

PTA Meeting  
May 16, 2019  
Library Learning Commons

I. Call to Order: 9am in Library Learning Commons. In attendance were Jen Markey, Laura Rowley, Ginna Yerral, Lauren Feltz, Nicola Davies, Hillary Morrissy, Chandra Ring, Jackie Shaw, Vanessa Elias, Lisa Finn, Amy Getler, Carolyn Lyon, Kim Hall.

II. Approval of April 2019 Minutes: Motion to approve minutes made by Kim Hall and seconded by Jen Markey. Minutes approved.

III. Teacher Representative: No report

IV. Principals Report - Lauren Feltz: The last of the grade level concerts was last night for 6th grade. Lots of big projects are underway and wrapping up as the academic year winds down. . 8th graders doing their capstone project. Happily nearing completion of spring testing cycle. Cricket, poodle puppy, has been here since break and done very well and kids have done well with her. Here being socialized, not trained yet. Today is her last day here for the year, heading to NH for some obedience training. Clover is also being socialized as well. Have more families offering to host than we have time to host the dogs. No district funds are being used for this project, at least until well underway and proven successful. Lauren's family donated the funds for this project. Cricket is highly social. Clover was selected specifically as an autism dog and works with Lauren's nephew. Thought process is that when one dog is on duty the other is off duty. They needs significant breaks from being on duty. One staff member has a significant fear issue the school is working through. The dogs are hypoallergenic. Teachers/staff can also receive special training if desired. Goal is to have dogs trained enough to begin working here next year, won't be fully trained for at least two years.  
Lots of rain so kids haven't been able to go outside. Lauren thinks all students will still be able to get outside and use the rock wall. PE Teachers are changing roles so that all students are able to do Project Adventure.

V. President's Report - Need a President. Hilary stays on until resigns or replaced, but she is moving and can host meetings via Skype. President needs to be a PTA Member and can be anyone at that point.

New Slate of Officers:

President - Hillary Morrissy -

Vice President - Donna Arnold

Treasurer - Amy Getler

Parent-at-Large - Kim Hall

Secretary - Chandra Ring

We will vote on slate at June 6 meeting

Gifts and Grants: This year we know we'll be taking a large hit from operating budget next year without spirit wear, sharing funds from Turnover Shop with SEPTA and annual appeal has gone down a few thousand dollars a year over the last few years and Box Top changes. We've also gotten a very generous \$3,000 budget annually from the Henry Foundation that we cannot count on for this year. Last year we rolled over \$16,000 for a large project that is included in the list for this year. Attached are requests and Executive Board recommendations for amounts to grant, if any, for each request. As a PTA we don't buy furniture so there are some rejections and reductions based on that.

We set a cap of about 35,000 and are taking remaining monies to roll over for next year and earmark for either a VA and/or a Visiting Poet. we turned down visiting poet request for just 8Y but hope they can return with a request for all 3 8th grade teams to have poet. 8Y has had a wonderful experience in past years with this and he has come to each of the 5 writing classes. This year 8G was asked to come watch, not participate. We'd like all classes to be able to participate. This has happened for many years with some lack of clarification for which students were benefiting.

Question regarding the McSquares for clarification which Hilary offered. These are great for collaborative projects for students. These are great for quiet kids and teachers can customize them for their use. Markers that come on them allow for writing on both sides and they can all hang on a white board for storage. If want to remember work they've done on these boards, can take a picture with their Chromebook. This is a bit of a pilot, Lauren sees a lot of uses for these in math rooms. The set of 24 of these will remain in the LLC.

District will be funding base 10 manipulatives for math classrooms this year, over time. Another way for students to use their hands and help conceptualize math concepts.

Question regarding the 3 listening centers and why are they only for 8th grade. Pat Mulhall introduced use of audio books of her own expense this year. She found for some kids listening got students much more into the story. She worked with the other reading teachers in 8th grade and with LLC for some headphones and is requesting that for each of 8th grade reading rooms 6 headphones and audiobooks to add to classroom libraries. Helps students who may help learn better with audiobooks. Only an initiative with 8th grade but if highly successful may trickle down. When students use an audiobook they are also following along in textbook. In 8th grade students have a tough text unit where they specifically learn strategies to tackle a challenging text. Sometimes kids will think audi-books are an easy-out. For some students, this is incredibly helpful. For re-reading, they rely on the text alone. Helps students with stamina struggles, or other concerns. While book is checked out to the teacher it is only one check-out. The titles are selected to align with genres of book units in 8th grade and there will be variety of the titles. Some units students read an assured text (same text for all); for some their is self-selection in books clubs or totally self-selected. Learning if you are a good audio-book listener is great for kids to know. This can be especially helpful for the tough texts and having the inflection from an audiobook can help with comprehension and also models for those that struggle with this and grow their vocabulary by providing more clues to the meaning of the word.

This is in partnership with SORA

Last year two cellos were purchased after one was requested but we said do not ask again. They asked again this year and one of the cellos has segments of paint sticks to hold the bridge

up. Seeing this, we felt it important to replace and support the music program. MB also purchased a used cello this year to replace one of the classroom ones. About 20-22 cellists any given year and share the same 6 cellos. Another items that swayed the board on this was that Lauren discussed working to get on a track to put an instrument a year in the district budget as this hasn't been in the budget for a very long time and we are seeing the results of this in the instrument collection now.

WEB Program - WEB asked for t-shirts last year as well. We stopped funding t-shirts but did pay \$3,000 for training for this program. MB will figure this out. Last year a staff member put pizza on her credit card. We can request a \$5 contribution towards this from students as well. Another idea is to have first amount of monies from Stop & sShop go to fund these items.

We aren't funding the listening center furniture or flexible seating requested as we've done this in the past and have reached a limit on this. Possibly a giving tree for these needs would be beneficial for the future. Keeping a wish list may meet some of these needs, people could fund or donate used. If it is something large MB may be able to have someone pick it up as well.

Hillary motion to approve \$30,667 second made by Ginna. Motion unanimously carries.

Hillary motion to reserve \$4,333 for 2019-2020 to apply towards VA and/or VP for all of 8th grade. Second by Kim Hall. Approved unanimously. There is also \$967.55 leftover from previous VA requests that can also be applied to this (the \$967.55 must be applied to VA).

BOE applying lots of pressure to increase classroom time. Shifting to fewer adjusted schedules. There is especially this need in math. Lauren wants to shift to a VA experience that

Proposing putting World Lang assembly, Red Ribbon Week and VA on three year rotation.

Trying to be thoughtful of maintaining the joy of middle school, so don't want cut any concerts, talent show and anything that celebrates student work. Concern of PTA is high variability of authors so while one may be good for a workshop and one for a presentation and they may not hit as many kids by going to every three years. Would need to see authors perform/present to assess abilities

#### VI. Officer Reports:

a. Vice President - Laura: 2 new parent members since March and 3 new teacher memberships so total of 362 members.

b. Treasurer - Jackie: Expenses are going along well and so far as expected. Dinner dance tickets will be key this week. Online have about 2300 from online sales. Tickets will be sold in cafeteria this week as well. On track for this thus far. Hospitality seems to be on track as well but has reconciliation to do. Had a good year this year. Discussed leaving at least \$3,000 to start year next year since we won't have gym sales monies coming in to start the year. Annual appeal in generally October so need money to start the year. IF anyone has expenses please submit timely as fiscal year ends June 30.

Could WEB Leaders sell team t-shirts instead of PTA to cover their costs? Potentially get some staff sales as well. If WEB wanted to take this on. Does this create a favoritism of WEB over other activities?

C. Parent-at-Large - Kim Hall: Covers meetings 4/25 and 5/9 (plus town vote results)

1. Budget
  - a. Approved by town vote, 10.97% turnout 892 Yes, 395 No too High, 40 No too Low. Because less than 15% of town voted would have been approved regardless of actual votes. BOE Chair and BOF thanked folks for coming out to the meeting
  - b. The cuts made to the budget were reviewed in April 25 meeting and cover a cuts to a range of areas including at Middlebrook: Musical Accompaniment at Middlebrook, some of the WEB funding. Some expenses were also pushed into this fiscal year.
  
2. Grade 6 Math Course 6141 - describes course - approach, rationale, costs associated, timing and more. Was reviewed and discussed on 4/25. Approved on 5/9. A few key things to note: Course will incorporate some new materials that have been piloted this year, including an open source curriculum resource called Illustrative Math. Will be still using Math in Focus too. Net, adopting the sequencing defined by Illustrative Math with many of the materials from Math in Focus. Next year will do a 6141 for 7th and the following year for 8th.
  
3. Want more information on specific topics visit board docs (<https://www.boarddocs.com/ct/wilton/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>) or view specific meeting (<https://www.wiltonps.org/about/board-of-education/boe-meeting-videos-channel-78>).
  - a. 4/25 Meeting includes Grade 6 Math Course 6141 - Course Description and information (including sample problems) on how course will be executed / resources, etc. and explanation of budget cuts.
  - b. 5/9 meeting includes conversation about Ready Access Digital Learning and Technology Plan Update and updates on Website (including a shout out for our very own Nicola Davies).
  
4. Quick Bites / Miscellaneous:
  - a. Policy
    - i. Reviewed, Discussed, and Approved Policy 5114 Suspension, Expulsion, Removal from Class - revised to fit new state legal requirements
    - ii. Working to develop policies for religion in schools and a proposal for a therapy dog policy.
    - iii. Still working to revise 6141 process to include all new courses (as has been done with Math 6) vs. just high school curriculum / course changes.
  - b. Awards

- i. CABE Student Awards received by Middlebrook Students Carly Pierson and George Hahn

Healthy Food Certification - District required to do this each year. As we have in the past, we opt out of the this certification, as the high school offers a wider array of choices. The lower schools do all meet the certification. SEE REPORT Kevin Smith and BOE CHair Christine Finkelstein thanked those that .... This is the change (not BOF chair)

#### VII. Committee Reports:

- a. 8th Grade Dinner Dance - Carolyn Lyon: ticket sales are ongoing on website and in cafeteria. Hope to come in under budget; will know more next week. Meet next Wednesday at Comstock. Decorations can begin in cafeteria once lunch is cleaned from 8th grade lunch wave -- Lauren will confirm time. If multiple volunteers need to park in back and get in then Gina can print tickets. Tickets will be sold online until dance. Looking for volunteers in hopes of increasing number of volunteers and to serve dinner faster. These volunteers do not need background check via district. Using composting, recycling and trash cans already in cafeteria. Everything food item will be either recycled or compostable. Roving magician, photo booth, DJ will be present. Two days prior to dance a ticket will be given out at school so students can get in fast, will need to check in if you don't have your ticket. Food questions have come up with allergies and celiac. We aren't making any special accommodations. In the past parents have brought dinner to bring in their child's dinner to serve to the parent at dinner. There will be a variety of options.
- b. Soaring Ahead - Vanessa Elias - Thursday, June 13. Starting at 6:30pm this year and we will not be putting up the buildings in front of the stage. Ties are expected for boys and we will bring backups for those who forget one. We are working on simplifying the design. No video presentation this year.
- c. Ice Cream Socials - Carolyn Lyon: Dates are swapped from the last meeting. 6th and 7th grade sign yearbooks at this event. 8th grade will also have a time to sign yearbooks. 7th Grade awards are June 13 and Grade 6 Ice Cream Social. Friday, June 14 is Grade 6 awards and Grade 7 Ice cream social. Holiday Hill is June 11.
- d. Special Education - last meeting last night
- e. WYC - Vanessa Elias: Lots of great events. Wilton's Big Block Party weekend is a weekend to connect neighbors face to face and encourage free play. Had two weekends last year, one this year (June 8-9). Looking for a few positions on the Board, especially someone to coordinate weekly newsletters.

VIII. New Business - Lauren raised how do we encourage more teachers to join. Is this about wanting them to join or having their support? It is about having the membership. Laura Rowley made a thank you to Hillary for her last two years as President of the PTA.

Ginna asked about the volume of non-normal schedule days this quarter -- has had 2 full stride classes this quarter he thinks. May and December are our two hard times of the year and we

don't have a Friday that is a regular day this month. Every time we have a concert we have 3 adjusted schedule days. Over the course of the year there are more adjusted schedules than regular schedule days. Did a lock-in and a shelter in place drill in one day as well. It is not the practice to just take adjusted schedule days from STRIDES, everything gets shorter. There is a study group running to look at the schedule for 2 years for now given the mandate from the BOE to meaningfully give more instructional minutes to math.

VIX. Adjournment at 10:28am