

**Weston PTO Board Meeting Minutes  
March 10, 2010**

Present: Ellen Livingston, Danielle Black, Cheryl Maloney, Karyn Taylor, Deb Egan, Adrian Proll, Jerina Harris, Robin Ewald, Denise McGeough, Maryanne Rogers, Jean O'Connor, Joanne Melikian-Cate, Lisa Williams, Brooke Tiller, Joan Heilbronner, Deb Sullivan, Laura Miller, Barbara Burgess

The meeting was called to order at 9:19am.

**Opening Business:**

**Approval of February 9, 2010 PTO meeting minutes.**  
The Minutes were approved.

**Treasurer's Report: Tina Chartrand**

Financial actuals attached to report. Ellen reporting for Tina urged everyone to take a look at their budgets and start thinking about next year.

Also, receipts need to be turned in for reimbursement.

Some schools still have money allocated for their beautification. This was given for this specific purpose so please let's use it towards making the schools look good!

**Superintendent's Report: Cheryl Maloney**

Cheryl showed the recent Town Crier which featured a story on March 4<sup>th</sup> highlighting The Enrichment Center at the High School. It is a new pilot program which provides assistance to any and all students to help them with their assignments and to develop more efficient and effective study habits.

Cheryl talked about recent articles that have spotlighted teaching and homework issues. The Boston Globe talked about Family Homework and the best way to engage the family in helping with school work. The New York Times had a great article on How to Improve Teaching. It talks about moving teachers from good to excellent. Typically in

schools, below par teachers can be let go, and the excellent teachers can be celebrated but the article talks about how to help the teachers in the middle improve. With regards to reading, for example, teachers know the path, they teach a student to read knowing that they will eventually move to a novel and be discussing plots and sentence structure, etc. but with math there may not be such a clear cut path or understanding. Finally, Newsweek had an article about How to Move Teachers Forward. Cheryl stated that she always is looking for ways to move our teachers forward and support them with professional development opportunities.

Cheryl showed her article from the Weston Public School Website regarding the Update on Field School and the Science Lab. Both articles will be archived. At the bottom of the article there is a question, "Did you find this helpful?" People can email Cheryl directly with comments or questions regarding the article. Eventually, there will be poll questions which will be archived as well.

Thanks to Cort Chilton and the people at Case House with regards to the School Performance Report. It is available on Quick Links under Operation Assessments. It is very transparent. Some of the poll questions will come from this location and it will also have the school section of the town report.

In the high school media center on April 27<sup>th</sup> a talk will be given by Cheryl and Cort Chilton on the School Performance Report. It will be focused on Trends in Education. Most trends are positive and we want the town to know that their money is well spent.

The administrative council will be addressing Bullying on each schools website. It will discuss how each of them will handle the prevention of Bullying. It will also include a note from each schools principal and School Superintendent, Cheryl Maloney. The Bridgewater President, Elizabeth Englander, is conducting a poll on Bullying. Weston Schools have been asked to join this poll and upon gathering more information about the program we will look forward to joining it. Barbara Coloroso, a National Expert on Bullying gives tips for what parents can do at home to help with Bullying.

### **School Committee's Report: Ed Heller, Maryanne Rogers**

Maryanne reported that communication improvement is a goal that was established by Cheryl Maloney. The communication efforts will expand and are never ending. The school committee welcomes feedback via the website, town meeting, etc.

The budget process is going well. A modest increase. Mandarin Chinese language was implemented for grades 7 – 12. State and Federal aid are stable. There is more worry for the 2011 budget than for this one.

The Field School project is moving ahead. The MSBA keeps giving forms for more information which are returned in a timely manner. We are looking at starting soon.

The High School Science renovation has found a project manager. The process of hiring an architect has started. There have been 40 inquiries with 15 showing up for the onsite tour. Preliminary plans are done but still looking into more ideas. Cheryl commented that there will be a time when parents can meet with the architect for input and questions. The PTO and Science Council can be helpful in getting the word out.

**Legal Council: Aviva Jeruchim**

On the legal front, it has been quiet. Aviva has continued to review edits and change to the reading program.

**New Business: Ellen Livingston**

Ellen introduced the Global Initiative, Exchange Student representative, Danielle Capalbo. She spoke about the Student Exchange program. She is looking for a host family for May and June. Communication will come through listserv.

**Old Business: Ellen Livingston**

Ellen gave an update on the Nominating Committee. The Board for next year is half filled and there are still positions open. Hopefully the slate will be complete by the next PTO Board Meeting.

The Calendar Subcommittee is working on the download. Great things and new things are happening.

Please send in the Job descriptions for each department so that we can have them by our May meeting.

March 27<sup>th</sup> is Health and Wellness Day. Ellen and Danielle are looking for help to set up and or clean up. Help needed as well with raffle items. Ellen passed out a sheet with ideas and already donated items.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### **CALENDAR PRODUCTION: Kim Costello, Robin Ewald**

The calendar committee is gearing up for production of the 2010-2011 edition. So far we have

- Distributed gift cards to school admins to thank them for their work putting the calendar together
- Put together timeline for next year's distribution (thank you Kim!)
- Contacted three new printers for quotes (two of the three are significantly lower than last year, still waiting to hear back from the third)

**Need to finalize the student directory form with PTO president and Aviva ASAP**  
(this form goes out in March)

Need to coordinate student directory form distribution with all schools, admins and PTO chairs – especially important since MS and HS forms are mailed

### **MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL: Jane Fong, Lisa Williams**

We are currently updating the membership forms for the 2010-2011 season, for printing and distribution to Case House and Weston Windows. Forms will be ready for kindergarten registration, which is on April 1<sup>st</sup> this year.

Lisa and I will meet in April to plan for the May membership drive.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Carolann Augustine, Deb Sullivan**

\* Cradles to Crayons "Give Your Pants a Second Chance" - This Drive was very well received, yielding several hundred pants for children at Cradles. (We're still receiving emails about pants folks have to donate...well after the Drive has ended.)

\* Reach out and Read – The ROR Drive began on February 27<sup>th</sup> and will now run through March 12th. (We extended the Drive by a week due to the recent pick-up in activity).

\* Community Day – Registration is underway and filling up fast - as of March 5th, over 50 kids have registered, with some activities at their maximum participation levels (We can take up to 72 students in total.). Working on last minute logistics, supply needs, etc. but really looking forward to great day on April 7th.

**WESTWORD: Laura Dubin, Greg Augustine**

Greg gave a reminder to everyone to get their submissions in. They are entering a busy season.

Greg welcomes any feedback and suggestions for Westword for next year. They have already made changes this year but are always open to new ideas.

**HIGH SCHOOL: Jean O'Connor, Marion Packs**

At the high school

We had a beautiful and delicious faculty appreciation luncheon last week due to an unprecedented number of volunteers who offered to help.

The Social Norms project is underway, we had a follow-up meeting with a working group which will continue to meet. Our next parent ed talk is on the 18th; Binge to Blackout discussion.

Career Day plans being finalized, we solicit volunteers for this.

Planning for all big events underway; prom, graduation and reception, awards night, spring fling.

Wendy Spector working on our website and daily announcements.

Jane Shay our third parent advisor for class of 2012 and Rachel Caesar coming on for incoming freshman class.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL: Joan Heilbronner, Deb Egan**

**Guidance Forum:** Thank you to the MS and HS guidance departments and to Anthony Parker for coming to speak with parents of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students about the course selection process. This was our "pilot" forum, and the feedback from all fronts was extremely positive. The discussion was well-attended, and the topics were quite varied, and the event as a whole was a great success. The guidance office hopes to hold this forum on an annual basis.

**ImPACT Testing:** Concussion baseline testing for spring athletes will commence shortly. Andrew Rizza will coordinate the testing along with the coaches and hopes to have it completed soon after the spring season opens. Thank you again to WEEFC for funding this program for the MS.

**Nashoba Valley trip:** Students and faculty will participate in a skiing/snowboarding night at Nashoba Valley on March 12. Thank you to Janice Corley for organizing this trip.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Ice Cream Social:** The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade is holding its annual ice cream social on March 10. All funds raised will go towards Haitian Relief.

**Art Show:** The MS Art Show is scheduled for March 24, and its theme will be based on the Thomas Burns mural painted by students. Volunteers have been busy preparing artwork to be hung and will convene once again to display the pieces in the APC. Our hospitality staff has been working to coordinate the decorations with the theme of this year's show.

**Grade 6 Tropical Dance:** Scheduled for March 26. The dance will be in the MS cafeteria and be chaperoned by faculty.

**MARC Presentation:** We previewed a free presentation on cyber bullying by one of Dr. Englander's graduate students from the MARC center at a middle school in Harwich. We are discussing whether to schedule an internet safety talk with this group for next year. In addition, the MS is also looking into participating in some of the research done at the MARC center on technology-related issues and children.

### **FIELD SCHOOL: Linda Angelucci, Adrian Proll**

#### **February**

Low key month, mostly occupied with planning & executing against small goals for:

Staff Appreciation Lunch

5th Grade Celebration

5th Grade Video

#### **Upcoming Events:**

Jr. Broadway - Willi Wonka (week-end of 3/12)

5th Grade Wax Museum (3/16)

Staff Appreciation Lunch (3/26)

Extra School Council session planned for 3/18 to review 2009 School Improvement Plan, begin work on 2010 goals

### **COUNTRY SCHOOL: Laura Miller, Brooke Tiller**

We had a successful Kindergarten & 1st Grade Math Forum on 2/9. The 2nd Grade Math Forum was rescheduled once again and was finally held on March 4th. Both were well attended and educational for the parents.

We're pleased to announce that Dr. Christine Price was selected as the new Country School principal. She will be finishing up her responsibilities at the Conant School in Acton and beginning at Country on July 1st.

We've been working hard preparing and planning for the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon on Wednesday, March 17th. Hopefully the teachers will feel fully appreciated for all that they do for our children all year long!

**WOODLAND SCHOOL: Joanne Melikian-Cate, Rebecca Stevenson**

Grade 3 SMART sessions begin this month to provide test-taking strategies to the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for MCAS. They will have their first MCAS session on the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month.

The Staff Appreciation Luncheon will take place this coming Thursday, March 11th. We are very excited about our Asian themed luncheon, and the plans are in full swing. Hopefully, all will go smoothly.

Last, but not least, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will have the star lab on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

**CREATIVE ARTS: Lisa Green, Mandie Jordan-Smith**

February was another busy month for Creative Arts at Weston schools. Wordfest has now booked Kate Klise for Ben Sandalls day at Field School on April 29. Kate Klise has authored many books which appeal to 4 & 5 grade so she is an excellent choice.

Yesterday the author Debbie Miller presented to 3rd grade at Country and Woodland.

Next Week author Jarret Krosoczka will be at Country and Woodland presenting to Kindergarten and Suzy Kline will be at Woodland presenting to 2nd grade.

On February 26th, Living Voices finally performed "Through the Eyes of a Friend" to 7th grade (after the snow date cancellation) and was very well received by the students and teachers. The presenter really connected with the students and brought to life the story of Anne Frank and the Holocaust. The Middle School would like to book them again for next year. Last Friday, March 5th, the High School had New Rep on Tour perform 'Macbeth' to the 10th grade. The play was an adaption and was slightly different to the original play as it was set in Bosnia, using original Shakespeare words. It was very well recieved by the teachers and students. We are currently looking for future tours of 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'A Rasin in the Sun' for 9th grade.

We have produced a Creative Arts Resource Guide which outlines the steps week-by-week when booking a performance. This is very helpful for new committee members (and old) to make sure a booking runs smoothly. We are also looking in the future at getting feedback from teachers after the performance so we have put together a Feedback Form and hope to start using that for future performances.

Finally, we have now booked the last performance for this year and we are busy previewing and booking for the next school year in coordination with the Principals and faculty.

**MATH AND SCIENCE COUNCIL: Betsy Romeri, Denise McGeough**

“Our biggest event for the month of Feb was Family Science Night on February 26<sup>th</sup>. We had the high school science team, Lands Sake Farm and the New England Aquarium present 14 different science exhibits for elementary kids to enjoy. Mike Francis (Galileo) gave 5 tours of the Star Lab for parents and children. The National Honor Society served as volunteers to facilitate at the exhibits, hand out lab coats, goggles and certificates to our budding scientists. It was an excellent example of our community coming together in support of educating our elementary school children. We should reserve a special thank you to Pam Bator and Larry Murphy for their dedication and commitment to our children and allowing these above and beyond experiences like Family Math & Science Night.

As an update to the Science Internship program for high school students, we have 14 students that have submitted applications. Their lab interests include physics, computer technology, neuroscience and molecular biology to name a few. The council will work with Larry Murphy to find programs for all the kids as Larry continues the application process with the students. If you have any ideas or contacts for placement of kids in lab settings, please let us know.

We have three programs scheduled for the month of March, two Star Lab tours given specifically to third grade classrooms by Mike Francis to support the curriculum on the solar system. We also have the Discovery Museum Rocks and Minerals program returning to Field School for the remaining 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms.”

**WEBMASTERS: Beth Keene, Alicia Abad, Suzanne Lenox**

The website was updated to promote and link to sign-up information for Reach Out and Read and Community Day.

An option for a trial e-calendar download was added to promote its use (and purchase) in the upcoming membership season.

Other monthly updates were conducted, per usual.

In preparation for the membership season, it is time for school chairs to consider the following:

- Changes they might want to make to their volunteer opportunities
- Print off volunteer names, as needed, for end-of-year events because volunteer database will be cleared out shortly
- Confirm gift book contacts
- Make sure we have updated school event info

**WESTONPAC: Marcy Dorna**

Nothing to report this month.

**WEEFC: Kelly Renner**

Suzie Reeves reported that Ellen and Joan will join WEEFC next year.

WEEFC has funded the middle school concussion lab, the star lab and also the science night.

**PARENT EDUCATION: Barbara Burgess**

An article came out in the Crier regarding the Dinner Table event. All went well! Special thanks to Ellen and Danielle and Sheila Burkus and Marcy Dorna and Bill Burgess for their help in setting up and breaking down. Great team effort! Families learned a lot and SEA students did a great job taking ownership of the evening.

## [Educational dinner planned on sustainable seafood](#)

**By Veer Mudambi**

[GateHouse News Service](#)

Feb 24, 2010

WESTON —

A partnership between a high school and an aquarium conjures up images of students learning marine biology or getting their hands dirty sorting specimens.

It does not bring to mind haute cuisine seafood dinners, but that is exactly what visitors can expect to experience on Sunday at the Community Center from 5 to 7 p.m.

Local families will be getting together for a meal prepared by guest chef Jose Duarte of Taranta, a Peruvian restaurant, in consultation with a sustainable seafood expert from the New England Aquarium and Weston High School environmentalists.

Heather Tausig, associate vice president for conservation at the New England Aquarium, will be speaking at the dinner about the sustainability of marine food sources and what the average person can do to help.

"There's always an assumption that when you move to more sustainable choices that there's always a cost associated with that and that's not always true," said Tausig.

At the aquarium, Tausig discovered the opportunity to partner with local chefs and educate the public about environmental issues.

Barbara Burgess of the Weston PTO, a supporter of the sustainable seafood initiative at the aquarium, thinks it "fits very well with things that are at the top of the mind of the general public and students in particular." Burgess has been an overseer at the aquarium for three years and focuses on education and conservation.

An eco-dinner in Weston, the brainchild of Burgess, is an off-shoot of the Celebrate Seafood dinners at the New England Aquarium.

"It brings a new kind of opportunity for us to bring our knowledge, the expertise of a Boston chef, and treat Weston families to this educational dinner," she said.

Looking for the best opportunities to communicate about ocean conservation, she said it promises to be a "very interactive evening."

Having worked with companies who have bought and sold seafood for about 10 years, Tausig began speaking with the food service providers at the aquarium who agreed to serve only sustainable seafood in the café, such as using Alaska pollock in fish sticks.

"Ocean friendly choices," according to Tausig, "are more a matter of paying greater attention rather than letting our purveyor just choose anything."

Burgess expects the eco-dinner to be a "fun and different way to bring High School families together." Drawn to the "concept of the dinner table" in which large issues can be discussed among a family or other group, she hopes that students will teach parents about environmental issues.

This is her first year as co-chair of parent education, a department of the Weston PTO.

Junior Brandon Blaessar, head of Student Environmental Action at Weston High, will be master of ceremonies at the event.

The High School club focuses on bringing environmental issues to the attention of the surrounding community and what the consumer can do to help support going "green."

Students in the club have made a collection of table centerpieces out of recycled materials, transforming bottles into underwater scenes.

No bottled water will be available at the event – just a cooler and cups. And instead of buying high-grade sushi imported from Japan, one can eat more local fish.

"I believe our young people don't get enough education about our oceans and the challenges they face," said Burgess, who hopes they will learn to be "stewards of the oceans."

Tickets for the eco-dinner can be reserved for \$20 per family (any size) by contacting Burgess at "[bburgessfamily@comcast.net](mailto:bburgessfamily@comcast.net)"

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**METCO: Jerina Harris**

March 15<sup>th</sup> from 9-11 am is Lobby Day at the State House. Students are welcome to attend, please contact Mr. Fuller with any questions.

March 18<sup>th</sup> is the next METCO meeting at the Mildred Middle School in Boston.

Jerina reported that they are putting together the family and friends event.

METCO is trying to encourage more interaction once a month between Weston and METCO students.

There is one position open for secretary on the METCO board for next year.

**WCCA: Barbie Cobb**

Not present.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40am.

