work leading Middlebrook’s efforts to become a CT Green Leaf School, building and maintaining our organic garden, and restructuring Family and Consumer Science courses to focus on wellness, healthy living, and sustainability. Congratulations to Heather on this great achievement!
- The Support Center would like to thank all students and parents who supplied baked goods for its annual bake sale. They were overwhelmed with donations, raising a record \$3,101! DCF used part of the funds for holiday gifts and will use the rest during the year to support children in foster care.
- Middlebrook participated in National Geographic’s geography bee in December and held the school finals competition in January. After competing on their individual teams, ten students earned places in the school finals. Finalists were:
 - i. Grade 6 - Emily Bukowski, Jackson Luther, and Ashley Merkle
 - ii. Grade 7 - Dillon Loud, Rahul Vallabhajosula, and Anthony Rushevich
 - iii. Grade 8 - Charlie Bennet, Jackson Lent, Alexander Koutsoukos, and Zach Muraskin
 - iv. Congratulations to third place winners Charlie Bennet and Anton Rushevich and second place winner Jackson Lent. For the third year in a row, Alexander Koutsoukos won the school competition, earning the privilege of moving on to the state qualifier. Middlebrook congratulates Alex and wishes him the best of luck in the next phase of the competition.
- The second quarter Family and Consumer Science culinary competition proved quite a battle. Sixteen teams poured their hearts into delicious meals. The winning “Young and Hungry” team delivered pan seared chicken with pumpkin seed pesto, quinoa with roasted Brussels sprouts, and crispy avocado fries. Team members included Alex Batrak, Maeve Sexton, Chloe Sokol, Sasha Sypher, and Solomon Wozniak.
- With teacher Tanya Leonard’s help, Middlebrook students are opening a “School Store Pop-Up Store” to test the concept of a working school store. The pop-up space will be in the media center through the month of February. Items to be sold include: pencils, paper, notecards, Middlebrook sweatshirts, t-shirts, and sweatpants, and items created by the Recycling club.

IV. Teacher Representative – Jessica Garcia

- As we move into the second half of the year, it is exciting to see students move toward more independence, larger scale projects, continued incorporation of technology and exciting interdisciplinary work.

Sixth Grade

- 6 Red

- Auditions currently being held for the Greek Festival that will take place at the end of February
- In Science, students have designed airplanes to research mass and speed
- **6 Yellow**
 - In Science class, students have built models of the earth, sun, and moon to demonstrate their movement in space
 - In Spanish, students continue to incorporate new technology into their learning. Green Screen and TouchCast have been used to complete their Spanish Rap Projects. Students also continue to grow in their confidence of using Google Apps for Education.
- **6 Green**
 - King Tut's Tomb Experience is in full swing! Students are working on being docents and are looking forward to greeting you when they open the tomb to the public. The tomb will be open during the school day from Tuesday, February 2nd to Thursday, February 4th
 - Proud to have 23 students participating in the Science and Engineering Fair. Topics of experiments range from observing how plant diets affect their growth to creating a bio-efficient water filter.

Seventh Grade

- Students and teachers are very busy with a variety of units that present very mature topics.
- In Social Studies, students are examining African geography and culture, paying particular attention to economic and political situations in this region.
- In science, students are learning about plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes.
- In English and RWW classes, students are reading books such as "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry" (7R) and "Macbeth"(7Y)
- In World Language, students are also examining how their culture may influence their life style. Students are working collaboratively to compare items in their bedrooms and how these items may be indicative of their culture (7Y).

Eighth Grade

- In Social Studies, all three 8th Grade Teams have been busy participating in the Great Debates. Students have worked very hard to prepare their cases and are doing an impressive job presenting their arguments before their peers and teachers.
- In science, 8Y and 8G have just completed the frog dissection, while 8R is studying the atmosphere and weather patterns, trying to determine where CT's snow is this winter!
- In World Language, students on 8G are presenting about their "Tomatina" and "Fiesta de San Fermin" (Running of the Bulls) experience in Spain, using Google Classroom/ iMovie/ and Google Slides to create their presentation.
- In English and RWW classes, students continue to focus on their writing and reading fine works of literature. 8R is beginning "To Kill a Mockingbird" in RWW while 8Y is examining the Russian Revolution as they begin to read "Animal Farm".
- Interdisciplinary projects are beginning on both 8Y and 8R. 8 Yellow is combining RWW and Social Studies classes for a project in February and 8 Red will be starting "IF" (Independent Fairfield), a combined English/ Social Studies experience later this month.

Other School Updates

- Teams are very proud of the representatives that took part in Middlebrook's Annual Geography Bee. The finals were held after school January 13th, and for the third year in a row, we are pleased to have Alex Koutsoukos represent our school in the state finals.
- 8th grade has been visited by the Wilton High School Guidance Department as their transition to high school begins. They have also met with guidance counselor Bonnie O'Brien to discuss high school life and how the recommendation/ registration process happens. Just a reminder to parents that there is

an informational meeting at Wilton High School on the evening of January 26, 2016. All 8th grade parents and students are encouraged to attend.

- Career Day is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2016 and we are looking for speakers! If anyone is interested in participating, they can contact the guidance department for information.
- We are also looking forward to several PTA sponsored events and activities including The Science and Engineering Fair is February 2, 2016. Science teachers are busy assisting students with entries. It is exciting to see the enthusiasm and creativity of the students in the experiments they are designing
- Visiting author Jordan Sonnenblick is coming March 17, 2016.

V. President's report- Laura Rowley

- Big thank you to hospitality for their good work on the winter solstice spread and the bus driver breakfast. Thank you notes were received, shared and appreciated.
- Parents who would like access to Chartwell's school cafeteria menu can use the Nutrislice app. The app provides many more details, including ingredients.
- Volunteer at the Turnover Shop one time per month. The proceeds come back to the community. Half the proceeds go to the Fairfield County Visiting Nurse and Hospice and half to the Wilton PTAs. In fact, Laura is picking up a \$10,000 check the day after this meeting!
- It is school budget meeting season and here are two presentations for the community to see what the Board of Education is proposing. Tuesday 1/26/16 at 9:15 am and Thursday 1/28/16 at 7 pm at the Cider Mill cafeteria. Last year the budget passed by default due to low voter turnout. Be sure to participate in the process and come out to vote.
- Next school year, probably by July 1, 2016, the school will be transitioning teacher emails to easier extensions. Using Maria Coleman's name as an example the formula is as follows:
colemanm@wiltonps.org

VI. Officer Reports

• Vice President- Pam Hickey

- i. Membership is down by 20 people versus last year.
- ii. Pam requested up to \$250 to purchase 12 more footballs to enhance playground equipment at recess. Liz O'Hara, the campus supervisor, has a great system going. She's been inflating balls and getting them out on the fields and basketball courts. Motion made by Maria Wilcox, seconded by Laura Rowley, all in favor.

• Treasurer – Maria Wilcox

- i. Book fair made \$3,000 for MB Library. Thank you to all those who helped.
- ii. Maker Bot supplies were purchased which brings that prior year grant to \$0.
- iii. Fundraising totaled \$19,062 with 369 participants. We have processed five corporate matching gift forms for a total of \$470, and hope to see those funds by year end.
- iv. Power of One prior year grant used \$273.78 on books with \$476.22 still remaining.
- v. We recently learned the MB PTA did not have an IRS determination letter; however, we learned that we fall under the CT State PTA IRS determination letter since we are part of that organization. I received their IRS determination letter and note that we are in good standing with them, so our records have been updated.
- vi. We are providing approximately \$500 in unsold (and already paid for) spiritwear merchandise to be sold in the pop-up School Store mentioned earlier.

• Parent-At-Large – Kim Lynn

- i. The Miller Driscoll Building Committee initiated a conversation for a change in the calendar year so that school would start after Labor Day, along with additional changes in the calendar. BOE is set to vote on the proposed calendar at its 1/28/16 meeting.

VII. Committee Reports

- Fundraising- We need a Fundraising Task Force for next year and are looking to involve students and parents without buying and selling. We are looking for events like a Walk-A-Thon that work well in this way.
- Science & Engineering Fair- Will take place Feb 2, 2016, with a snow date of Feb 4. The committee requested additional funds to cover the cost of having 50% more kids participating this year – 103 registered. A motion was made by Maria Wilcox to approve up to an additional \$1,500 and seconded by Pam Hickey. All were in favor. Sujata Vemuri and Rocio Fields advised that next year there should be more members on this committee to support the work load. They are sending out requests for judges and volunteers. Maria Wilcox suggested Wilton high school students looking for more hours which they are exploring.
- Reflections- Congratulations to our winners moving on to State competition: Aby Yoon (Visual Arts), Aislynn Conway (Photography), Mickey Wilcox (Literature), and Brycen Addison (Music). Thank you to everyone who participated, and to the Wilton Library for putting all of the Visual Arts and Photography entries on display.
- 8th Grade Dinner Dance will hold its kick off meeting Jan 26th at 9 am with 40 volunteers already signed up.
- Box Tops- Kim Rogg had a plug in the Middlebrook Weekly Messenger for Box Tops. Discussed sources of box tops and non-food items that have box tops. The next deadline for submission is March 2, 2016.

VIII. New Business

- The school requested up to \$3,000 to fund internet safety assemblies by Scott Driscoll, a former police officer and expert in this area. There will be three grade level assemblies, as well as one or two parent assemblies. Laura Rowley made a motion to approve the funds, Maria Wilcox seconded. All were in favor.
- The MAVENS club had a grant request last Spring that was not fulfilled due to a lack of funds. After the close of this year's fundraiser, it was determined we could meet its need for funds to provide updated technology and equipment for students to film and edit assemblies and other events at the school. These recordings are maintained for future use and some are aired on Cable Channel 78. Maria Wilcox made a motion to approve up to \$3,904, Kim Rogg seconded. All were in favor.

IX. Adjournment 10:23 a.m.