

PTO

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Board Meeting
February 12, 2008

Present: Pam Remis, Liz Hochberger, Karen Packman, Kay Wynant, Denise McGeeough, Ellen Livingston, Margot Geffen, Diane Anderson, Wendy McCabe, Katie Phaneuf, Mary Ellen Sykes, Michelle Avery, Suzanne Lenox, Jean Arturi, Beverly Tam, Sharon Buenaventura, Damita Thompson, Connie Bendetson, Diane Douglas, Suzie Reeves, Cheryl Maloney

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

OPENING BUSINESS:

Minutes from January 08 were unanimously approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Kay Wynant

We are currently financially sound. Please submit receipts as used. Do not wait until the end of the year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Cheryl Maloney

Alan was unable to attend so Cheryl Maloney gave the superintendent's report. Weston does not participate in the Massachusetts State School Choice Program. This is a program that allows people to pay to attend a school out of their district. The school committee decides whether or not to participate and Weston does not because the state decides the tuition and the town does not have control over the students.

The Devlin family has provided the schools with ten defibrillators and training to use them. They have also provided the funds to finish the playground at Country School in Patrick Devlin's honor.

The budget process is going smoothly. We do not have an override and are still maintaining programs with some slight improvements.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT: No report

LEGAL REPORT: No Report

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Old Business

No report.

New Business: Cheryl Maloney shares her entry plan

As a new superintendent, it is her responsibility to share her entry plan. The purpose of the plan is to reach out and touch base with the staff, faculty and constituents of the community to review long range plans and process so that the superintendent will be able

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to hit the ground running in September. Cheryl has a long list of groups to meet with. She started with the High School student council, WEEFC, faculty leadership. She has more groups to meet with in the community and schools. She will also be holding focus groups in March on selected topics that will be advertised prior to the meeting. She is also looking to solicit ideas from the PTO for intelligent ways to share ideas with parents that are thoughtful without adding an additional burden to their time.

Cheryl also shared that there will be two forums regarding the possible expansion of full day kindergarten. The dates are March 7th at 9:00 am at Country School and March 17th in the evening at Woodland School.

The foreign exchange program also needs attention. The current group that has been organizing and running the program is looking for the PTO to take on this responsibility. The PTO would need to add it as a separate committee with a chair and co-chair. PTO would then be responsible for finding homes and hosting events for students who come to Weston from Brazil, Rombas and potentially China and Uganda. The current PTO Board felt like they needed more information before a decision could be made, including funding and other logistical issues. We are hoping to invite Anthony Parker and Henrietta Power to our next meeting to answer some of these questions.

Cheryl also passed out a survey to the PTO Board and asked us all to fill it out and return to her as soon as possible.

Weston Parent Coalition

The Parent Coalition has completed their survey and would like to post the results on the PTO website. It was decided that as a board, the PTO needs to come up with some guidelines before adding any outside information to our website. We suggested that the Weston Parent Coalition look to see if they might, at this time, be able to post their results on the town website which also seems to get more hits than our site.

FACUTLY ANNOUNCEMENTS: No Report

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CALENDAR: Jean Arturi

Calendar Software Investigation

Since we last met, I have been gathering information about calendaring software....

- Cort Mathers and I have exchanged emails and members of his team have offered their ideas (although no one does what we do)
- I have spoken with Ben Franklin Printing to get their input
- Alicia Salkewicz and I have emailed and spoken a few times (and Alicia has done some investigating with friends of hers)

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- I have talked to Ilene Horowitz who was going to talk to the help desk at Adobe to get their suggestions.

In short, we have determined that Ilene Horowitz is using the correct software, Adobe InDesign, however, we have not yet determined how best to improve the process. We know that Excel is not readily compatible with InDesign, however, it is the most compatible format for the SQL database that our Web mistresses use for the PDA download. We have a few suggestions and ideas, one of which would involve writing script (however, every few years when the InDesign software is updated, the script would likely need to be tweaked which would cost more money) but we are still investigating.

The next step is for me, Jean, Alicia and Ilene to sit down and see exactly what Ilene does, and talk to her about some of the suggestions we have received. Ilene is very open to this, and we will arrange a time after February break.

Student Directory Changes

I have sent an email to all the school administrators asking for changes to the student directory so that I can forward them to Diane Kaskon.

“Thank You”s to School Administrators

Jean and her soon to be new calendar counterpart, Kim Costello, are planning to distribute \$25 “thank you” gift cards to the key school administrators that we work with on the calendar and directory. This list includes: Janet Bohlin, Lisa Hollis, Diane Kaskon, Danette Alamanos, Sandy Bergin, Diane Sears and Mary Gallagher. We do this annually not only to thank them and extend our good will, but also as an easy, welcome means for the incoming co-chairs to introduce themselves to the key individuals with whom they will work over the summer and to share any updates about this coming year’s process and timeline.

Calendar and Directory Timeline

I am in the process of updating the timeline in preparation for the baton passing to Jean and Kim.

Student Directory Form Changes

After our last board meeting, Jean and I spoke with Jonathan White and asked him to please redraft the language for Section 3 in the Student Directory Form. The goal is to shift the burden of proof of shared legal custody from the secondary parent to primary parent. As you know, in the past the secondary parent has had to annually demonstrate proof of shared legal custody or obtain a signature from the primary parent to list a second address. However, we believe that the onus should lie on the primary parent to prove that the legal custody arrangement has changed in the last year, rather than fall on the secondary parent to prove that it has not changed. The huge advantage to the PTO

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and the Calendar Co-Chairs in particular of this new language is that it will not involve nearly so much paperwork or intrusion in other family's personal affairs.

I have yet to see the new language.

MEMBERSHIP: Sharon Buenaventura

Nothing new to report.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Georgia Argyrople

This month, the Community Outreach Committee was very busy launching a new initiative, Cradles to Crayons. The Cradles to Crayons Collection Drive was a huge success! The PTO's Outreach Committee and Cradles to Crayons would like to thank all of the Weston families for their generosity and kindness. This effort will go a long way in assisting Massachusetts families in need.

The following items were collected during this drive: 12 car seats; a high chair; 2 strollers; a rocking chair; 2 table and chair sets; 2 crib mattresses and bedding; 2 exersaucers; 2 pack and plays; a baby gate; 15 boxes of clothing; blankets; baby products and diapers; books; 8 boxes of toys; and 3 boxes of art supplies and back packs. We look forward to collecting next year for this worthy organization.

Our next collection will be in April on behalf of Buddy Dog. Please stay tuned. This month, the Community Outreach Committee was very busy launching a new initiative, Cradles to Crayons. The Cradles to Crayons Collection Drive was a huge success! The PTO's Outreach Committee and Cradles to Crayons would like to thank all of the Weston families for their generosity and kindness. This effort will go a long way in assisting Massachusetts families in need.

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WESTWORD: Suzanne Lenox

No new report.

HIGH SCHOOL: Report read by Karen Packman for Marcy Pomerance

Classes have just had some very successful events, the highlights of which include,

- Hypnotist who came and entertained a full HS auditorium, and included the entire community, something the HS would like to do more of.
- Seniors had a wonderful "Black and White" dance at Weston Golf Club to help break the tension of the college-application wait.

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- Special Olympics were a huge success this past Sunday. Twenty-four teams competed in our gyms, aided most capably by our Senior and Freshmen classes. A huge community success.
- Our parent education monthly meetings continue this Thursday with NPR's Bill Littlefield, a joint meeting with the MS.

Plans continue with prom, trips to Frog Pond, a video night, upcoming car washes, and maybe even a dog wash. April will bring our bi-annual Career Day to the HS, where our students choose from among 150 speakers who address the kids about their careers and the sometimes unconventional routes they took to get there.

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Wendy McCabe

We had our Middle School Winter Musical, Into the Woods, last week, which I heard was great.

The Costa Rica Trip is set to go and they will be leaving on Thursday.

The lunch notification process has not been going as planned. Only one note has gone home thus far during the year, so Rebecalyn is planning a meeting with Penny Theall.

The 8th graders spent the day in an Academic Integrity Program discussing plagiarism, how to cite things correctly, using the internet correctly, etc...

The Middle School is in the process of putting together a "Faculty Think Tank" to look reevaluate the Program of Studies as well as the possibility of moving to a modified cycle schedule.

FIELD SCHOOL: Diane Anderson

The Book Fair which raised money for the Kassisi School was very successful. We raised \$1,300.

There is another Principal's Breakfast scheduled for 2/28 at 9 a.m.

The 5th grade World of Work evening is also taking place on 2/28 at 5:30.

We are busy planning the Teachers' Appreciation Luncheon which will be on Thursday, 3/13.

COUNTRY SCHOOL: Denise McGeeough

It has been a pretty quiet month at Country. Planning is now underway for the teacher appreciation lunch scheduled for Wednesday, March 19th. This year we are going with a Japanese theme to coordinate with the first grade unit on Japan. Maria Park and Trish Scozzafava are leading the planning committee and it should be a fun day for all.

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This past Friday a math forum for third grade parents took place to educate parents about the math curriculum and how to help your child at home. This forum was sponsored by a grant from WEEFC.

WOODLAND SCHOOL: Ellen Livingston

The Kindergarten Readers Parent Forum was held on January 24th. It was well attended with about 30 parents. In addition, the Kindergarten classrooms held their open house this week.

The 2nd graders are hard at work completing their "Good Citizen" speeches which will be given next week.

We've started planning for the Staff Appreciation Lunch which will be held on March 13th.

CREATIVE ARTS: Marilyn Hirsch

In January, the elementary schools were alive with Wordfest authors while the High School continued to move along on its mural project with artist Thomas Burns. Many high students have transferred their photographs to drawings on giant papers, and the start of painting is just days away. As other students see the mural taking shape, more are asking to participate, which is just what we want!

Alaskan author Debbie Miller visited Country School this month while author Lucinda Landon visited both Country and Woodland schools. Author Norm Finkelstein assisted Field School fifth graders with writing and editing as part of the grade's World of Wonder project, which involves real-world research into a particular job and then the production of a book describing the work environment and the person the child has interviewed.

The committee is finalizing programs for the end of this year at all the schools, while continuing to preview and book performances for next year.

SCIENCE COUNCIL: Bing Brown

The Science Team in Weston hosted the Science Meet on January 17th attended by about 250 students from all over. Our own science faculty member and the Science Team leader, Reed Konsler, coordinated this event at the high school. The energy level was high and it was a good time to fire up young minds with science and real-world applications. It was also a good time to advertise about the Science Team.

Envirothon is up and running at the high school with Casey Townsend, from Land's Sake, as the team leader. The team is working hard towards the regional competition that will take place on May 7th at Hopkinton State Park in Hopkinton, MA. They have also participated in several workshops with other competing teams in Westboro and Amherst.

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Casey also gave lectures for HS Environmental class on soil structure and sustainable forest practices in Weston. The Green Power Maple Sugar Program has begun for middle school students. This after-school program is designed to introduce students to the traditional New England craft of making maple syrup from the sap of sugar maple tree.

Garry Krinsky presented his “Toying with Science” to the 6th graders on Jan. 29th to support their Physical Science curriculum. Mike Francis (Galileo) came and fascinated the 3rd graders as the Starry Messenger on Feb. 7th and 8th. Many thanks to all the parent volunteers and Pat Jacobs, Mix-It –Up for 3rd grade at Country went well last Jan. 17th & 18th.

Upcoming events include David Gallo of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute to talk on deep sea vents, mid-ocean ridges, plate tectonics to the 8th graders on March 19th, Domino Physics is scheduled to occur on March 13th, Narayan Kkandekar is coming on April 29th to give a lecture to chemistry class on art restoration and forgery. It would offer a good link of art and chemistry. Please note the Science Symposium, originally scheduled on May 21st in the PTO calendar, has been moved to May 27th at 6-7 pm.

Dr. Pat Jacobs, elementary science and social studies specialist, has announced her retirement that will occur at the end of the school year. She is one of the most active faculty liaisons who attend our council meetings and she shall be missed.

A subcommittee of the council is hard at work organizing the Math Family Night that will take place on March 28th. We will need parent volunteers to help out that night so please send an email to Bing at bing.brown@comcast.net if anyone is interested.

WEBMASTERS: Beth Keane

No new report.

WSEPAC: Rosemary Lydon

No new report.

METCO: Damita Thompson

We recently had a meeting regarding transportation for the Boston children and we currently now have a new late bus just for the elementary children. This has been a huge improvement.

Ice skating at the Frog Pond was also a great success and our potluck is on March 7th.

WEEFC: Suzie Reeves

WEEFC has funded over \$280,000 in grants. We are fortunate that this money allows some of the pressure off of the school budget. Also, the spring sprint is not far away!!

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WCCA: Diane Douglas

Steve Songs performance during February Vacation week, Wed., 2/20, 10 – 11 am at the Country School.

Nominating Committee beginning the process of selecting next year's board and age group heads. Announcement will be made at our April board meeting, open to general membership.

Budget Committee beginning to prepare 08-09 budget.

Kindergarten Forum in March: WCCA continuing to work with public school administrators to set forum.

LWV- Rochelle Nemrow

No new report.

The next PTO Board meeting will take place on March 12th at 9:15 at the Case House.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.