Middlebrook PTA meeting

Jan 16th, 2019

Attendance:

Carolyn Lyon, Kim Hall, Michael Panoli, Lara Pachalidis, Donna Arnold, Amanda Patania, Amy Gettler, Donna Peterson, Loralee Hamilton, Olga Zargos-Traub, Lauren Feltz, Karen LaMantia

1. Meeting was called to order at 9:03am
2. Minutes of November 2019 meeting were approved. Motion by Kim Hall and second by Amanda Patania. Motion approved.
3. Teacher Report – Mike Panoli
4. **Red Block Party** The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Red teams will be having a mini block party that will run through some classes and the students will be writing holiday cards for local senior centers. This is the first of hopefully two with the second being in the spring. The Social Studies, Science and Foriegn Language classes are working on cards for the senior center on Thursday 12/19.
5. **Visionary Artists** We have 16 visionary artists this year doing some spectacular work including a three-dimensional outdoor sculpture, chandelier for LLC , amazing paintings in oils, acrylics and even a digital painting duo!
6. **Ogden Center** Student Council, Middlebrook Singers, and Flute Choir will be traveling to Sunrise Senior Center and the Ogden House Holiday Luncheon on Wednesday, December 18.
7. **Geography Bee** Yesterday, Middlebrook held its school wide championship for the GeoBee competition. Members from each team participated and through a hard-fought battle Kieran Lenihan came out victorious with Anderson Campbell coming a close second. Kieran will be moving on to the state tournament hopefully to represent CT in the national Tournament.
8. **Debate** On Saturday Dec. 14th, 246 Middle-schoolers from 22 Connecticut schools came together at Smith Middle School in Glastonbury to debate the motion: *This House regrets the worldwide proliferation of surveillance cameras*, in the CT Middle School Debate League’s first tournament of the season.
9. **Digital Publications** Digital publication club (formerly literary magazine) is still collecting and editing prose, poetry, artwork and photography for our winter issue, which will be released to the school in the second half of January. Students from any grade level may submit work, and anyone can attend meetings, which are every other Wed. from 7:30-8:00.
10. **Science Olympiad** Science Olympiad students are busy preparing for their events.  Some of these include: Disease Detectives, Genetics, Meteorology, Ornithology to mention a few.   Events include ones that are both knowledge based and ones that involve creating and building structures.   We will be looking forward to participating in a statewide Science Olympiad Competition on Saturday, March 14th at Irving Robbins Middle School in Farmington, Ct.
11. **Gaming Club** Gaming club is in its first year and already the kids have so many incredible ideas and opportunities. Every other Wednesday we meet to not only play games but learn. Our club founder has already begun organizing tournaments but also is working on getting a gaming coaching model up and running. The experience has been wonderful and our students leaders have big plans for the future. We meet every other Wednesday (next meeting will be January 15th, at 7:30, in room 7 Yellow 103.
12. **Upstanders** Upstanders have been working on group problem solving skills that we then apply to school situations such as working in groups. We had an interesting discussion around how to handle the different processing speeds of students in a group when given a task to complete an assignment in a given amount of time.  One of the "hot topics" we recently worked on was the frozen yogurt line in the cafeteria and how to handle our peers doing things such as cutting the line. Students were very passionate about that!
13. **Open Art** In open art club students are working on self driven projects in paint, clay and watercolor.  Students are encouraged to come up with a concept and material of their choice while we assist them in their creations.  This is students time to have the freedom to pursue and investigate ideas and explore materials more in depth that they might not be able to do in their regular art classes.  Visionary club is working on their year long art projects. Students are done completing their ideas and are now on their way with their paintings and sculptures. This year in addition to some beautiful two dimensional work, an eighth grade student is planning a large sculpture that will be in the court yard across from the main entrance (looking for assistance in funding if anyone has any ideas :)  Look for their final work during the end of the year presentation at the award ceremony.
14. **Unified Sports/Running Club** Running/Movement Club has ended.  We had 3 seniors from Wilton High volunteer each week to join us in activities designed to cultivate friendships via movement.  We learned how to stretch, warm up and improve our ability to run short distances. Each session ended with a movement game including tag, volleyball, wiffleball, and sharks & minnows.  We will be meeting again in the spring and welcome additional members. Unified Sports at Wilton High School has increased it membership.  Each week, Middlebrook students take the bus over to the high school.  We began with a unit of soccer culminating in soccer tournament at Fairfield Ludlowe including pizza for all. We are currently engaging in a basketball unit with many high school volunteers.  Our shooting and passing abilities are improving weekly. There will be a basketball tournament shortly to conclude our season. Next season will include theater. We will have a talent show in the spring and would love to have more members
15. **Desperado Club** In Desperado Club, on alternating Wednesday mornings, we have been enjoying non-electronic games like Gobblet, Great Dalmutti, and Shut the Box whilst working on our good sportsmanship skills.
16. **Youth to Youth** We are all ready for our three ski trips in January!  All students are welcome to join us and you can find sign up forms on the Y2Y board or on Y2Y Google Classroom page (use code 3pjwzr).  We are also gearing up for the Y2Y 2nd annual lock-in. We are happy to announce we will be having a motivational speaker and musician, Jesse Rubin, join us at our lock in.
17. **School Store** We will have our first 2020 meeting on Tuesday, January 7th at 7:30.  We will be organizing shopping materials for the winter and Valentine's Day.  We are looking for new members to work in the morning and during all lunch waves.
18. Principal Report
    1. Delayed opening – 3 options, with snack and/or lunch
    2. Early Dismissals – 2 options will be available, snack and/or lunch will be available for either option
    3. Assessment Study is going to be put on the back burner so staff/teachers can look at the overall schedule for MB and need for change
       1. Need to improve learning outcomes for students – esp in math
       2. Time allowed for math is insufficient in the school schedule
       3. Looking at time spent in Academic Core classes/World Language/STRIDE classes
       4. Priorities will include SEL, Portrait of the Graduate and MB Mission statement to create schedule
       5. Working group will include staff/teachers/parents
       6. New schedule to be implemented 2021-2022
       7. No substantial plans to make changes to staffing/teaming for 2020-2021
       8. PTA will provide parent survey to get info for schedule
       9. Working group sessions are going to be 90 minutes from 3-4:30 on Tuesdays.
19. President Report
    1. Thank you to the Turnover Shop for their donation. They have a long history of supporting Wilton PTA's and extended that this year with one of their largest donations ever -- $48,000 to the PTAs including $10,500 to the Middlebrook PTA. Please consider supporting the Turnover shop with donations, shopping and/or volunteering your time in the Turnover Shop.
    2. Monday the PTA sponsored a Visiting Poet for all 8th grade students, with both a presentation and small workshops for all students. Alison Rubin, 8Yellow teacher had the following to say about the visit: "Poet/performer/educators Regie Gibson and Marlon Carey performed for the 8th grade a selection of their poetry, the highlight of which was a poetry slam between two of Shakespeare's characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: King Oberon and Nick Bottom. (According to audience applause, Bottom emerged the winner.) There was a brief Q & A following the performance, during which students asked about how they got started writing poetry, how long they have been performing together, etc. After the assembly, students had a part 1 poetry writing workshop through their writing classes, and will have a second day to continue writing and work on performing their pieces.
    3. Reflections: Submission period has closed and Middlebrook has less than 10 entries.
    4. Parent Representatives will be serving on various upcoming curriculum review committees including the English Language Arts Curriculum Review and Guidance Curriculum Review. New this year, we're asking these parent representatives to report back to the PTA on these meetings. Parents will also be members of the committee examining potential schedules for Middlebrook for 2021-22.
    5. LLC Redesign - the committee is hard at work planning. Proposed plans are on display in the LLC and Lori Ellis can assist you if you'd like to take a look.
    6. Wish Lists are in final stages to go out to IL's in coming days and go live for parents in February.
20. Vice President Report
    1. 346 members – 291 families, 55 teachers
21. Treasurer Report
    1. Revenue – membership lower, annual appeal did great, photographs, Turnover Shop
    2. Expenses – still waiting for 6th grade Fun Night
22. Parent-at-Large - Note: Covers meetings on 12/5 and 12/19. Related files can be found on Board Docs (https://www.boarddocs.com/ct/wilton/Board.nsf/vpublic?open), within the agenda for the meeting specified.  Once there, you will find attachments within their agenda item. Occasionally, I will link to a presentation.
    1. New Board Leadership: Deborah Low voted Chair, Glenn Hemmerle voted Vice Chair, Gretchen Jeanes voted Secretary
    2. Middlebrook Kudos and News - Mike Panoli and Katie Durkin Advisers to Debate Club whose success was noted at 12/19 BOE Meeting and in Good Morning Wilton; Simon Bulenzi, Sue LaBarbera and Kimberly Cameron (CM French Teacher and MB Mom) are planning a high school trip for French students about Art in France; Scott Silver-Bonito was one of 3 Wilton staff to have a paper accepted for presentation at an upcoming Educational Technology conference

* 1. Budget Assumptions and Goals Shared 12/5, Revised/Approved 12/19:  <https://go.boarddocs.com/ct/wilton/Board.nsf/files/BJTSR873E51C/$file/FY%202021%20Budget%20Goals%2C%20Assumptions%2C%20and%20Constraints111219%20rev.pdf>
  2. Policy and Regulations - The policy is the “what”, the Regulation is the “how”. Copies of the policies / curriculum can be found on board docs agenda for meeting date.
     1. 12/5 Policy / Reg Reviews and Approvals
     2. 6141 Curriculum Review
        1. K-8 Social Studies - Shifts to four main inquiry dimensions (the “Inquiry Arc”): Developing questions and planning inquiry, Applying disciplinary concepts and tools, Evaluating sources and using evidence and Communicating conclusions and taking informed action
        2. Middle school Math (Grade K-5 also presented) -  Enrichment perspective is about going deep, not going “fast” - the depth of understanding of a topic. Double acceleration preceded Common Core to add rigor, but when common core implemented it raised rigor - especially at middle school - dramatically, and accelerated kids ended up missing foundational skills.  Historically, Westchester / NY and MA never offered double acceleration. And nationally moving away from it. Looking at different schedule options to increase instructional time for Math… still in stage of reviewing models.
        3. Grade 7 Math: 7th grade common core aligned course similar to prior course, but now incorporating elements of Illustrative Math program with Math In Focus to build foundation for secondary math. Ratios, proportions, equations and expressions are key work of grade.  Need professional learning for implementing curriculum, not developing during school year. 2 day workshop in spring.
        4. Grade 7 / 8 Pre-Algerbra - Pre-Algebra, Named this way because it is two years of math.  4 data point criteria for placement, Overrides will be different. Net: parents can ask for a review, final decision made by building principal in coordination with math coordinator.

1. Presented 12/5 / Tabled for Later: Policy 0521 Statement of Non-discrimination - revising to align better with current laws and tabled 12/19 pending technical language changes
2. Approved Policies
   1. Presented 12/5 and Approved 12/15:
      1. Policy 1210 Parent Organizations - New policy.  Spirit is to encourage relationship btwn district and parent organizations, such as booster clubs.  No prior policy existed. This will be first as an umbrella to all parent organizations, with one specific to booster clubs to follow later.
      2. Policy 3453 Student Activity Funds - Revised, renamed (was in 6000s but moved to business operations/3000’s).  Standardizing all to be in central office - not at building level - aided by new automated software.
      3. Policy 1322 Contests for Students - Revised.
   2. Policies Approved 12/5: Policy 1360 Student Awards and Scholarships, Policy 0200 Educational Goals, Policy 5141.214 Sunscreen Application
3. Miscellaneous:
   1. 12/5 Meeting (decks attached to agenda item at board docs)
   2. Enrollment - Ellen Essman presented, projected enrollment to decline by 54.
   3. Class Size Report -  Net, most Middlebrook classes hover around 20.
   4. Special Education Scorecard Targets - Approved but please reformat for legibility.
   5. Zero Waste Schools Program Guide - Developed by Tammy Thornton and Heather Priest to layout blueprint of what and how we want to do.  Was reviewed earlier and adopted tonight. One win already is a change in carting contract resulting in about $1700 in savings each month. Unanimously and Enthusiastically
4. 12/19 Meeting
   1. Update on Modern Learning (formerly Digital Learning).  Key points for MB:
   2. Transdisciplinary work is being piloted at MB.
   3. As they conclude LLC revamps will be looking to modernize classrooms with increased flexibility and referenced the success of the pilots (PTA-funded).
   4. Referenced student data privacy laws and how not only are we compliant with CT laws, but also that they are among the most comprehensive.
   5. Finance Report - BOE and District are starting to see reports from the new integrated finance system come on line that will yield a lot of benefits - for instance reducing a lot of currently manual entry and reporting work.
5. Fundraising
   1. Want gym clothes back
6. Surveys
   1. Assessment/Grading survey to be tabled as book study / work on that has been at Middlebrook.  In lieu of that, the next (and possibly final) survey for this year to the parents will be regarding scheduling and will be developed to assist the team that will be looking at that at Middlebrook for implementation no sooner than 2021-2022.
   2. Updates on the two surveys executed before Winter Break
      1. **Parent Teacher Conferences:**Though half (52%) of parents responding had participated in a student teacher conference at Middlebrook, a far higher percentage (65%) rated them "Very Valuable" - indicating a desire for more two-way communication avenues for teachers and parents.  On the question of whether or not to include children, 49% said "It depends" and the remaining half of respondents were split between Yes and No.  The feedback in open-ends suggests that it really depends on the nature of issues to be discussed and a desire for the adults to be able to speak freely.  Additionally, many were concerned about impact of adding child on timing of meetings, which are already too short in many parents' eyes.
      2. **Soaring Ahead:** Clearly a valued tradition in our community, with respondents generally split between those who have attended and those who haven't. Over half find it very valuable, and less than 25% find it neutral or somewhat "not valued".  The sweet spot for length is 1-2 hours among respondents whether they have attended in the past or not.  Among those who have attended None found it too short, 31% found it just right, and 17.2% found it much too long.  That said, the things people love are largely what makes it long - each student walking across the state and the teacher comments.  When asked for suggestions - there were many, but not a lot of consensus.  Themes included the prosaic (fewer, shorter speakers), the improbable (AC in the field house) and the creative (look at ways to streamline or change distribution of teacher comments - such as a fixed character limit or reinstating closing house and reading teacher comments there or even perhaps not reading the comments.
7. Gift and Grants
   1. National Science Conference - 4 teachers, 1 STRIDE teacher – fund no more $1316, cosponsoring with district (paying for registration), PTA would be paying extras. Motion made and seconded. Motion approve
8. Science Fair
   1. Need volunteers to help with set-up and clean-up
   2. Email was sent out on Jan 10th with sign-up
   3. Thoughts about moving it to evening event
   4. Reaching out to different groups to help find volunteers
9. WYC
   1. Book Group sign-ups out – “How to Raise an Adult”
10. SEPTA
    1. Informational session at MD for preschool
    2. Feb, March, April will be presentation based
    3. Grant given to MB special education teacher
    4. Thankful for the Turnover Shop donation received
    5. April 29th Spring social
11. Trackside
    1. Themes are wanted to encourage more kids to come

Adjourned at 10:32am