**Middlebrook PTA Meeting**

**March 19, 2015**

1. **Call to Order – Middlebrook School at 9:10 a.m.**

* **In attendance:** Maria Coleman, Savet Constantine, Stacy Crameri, Vanessa Elias, Kristin Fasano, Pam Hickey, Marnia Kiernan, Laurie Maggio, Karen Murchison, Liane Roseman, Laura Rowley, Margaret Santacroce, Maria Wilcox

1. **Approvals**
   * Feb. 19, 2015 minutes approved – motion by Stacy Crameri, seconded by Vanessa Elias. None opposed.
2. **Principal’s Report – Maria Coleman**

* For the first time, Middlebrook students participated in the History Bowl in Darien. Seven students went, and had minimal preparation time. Our 7th grade team placed 10th and 8th grade placed 11th.
* Four students represented Middlebrook in the Math Counts state competition, with the team taking 4th place overall, and one student (who placed 4th) will represent CT at the nationals.
* International Food Week was a success with competition in appetizers, entrees and desserts.
* A video will be aired regarding the ongoing school climate survey/work, in which both children and parts will participate .
* On April 9th, there will be both morning and evening programs regarding the math program and how students are assessed and progress through middle school and beyond.

1. **Teacher Representative – Marnia Kiernan**

**Sixth grade**

Green

* Students are meeting classic characters like Long John Silver as they tackle the challenging novel, *Treasure Island*.
* Students are presenting their argument on "Despierta América" later this March (Good Morning America version on the Univisión Network) proving which country has the better eating schedule and diet to maintain health (that of a specific country in the Spanish speaking world or the United States)
* In RWW, students read the science fiction short story "The Veldt" by Ray Bradbury and then they had the opportunity to share their vision of the future in the year 2050, create their own personal design of a high tech playroom, or create an original book trailer for the story, "The Veldt." Students flexed their creative muscles in a variety of different ways and the end products were impressive!

Red

* The 6 Red students have finished their Egyptian masks and displayed them in our hallway
* “This is your life” project in math class - real-life simulation activities that use math
* Students are beginning studies in poetry to gear up for the 6 Red Poetry Festival in the beginning of April

Yellow

* The 6Y Team celebrated “Mysteries of Egypt” day on March 13th. Hundreds of students, parents, and staff members enjoyed their student led tours of the 6Y Egypt Museum. Also during the day, students enjoyed hearing from an Egyptian guest speaker and creating Egyptian collars, pyramids, and postcards.
* The team 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 April break. The Walk-A-Thon will take place on May 1 for the entire sixth grade.

**Seventh grade**

Green

* Students are working on Phase III of the Power of One as they look at issues throughout the world and share their findings with classmates. Shortly students will select an issue they feel passionate about and will explore this issue further as they propose an “Action” to help.
* Students will be taking part here at Middlebrook March 30 as the 7th grade witness a multimedia musical of a child Holocaust survivor’s remarkable triumph of spirit. Written and performed by Suzanne Tanner, *Beyond Me: A Song Cycle in the Key of Survival* tells the story of Rachel Goldman Miller, a 5 year old Jewish girl living in Paris in 1938 and all she has to endure.
* Also coming up will be our third Innovation Day. Based on Google’s *20% Time*, students will spend April 2 engaged in learning and creating something of their own choosing. We look forward to our students learning a new skill that they can carry forward in life.

Red

* Science students are learning about chemistry and studying elements, atomic structure, and chemical reactions of various sorts
* In Spanish, students are learning to communicate about buying and selling various items as they practice possible dialogues between shoppers and store clerks
* Students in RWW are studying the Holocaust in several different ways

Yellow

* Students are learning about aspects of the Holocaust in several classes as part of an inter-discplinary unit
* Activities for this include, but are not limited to, defining the word genocide, viewing a clip of “The Boy in the Striped Pajamas”, hearing a book talk in order to select a related book, and creating a memorial wall in the pod
* The Acts of Random Kindness group recently delivered individualized messages to each person on team highlighting a positive attribute

**Eighth grade**

Green

* As part of our study of economics, students are finishing a unit on the Gilded Age and will soon begin studying the Boom to Bust period of the 1920s and '30s.
* We are finishing up our review for the science CMT’s. These will be given to the students Tues. the 17th. Hopefully by now the students feel well prepared.
* Based on the popular Spanish tradition that celebrates the arrival of spring, students will create and explain artwork that represents an issue in their group’s “society” that they would like to address.

Red

* We are looking forward to spring and all the excitement it brings. One sign of spring is testing season, and we are preparing for both the Science CMT and the SBAC tests.
* Studies of physics, economics, Shakespeare, and Orwell are underway on team!

Yellow

* RWW students have begun acting out *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, complete with props and costumes!
* French students will be learning about fitness and maintaining a healthy lifestyle in French-speaking countries. Spanish students will get a cultural overview of the “barrios” (neighborhoods) in Spanish speaking countries and in New York City.
* In Science students are completing their books on the Physics of Sports using the app Book Creator on the iPads and will soon embark on the STEM project of investigating, designing and building toothpick bridges.

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

* There will be a Math/Common Core meeting today at Trackside starting at 10:30 a.m.
* The SPED review is underway with approximately 40 parents, staff and administrators to take part in the discussion, which will include IEPs and 504s.
* March 23rd is the Board of Finance meeting which will address the school budget, so this is the time to make comments.

1. **Officer Reports**

**Treasurer – Maria Wilcox:** Cash projection is still $36,000 for the playground versus a cost of $40,000. Cider Mill will donate another $1,500, and some amount (as of yet undetermined) should come from Miller Driscoll. This would still require a small dip into reserves, which we anticipate replenishing next year in full. Additional details can be found in the budget.

**Vice President – Pam Hickey:** It was determined a gas line comes into the school at the proposed sigte of the playground. The BOE is working with us to determine how far we will need to move the site and the twon will cut out pavement as necessary at no cost. We should have more detail when Call Before You Dig comes out on 3/20/15. Parks and Recreation will do the safety fencing. We still anticipate having the playground ready shortly after Spring Break.

**Parent-at-Large – Stacy Crameri:** Board of Finance meeting is 3/23/15 which will allow for comments on the school budget. On 5/5/15, the BOF will present the budget along with the new mil rate, with voting to follow that evening and the day after. The Board of Education is reviewing all policies which are approximately ten years old. In addition they are reviewing reinstating weighted grades as current policy may put our students at a disadvantage on the common application for college. Parents are encouraged to email the BOE with their thoughts.

1. **Committee Reports**

* Nominating: Progress being made, and there will be an appeal to 5th grade parents at Cider Mill.
* Reflections: Two state winners, taking 4th in painting and 2nd in film..
* 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.
* Special Education/PAB: April is Disability Awareness Month. A mental health committee has formed, and there is now a PAB section on each school website. Vanessa Elias is taking over Maria Wilcox’s role at WYC; however, they are still seeking a secretary.
* 6th Grade Activity Night: Committee is ready for tomorrow, but the weather forecast may postpone it.
* 7th Grade Activity Night: There were 39 kids present. Ther was discussion of holding 7th grade activity night only in the Fall as there is historically a significant drop off in participation between Fall and Spring.
* 8th Grade Dinner Dance: The theme is Wizard of Oz/Somewhere Over the Rainbow. They have decided to return to printed invitation, which will be sent out a month prior. The date has been changed to June 5th, and a “save the date” email will be sent. They plan to have chairs for food and decorations, and are hopeful a parent with food supply/restaurant connections will be able to help out with catering.

1. **Adjournment 10:25 a.m.**