

Middlebrook PTA Minutes 10/20/16

I. Call to Order – 9:09AM in MB Media Center. In attendance were Laura Rowley, Lauren Feltz, Lori Ellis, Tanya Leonard, Chandra Ring, Kim Rogg, Hillary Morrissey, Yim Lai, Ginna Yerrell, Carolyn Lyon, Mary Jones, Nicola Davies, Jen Acerra-Markey, Ronni Sayewitz, Dawn Breakey, Maria Wilcox, Lauren Yoon, Vanessa Elias and Lisa Finn.

II. Approval of the September 15, 2016 Minutes – a motion to approve was made by Maria Wilcox and seconded by Mary Jones, approved by all.

III. Principal's Report - Lauren Feltz

- A. It is currently Teen Read Week.
- B. MB is getting ready for Red Ribbon Week next week.
- C. Each Team is doing team building activities, committed to all students feeling connected, known, valued and acknowledged. They're using different ways of doing this, such as activities during the Flex Friday time and 7G's Connect Four Board which students can decorate with whatever they're into at the time.
- D. 8 Red had a surprise reunion with high school students.
- E. 8th grade has finished their first book club meeting.

IV. Teacher Representative

- A. A Teacher representative will be announced soon.

V. President's Report – Laura Rowley

- A. Nominating Committee: This role still needs to be filled. It is especially important in the spring when we are looking to fill board and executive positions. Ideally, two people will share this role.
- B. Reflections: Currently we have one person, but would ideally have a second to share this role. Reflections is the PTA Arts and Literature competition.
- C. Media Center: The Media Center may still need volunteers. Please check in if you are interested.
- D. Stop & Shop A+: By registering your Stop & Shop card, the PTA can earn points that convert to cash for the school. We currently have 83 registrants and hope to continue to grow.
- F. Cafeteria: Follow up from last month's meeting
 - a. Pricing: items are now all labeled with their prices. There is also a menu with detailed pricing. Parents can view pricing on the website.
 - b. Nutrislice App: this app provides the most current menu at your fingertips and is more up-to-date than the website.

- c. Timing: The lines are moving and the longest wait is for customized sandwiches. There have been adjustments made to speed this along.
- d. Gluten Free: Gluten free rolls and deli meat are available.
- e. Brian Reynolds is highly responsive and aware of food trends. Please reach out directly with concerns.

VI. Officer Reports:

- A. Vice President – Mary Jones: Memberships continue to come in. We are up to 357 (29 faculty) which is 70 more than at the September meeting. We had 460 members last year. Membership dues increased \$5 this year, offsetting the decrease to some degree.
- B. Treasurer – Maria Wilcox:
 - a. Membership dues for September (312) and October (28) for a total of 340 were paid to the State.
 - b. Insurance paid 410 same as prior years.
 - c. Kim Lynn did a financial review of the 2015-16 fiscal year. This is what was done:
 - i. Looked at all the deposit receipts for the fiscal year and there was nothing out of the ordinary.
 - ii. Looked at bank reconciliations completed throughout the fiscal year. Nothing out of the ordinary noted. All done in a timely manner.
 - iii. Looked at listing of outstanding checks as of 6/30/16. Nothing out of the ordinary noted.
 - iv. Anyone that wants to see last years' reports can request to do so.
 - d. Received funds from Mobile Arq for membership and donation. Maria was able to tie it to the system information and it worked perfectly.
 - e. \$815 of the \$16,590 gift and grants approved in 2015-16 for the Chariots of the Sun Assembly was paid.
 - f. Maria attended CT State PTA Treasurer/President Training via conference call.
 - g. A copy of IRS form 990 was completed by Ellen Essman and mailed to CT State PTA.
 - h. Maria sent all team leaders notice that the team grants of \$300 per team were approved by the PTA. She told them to start thinking about what they wanted to spend the money on. If they do not use it during the 2016-17 school year they lose it. In prior years when the whole school has needed something, we've asked for some of this money back. Kwame Alexander has been booked as the visiting author on May 4, 2017 for \$7,500. The PTA allocated \$5,000 for the visiting author and the Media Center put aside \$2,500. He also needs travel expenses. Maria proposed taking \$100 per team from these team grants for \$900 to cover travel. Lauren Yoon made a motion to approve this. Kimberly Rogg seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.
 - i. This is the earliest we've known the visiting author. 7th grade ELA is using his books in class.

- ii. There was a discussion on pre-selling his books. This will be followed up on.
- I. PTA cash position is about on target.
- C. Parent-at-Large – Kim Lynn – absent, no updates

VII. Committee Reports:

- A. Spiritwear – sales did much better than last year. PTA makes a 40% profit on sales. Profit was \$5,300. Spiritwear sales have ended for the year. PTA will need a new person to oversee sales next year. There is a small inventory remaining.
- B. Fundraising-
 - a. Fundraising has the goal of raising \$35,000 via all fundraising ventures, including Spiritwear, TurnOver Shop, Picture Day, Annual Appeal and Close Buy catalog sales [deleted Box Tops and S&S because these amounts go directly to school]. Just shy of \$11,500 has been raised thus far (\$3250 via PayPal, \$6975 via check and \$786.67 with Mobile Arq, plus catalog sale profit)
 - b. Close Buy catalog sales – we keep 30% of the profits. We’ve made \$418 thus far with a few more days of sales remaining. All sales must be made by the end of day Friday, October 21, 2016.
 - c. The goal is for continued direct donations to get us to \$15,000. Without this, we will need to cut enrichment programs.
 - d. Direct donations make up 33% of the PTA budget. We currently have a 27% participation rate.
- C. School Photo Day – November 9, 2016 is retake day during the lunch waves.
- D. Box Tops – The first submission deadline is October 28, 2016. Current box tops are down slightly.
 - a. We’ve received a lot of expired Box Tops.
 - b. Please trim them as they must be trimmed to turn in.
 - c. The PTA has a goal of 10,000 box tops collected this year (total \$1,000).
 - d. Collection boxes used to be in the Main Office, Teachers Room and Library. Towards the end of last year, one box was moved from the Main Office to the Check-in desk. Lacking space there, it was moved to the Teachers Room, putting two there. The visibility of a collection box in the Main Office is good advertising. Mrs. Feltz will look into why these changes were made.
- E. Hospitality – Veteran’s Day (November) and Bus Driver Breakfast and Winter Solstice (both in December) are upcoming.
- F. 6th & 7th Grade Activity Night – DJ’s have been paid for both. 6th Grade Fun Night has a cash box. New this year, we’re asking students to bring a personal care item for donation to the Wilton Food Pantry as a way to reinforce giving back.
- G. Special Education – no update
- H. WYC:
 - a. How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk kicked off Monday. This course is full and 17 people were turned away.

- b. Privileged & Pressured – The Risks of Growing Up in an Affluent Community: Lecture taking place at 10AM Friday, October 21, 2016 in the WHS Little Theatre. Arrive early to check in and as parking may pose a challenge.
- c. On November 1, 2016 The Cyber Child: Effects of Social Media – Neurological, Social and Educational Implications will take place at 10am in the Wilton Library and 7PM at Weston Town Hall.
- d. Red Ribbon Week: kicks off Monday, October 24, 2016. This is a national week for Drug/Alcohol Prevention being kicked off by a trip to Lake Compounce on Friday, October 21, 2016. All students will see a video on why they celebrate Red Ribbon Week. Wilton has participated for over 20 years.
 - i. This is a student-driven event, themed “Say it Loud, Live it Louder” this year.
 - ii. Youth-to-Youth will decorate the school Monday.
 - iii. Wednesday two assemblies with Javier Sanchez, a Youth-to-Youth International speaker, will take place for all Middlebrook students. He will also stay in the afternoon until 4PM for anyone that wants to stay. A current WHS student saw him speak and recommended him to Youth-to-Youth. The speaker is paid by an anonymous parent donation.
 - iv. Youth-to-Youth appreciates the excellent support Middlebrook offers.
 - v. Usually 600-700 students sign their pledge this week.

VIII. New Business

- A. Homework – Parents have raised questions regarding how long homework should take their students.
 - a. Mrs. Feltz discussed the need for this to be a school conversation. Team leaders use the district policy/procedure 5.1.54 graphic that homework should take 7-8 hours/week in 6th grade, 8-10 hours/week in 7th grade and 10-12 hours/week in 8th grade in assigning homework. All students work at different paces and homework does ebb and flow.
 - b. Most students feel math takes the most time. There is an ongoing conversation at Middlebrook about assigning the right few problems versus many math problems.
 - c. Teams are also discussing the need for greater consistency across the teams.
 - d. If a child is struggling, talk to the teacher if it is subject specific or the team leader if it is a global issue.
 - e. The school recognizes that kids have many other arenas where learning also takes place.
- B. Middlebrook Policy on Personal Electronic Devices – is there an expectation that students have personal devices for use at school? What accommodations are made for those without that access?
 - a. The school does not expect all students to have their own device.

- b. Mrs. Feltz spoke to this being a very real middle school issue. She'll follow up with teachers on approaching use of personal devices in class with a consideration of the impact on those without a device. The only way around this issue is to not allow personal devices at any point, but she feels the value added is more beneficial than not using them.
 - c. Mrs. Feltz will ask Team Leaders to have a conversation with teachers about how to manage kids without devices when they allow them in the classroom. There should be devices available for those who do not have them.
 - d. It was asked if Chromebooks should be the norm instead of students using their devices. Middlebrook does not have enough Chromebooks to cover all students.
 - e. Mrs. Feltz expressed confidence that when devices are used it is primarily for groupwork, hence not each student in class needs one.
- C. Google Classroom: Some teams are using Google Classroom this year. If your child's team is, they will have discussed this at Open House and posted it on Edline.
 - a. Google Classroom can send email updates. You must have a google email to get these updates.
 - b. Teams on Google Classroom must show a due date for every assignment. Some assignments are showing as a 0, despite being done as a result of this.
 - c. Mrs. Feltz will coordinate a parent training session for Google Classroom. More details will follow.
 - d. Some teams also use Twitter. Anyone can set up an account and follow the schools or team without posting on Twitter.

IX. Adjournment – 10:32am