

Middlebrook PTA Meeting

March 21, 2013

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order - Middlebrook School @ 9am in the Media Center: Beth Johnson.

- II. Approval of February 14, 2013 Minutes - Aileen Senneff: Maria Wilcox moved, Kim Troy seconded. Minutes approved.

- III. Principal's Report - Julia Harris:

"Coffee with the Principal" on "Internet Safety" was deemed an overall success based upon the results of the surveys following the presentation with Senior Assistant State's Attorney Richard Colangelo, School Resource Officer Rich Ross, Wilton Public Schools' Director of Technology Matt Hepfer, and Tim Ley, Middlebrook Technology Instructional Leader. If you were unable to attend, the March 12 presentation is located on the Middlebrook Technology web page under the title, "Promoting Responsible and Ethical Digital Behavior." Thank you to PTA President Beth Johnson and all of you for making this coffee possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have another topic that you would like to explore.

Our 18th annual Career Awareness Day yesterday was truly a community collaborative project with the Wilton Education Foundation. Our talented school counselors prepare the students for the day in the Developmental Guidance classes by exploring career possibilities with them and teaching them to take Career Interest Inventories on Naviance. The students sign up for sessions of interest to them and the counselors develop the schedules for the afternoon. This year we were most fortunate to have 64 community members present a variety of careers during four sessions. Presenters this year included one of my former students who is in Marketing at Facebook, a Flavor Scientist, a Portfolio Manager, a Cartoonist/Artist, and a Producer for ESPN. The six career clusters include: Business/Finance, Retail/Tourism, Engineering/Technology, Health Sciences, Education/Government/Service and Arts and Media. We appreciate the support of the Wilton Education Foundation to make this memorable day possible.

Auditions for the 2013 talent show will be held on Monday, March 25 through Thursday, March 28 during lunches. The talent shows will be held on Friday, April 12.

We will be celebrating World Language Week from April 8-12 with a variety of special activities including the International Food Competition and Dance China Assembly on April 10. The Dance China Assembly would not be possible without the support of the PTA funds. Thank you!

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the Public Hearing on the Board of Education Budget at the Middlebrook Auditorium on Wednesday, March 27 at 7:30 pm. Please let your voices be heard! The Public Hearing on the Board of Selectmen and Capital Projects Budgets will be held on the following night at the Middlebrook Auditorium at 7:30 pm.

Emily McCann placed in the state science fair. 480 students from grades 7-12 competed.

IV. Teacher Representative - Tara Peterson:

Six Green's English and RWW students have begun their annual poetry unit. Students will be exploring different types of poetry to read and write about, and compiling all of their creative poems into a poetry book. In the world language classes, students will extend their study of poetry through the study the poetry of Pablo Neruda, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Jacques Prevert.

The 6 Yellow Lions celebrated "Mysteries of Egypt" day on Friday, March 15. The museum of artifacts was open to parents, teachers, and students for tours throughout the day. Every class on team was dedicated to Egypt with activities such as writing in hieroglyphics on papyrus, going on Egyptian Webquests, and hearing a presentation from a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Also, 6Y has kicked off the Walk-A-Thon service project. The students are exploring possible charities to raise money for and will make their final decision by the end of this month.

6 Red's RWW classes have begun their study of *Ulysses* to coincide with social studies and the study of ancient Greece. The 6 Red Greek Festival will take place on April 5th from 12:30 to 2 pm with three plays, the trial of Socrates, and Aesop's fables performances, all on the MB stage! English class has begun their "Author Expedition" - students selecting an author to read three titles from. In world language class, students have been creating digital movies based on skits they created using vocabulary from "A Day in School" for Spanish and "The Restaurant" for French. And Science classes have just finished "Science Court" and studies of the seasons.

On 7 Green, English students are reading *Cheaper By the Dozen*, RWW students are wrapping up their *Macbeth* unit, in Spanish students are

learning how to talk about buying gifts and the cultural perspectives on gift-giving. World Language Week will be celebrated the week of April 8th. The World Language Department is sponsoring an International Food Contest after school on Wednesday, April 10th. Also on that date we will have a special assembly "Dance China." Algebra students are working on quadratic equations, while Math 7 and Advanced Math 7 are writing and solving algebraic equations. Science is transitioning to Biology using chemistry as a foundation and then will conduct an inquiry lab combining chemistry & biology & food!

On 7 Red, in Science, the study of chemistry continues, in RWW, World Geography, and English students are looking forward to starting their second interdisciplinary unit, entitled: Tolerance of Differences; Math 7 and Advanced Math 7 students are solving equations and inequalities, Algebra students are studying parabolas and quadratic equations, World Geography students are concluding their study of Southeast Asia with two parents coming in to discuss China.

On 7 Yellow the Change Agent Project starts this week with the choosing of a Change Agent and a biography. Investigative work continues concerning a field trip as their traditional ones are not available this year (Ellis Island and United Nations). The 7 Yellow Acts of Random Kindness group continues to spread good feelings with their recent accomplishments of a large donation to the Heifer International Fund and individualized shamrock messages for the team.

On 8 Green, students in science class are beginning to start construction of their toothpick bridges. In social studies, students are starting the Boom to Bust unit. In this project, students will create a character and keep a journal chronicling the impact of political and economic events on that character. At the end of the unit, students will attend a Depression-era social gathering in which they will come to class dressed as their character. In English class the students are involved in a poetry project in teams of three where one is a relative of the poet, one is a distinguished expert on the poet, and one student is the actual poet. The presentations will either be taped or performed live.

On 8 Red, students are also building bridges in science, finishing up Mock Congress in English and social studies, and packing and mailing to the Council of Indian Nations the stuffed animals collected during their Hug-A-Bears service project.

And lastly on 8 Yellow in Social Studies students are also engaged in the Boom to Bust assignment. RWW students are combining content knowledge, creativity, and technology to create websites, timelines, and

music videos on Shakespeare! Students recently finished reading The Pearl in English. Spanish students are creating a board game. French students are making a fitness brochure. And Science students are applying the skills they learned during the unit on forces/motion/and Newton's laws for a STEM activity on bridge building.

V. President's Report - Beth Johnson:

8th grade class photo is April 9 and the photographer will be CoffeePond. This year's class photo will be sold for \$5 to students once we receive them. Going forward, we have contracted with Lifetouch for the fall student photos but we are not under contract for the spring 8th grade photo. Lifetouch provided a price for the 8th grade photo which we feel is a bit high and we've asked them to try to bring it down. Depending on Lifetouch's response, we will be seeking other options.

The current and incoming fundraising committees need to meet to determine strategy for next year.

VI. Officer Reports:

- a. Vice President - Stacy Crameri: No report.
- b. Treasurer - Maria Wilcox: 6/9 teams have submitted requests for the team grants. 6R: White masks, 6Y: time capsule kit, 7R: camera and books, 7Y: books, 8Y: Shakespeare presentation, 8G: tickets to prohibition exhibition.
 - i. Current financial status: Total balance is \$77,508.00; reserve is \$25,000.00, remaining expenses are approximately \$15,000, so available cash balance is \$37,508.00.
- c. Parent-At-Large - Savet Constantine
 - i. School Budget Update: There is a \$3.2 million increase in contract and mandated services. The overall budget increase is \$2.8 million. The BOE website has all the graphics available.
 - ii. Upcoming budget meetings: March 27 at 7:30 in Middlebrook auditorium.

VII. Committee Reports:

- a. 8th Grade Dinner Dance: Anna MacDonald and Carla Quigg: We have inherited the binders from years past and formed a budget based on that information. A parent has agreed to do the catering at cost. All committees have their budgets. We are anticipating a budget shortfall of about \$1000. We can raise ticket prices to \$30 from \$25 as one option. \$9200 is anticipated cost, \$8000 is expected from ticket

sales. Currently the PTA donates \$1200. Maria Wilcox moved to increase the expenses for the dinner dance from \$9,200 to \$10,200. Michelle Doggett seconded. Additionally, water is not being donated this year, but soda is. Michelle Doggett also offered to donate some water, and Stacy Crameri suggested asking chaperones to bring jugs of water. Additionally, we need to feed the TIM's at the event. Maria Wilcox modified her motion to increase the expenses for the dinner dance to \$10,500. Patti Sylvia seconded. Motion passed. We also need to ask the special education teachers to inform families that the TIM's will be in attendance.

- b. Soaring Ahead: Laurie Collins: Very little to report; the gossamer we have looks fine so we will not need to purchase new at this time. There has been some discussion about having students wear their class shirts to Lake Compounce and Holiday Hill.
- c. Wilton Youth Council: Nancy Gany: We are desperately seeking volunteers. March 20th 7 - 9 PM at Trackside: Navigating the Teen Years: Helping our Kids Make Healthy Choices and Stay Safe. Keynote speaker, Liz Jorgensen will present and panelists include Kristin Dineen, WHS Outreach Counselor; Richard Ross, School Resource Officer; Roseanne DiSimone, WHS Health Educator; Laura Lanham of Positive Directions; and Sharon Guck of West Conn. April 23rd 6 - 9 PM at Trackside: No Kidding, Me Too! Documentary screening and post-screening panel to answer questions. NKMT's purpose is to remove the stigma attached to brain disease through education and the breaking down of societal barriers. There will be a mental health fair in the lobby of WHS both before and after the film & panel. May 9th - 9 AM and 7 PM at WHS Little Theater: Partnering with WHS PTSA on Internet Safety Presentation. May 2013 (Date TBD) at WHS Little Theater: The 2nd annual HS Transitions Program for Parents of 8th Graders. We are trying to schedule this in mid-May and panelists will include WHS Administration, Guidance Counselors from WHS & MB, and students. We have tentatively secured Colleen O'Neill, MSW, M.Ed to speak. She is a former middle school educator and currently is a counselor with Westport Family Therapy, working with adolescents and their families.
- d. Nominations for 2013-2014: Michelle Doggett: We are doing well for the 2012-2014 board. Savet Constantine will serve as president, so Parent-At-Large is open. Other major positions still open are Messenger/website and sportswear.

- e. Hospitality: Kim Troy: April 30 is teacher appreciation breakfast; May 1 is lunch, and May 2 is dessert.
- f. Activity Nights: 6th grade is April 5 and 7th grade has been cancelled twice due to snow and will not be rescheduled at this point.
- g. Special Education: Patti Sylvia: April is Disability Awareness month to coincide with Autism Awareness month. Todd Kellogg is coming April 25 in the morning and afternoon to talk about taking social skills on the road. We are also doing bookmarks again. The high school is making posters, Cider Mill is doing anti-bullying skits, and Miller-Driscoll is using books on inclusion and being different.
- h. Box Tops: A request/reminder to please trim the excess cardboard/wrapper from the box tops to cut down on mailing costs.
- i. Science Fair results: This past week over 480 students from grades 7 through 12 competed in this year's Connecticut State Science Fair. Middlebrook School sent 4 finalists from the winners of the Middlebrook Science Fair to the Connecticut Science Fair at Quinnipiac College. Out of the 480 students, 198 students were asked to continue on to the finalist judging for the fair with the majority of the finalists being high school students. Middlebrook School's Emilie McCann was named a finalist in the Connecticut Science Fair for her project on the vertical axis wind turbine. Emilie received a medal as well as a trophy for her work in the science fair. Congratulations to Emilie for her success in the CT State Science Fair!

VIII. New Business - Guest Speakers

- a. League of Women Voters - Lisa Somer: We are a non-partisan group open to members to encourage active participation in government. In Wilton, we just changed from a steering committee to a board due an increase in membership. We provide voter education, registration, and advocacy. Capitol Steps will be held at the Clune Center on April 5 at 7:30. We are also hoping to hold a program about Roberts Rules in September if there is enough interest. It will be publicized in the newspapers and PTA newsletters. Stacy Crameri just joined LOW, with no political background or knowledge, for the purpose of improved her own awareness and understanding. She has enjoyed registering high school students to vote and interacting with women of all different stages of life.

IX. Adjournment