

Minutes of the Meeting
September 7, 2011 Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

Attending: Brenda Reishus, Ana Vazquez, Hilary Grant, Maria Saba, Karen Fagan, Kim Tocca, Paula Michienzi, Joanne Baldini, Corinne Denis, Anne Sharp, Rachel Phillips, Carolyn Hintlian, Joanne O'Donnell, Roger Hain, Audrey Loria,, Robin Wolf, Dori Carellas, Tamanna Karim, Regina Campbell, Michele Sanicola Nadel, S. Wolf, C.& T. Tringale, Lu Ann Stackhouse, Lynn Bailey, Elaine Karp, Stephen Karp, Elinor Brown, Anne Marie Hill, Jayne Zeamer, Ted Wilson

Carol Cashion called the meeting to order at 7:34pm.

Focus on the Future: Susan Verdicchio, VP Programming, lead a discussion regarding:

- WHS Strategic Planning Report
- Online Survey, Parents and Students involved
- The role of the PFA in communicating the platform
- Request was made to fund T-Shirts which would help promote the Focus on the Future
- A motion was made and seconded and the PFA unanimously approved \$1,000 in funding for the T-Shirts

Routine Business: Approval of the June 2010 minutes was requested by the president. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Principal's Report: Tom Gwin welcomed all the attendees.

- He reported that the opening at WHS went very smoothly.
- There are now 20 Freshman homerooms to allow for the special programming with faculty advisors.
- Assemblies will be held for all grades covering safety, honor code, Student Handbook.
- Strategic Focus Plan has key goals for school improvement: homework policy, Advisory Program for Freshman; honor code.
- Summer trips reviewed and presentations will be made for Service trip to Ecuador and Cultural Exchange Trip to China.
- Looking for members of School Improvement Council - email WHSPFA if interested.
- Teaming up with Winchester Hospital to offer yoga, Zumba and Tai Chi classes. Encouraging Healthy Habits.
- Band Teacher is out on Medical Leave.
- Assistant Principal Chapman will be away from WHS for family medical reasons. Former McCall Principal Ralph Marotta will be stepping in to help out.
- WHS Open House will be September 22 at 7:00pm. All the clubs and teams will be there selling Sachem items or baked goods for fundraising.
- September 27th is a college workshop for Seniors; financial workshop to be held on October 4th
- Flu vaccine supervised by the Board of Health to be held on November 7th.
- Assistant Superintendent Rhonda Cohen has resigned and a search committee will begin looking for a replacement.

Questions for Mr. Gwin:

- Will teachers be returning tests this year? Mr. Gwin answered that tests will be returned but that the WHS administration is finalizing the plan
- Will there be a Junior Prom? Mr. Gwin explained that the Junior class has received permission to have a Junior prom - held at the Town Hall - where there will be a theme and food will be served.

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Treasurer's report: Robin Wolf reported that in both Enrichment and Grants, the PFA spent less money than budgeted and as result WHS PFA is starting off the year with a balance of \$12,000. Discussion of the budget will be postponed until the October meeting.

PFA By Laws Update: Robin Wolf explained that the current by-laws were last revised in 1998 and were badly in need of updating. They provide for committees/positions we no longer have, tie us to rules that are now tough to follow, and provide for things we no longer do. In April 2011, Caren Connelly, Brenda Reishus and Robin Wolf made several changes and they are posted on the PFA website. There were not enough attendees at the June meeting for a quorum so a vote was called for at this meeting and seconded and the new PFA By-Laws were unanimously adopted.

Committee Reports:

Class Reports:

Junior: Ann Marie Hill reported that the Junior Class will be selling sweatshirts at the Open House. In addition there will be a Class Dinner later in the fall.

Senior: Lynn Bailey reported the Senior Class will be selling Senior T-Shirts at the Open House.

Direct Appeal:

Joanne O'Donnell gave a brief overview of the WHS Direct Appeal program. She emphasized that 75% of our receipts are collected at the September Open House. Communications to all families are sent throughout the year and in November reminder postcards are sent to WHS families who have yet to contribute.

Programs: Faculty Advisor's New Role

The Winchester Advisory Group (WAG), the 9th grade advisory program, officially kicked off on Wednesday, September 21. Twenty faculty advisors (who have volunteered) have about 15 students in their advisories and the groups will meet monthly. All of the students in each advisory are assigned to the same guidance counselor. Therefore the advisories provide another point of contact between counselors and students. The purpose of WAG is to prepare and provide students with the knowledge, skills, resources, and supports that will ensure a successful transition to Winchester High. The program will offer a safe, connected, and emotionally enriching environment that will promote personal and academic growth for the 9th graders.

The goals of WAG are to:

- Build a high school community that encourages a sense of belonging and respect.
- Prepare students for the personal and academic challenges of WHS to maximize future success.
- Cultivate the important tools of clear communication, emotional intelligence, effective study habits, time management, and organizational skill.
- Develop decision-making skills, resiliency, responsibility, and respect for self and others.

The advisory period also allows other classes to meet for special programs, breakfasts, and "town" meetings. For example in September, the League of Women Voters will present a program on voting to the seniors, the juniors will participate in a town meeting, and sophomores will get together for a class breakfast. These activities will rotate among the three classes each month.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm

Respectfully submitted, Joanne Baldini, Secretary

Minutes of the Meeting
October 5, 2011 Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

Attending: Jody Collins Skinner, Carol Cashion, Karen Fagan, Anne Marie Hill, Yune Kunes, Cathy Tomey, Kathy Czech, Bill Clark, Lisa Vahey, Yu Yang, Elinor Brown, Elaine Karp, Brenda Reishus, Ingrid Geis, Dori Carellas, Rachael Phillips, Pam Gaither, Robin A. Smith, Jennifer Clifford, Paula Michienzi, Carol Savage, Pam Woo, Jodie Mullane, Ilango Chinnasamy, Joanne O'Donnell, Roger Hain, Robin Wolf, Malini Dutta, Joanne Baldini

Jody Collins Skinner called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Motion to accept reports unanimously approved.

Direct Appeal - Joanne Doherty

WHSPFA collected over \$20,000 from over 220 families - but this was down compared to last year which was \$25,000 from 267 families. The amount collected at Open House was less than anticipated.

PFA will continue to send email reminders to all WHS families.

PayPal is a little more in use this year. The downside to PayPal is the fee.

Principal's Report:

Interim Assistant Superintendent Richard Robbat has been appointed to replace outgoing AS Rhonda Cohen.

On September 22 the Faculty Advisors for the freshman met with their student groups.

- Seniors participated in an assembly on voting.
- Juniors held a town hall meeting.
- Sophomores had a class breakfast.

Yoga Program - 13 students enrolled

Student visitors from China - looking for host families

National Honor Society applications have been submitted. There will be a breakfast for National Merit semi-finalists and commended students.

Charlie card available in main office for half price

Treasurer's report: Robin Wolf reported that in both Enrichment and Grants, the PFA spent less money than budgeted for and as result WHS PFA is starting off the year with a balance of \$12,000. Discussion of the budget will be postponed until the November meeting.

Programs: Challenging and Motivating Students at all levels

Department Heads: Michael Marchand, Science
 Marge Harvey, Social Studies
 Judy Hession, English
 Anna Tirone, Foreign Languages
 Tom Haver, Math

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Motivating Students:

Math - There is a need to accommodate students at all levels and there are many levels for Math at WHS so that each student is motivated to excel

Foreign Language - There are no levels at Language Years 1 & 2; Honors is available at 3rd year; technology is also available in the lab and is a great support to the classroom teaching. The Foreign Language department wants every student to reach their potential.

English - One of the important pieces to motivate students in ELA is through great projects.

History - Teachers try to motivate students by showing that they care about their progress. It is very important to affirm good work and appreciate them as good learners. Teachers provide a variety of assessments to allow the student to prove their skills. It is important that they know their voices are heard. Curricular materials are consistent but it is also good to have a variety of ways to tackle the material.

Science - By hiring very qualified and most compassionate teachers the Science team tries to foster good communication. Students are leveled as there is a big difference in readiness levels

Consistency

Math - Common tests for mid-terms but teachers must allowed academic freedom for other classroom assessments.

Foreign Language - Some courses have many teachers but teachers are trying to collaborate even though there is no time built into the schedule.

English - Very different system for assessments as the approach is spiral learning. Writing Lab is the only course where there is common assessment.

History - The 9th grade classes have team teaching for world history and there is no honors. There is professional collaboration. The department is making great strides in getting the kids prepared and figuring out who has made great progress in abstract thinking.

Science - Prep time for teachers when possible.

A goal for all the departments is to develop common assessments.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted, Joanne Baldini, Secretary

Minutes of the Meeting
November 2, 2011 Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

Attending: Audrey Loria, Jody Skinner, Carol Cashion, Brenda Reishus, Lisa Vahey, Pam Gaither, Susan Verdicchio, Paula Michienzi, Robin Wolf, Anne Sharp, Joanne O'Donnell, Doris Carellas, Carol Savage, Susan Wolf, Ingrid Geis

The meeting was officially called to order at 7:34 pm by Carol Cashion. Input was requested about the "consent agenda" and unanimously approved.

Principal's Report: WHS was recently named as one of 375 schools on the College Board AP Honor Roll; Dr. Gwin stated that this is a great honor. A Technology Conference for over 1000 teachers was recently held at Gillette Stadium. Dan Downs presented a workshop for developing apps for mobile media with three WHS students (Ryan Murphy, Michael Thompson, Rameel Rana.) The Zumba class has been postponed due to lack of attendance; the Friday afternoon time slot may be the main reason. Yoga has about 13 students attending on Monday afternoons. Host families are needed for Chinese students; 15 families are still needed. National Honor Society inducted 65 new members.

The Special Advisory Days are continuing with topics to include time management, note taking, and test preparation. Spirit Half Week is upcoming with a pep rally. The 1st quarter ends on Friday, November 4; reports will be out by 11/17. No School on 11/10 due to professional day; No school on 11/11 in observance of Veteran's Day.

Treasurers Report: The 2011/2012 Budget was reviewed by Robin. A change in Enrichment was discussed in order to utilize funds to provide maximum effectiveness. The Scholarship fund was increased to enable students to attend educational trips through school. The budget for Social was also increased. Most line items remain unchanged; it is hoped that the cost of the newsletter will be minimized as more recipients move to electronic subscriptions. Total Expenses are budgeted at \$35,300. Currently have \$32,391 cash on hand. The Miscellaneous line item is budgeted at \$1,125; t-shirts cost about \$1,005.

Direct Appeal – Joanne O'Donnell indicated that more cash is still coming in.

The 2011/2012 budget was unanimously approved after first and second motions for the same; kudos were expressed to Robin for all her efforts.

Committee Reports:

PFA Grants – Brenda Reishus and Carol Savage presented the list of grants and spreadsheet for the 2011/2012 school year. All requests have been funded as received; others may be considered pending availability of funds. A question was raised about the frequency of "school" trips and cost of the trips. A suggestion was made to consider appealing to parents to help fund scholarships for families needing assistance to participate. The budget was amended to increase the grant amount by \$150; unanimous approval was given after first and second motions.

Social Committee – Paula Michienzi and Rachel Phillips discussed the holiday breakfast for staff, which will be held on Friday, December 9th from 7:15 to 8:15 am. (Snow date Monday, December 12th.) Raffles will be held for teachers; teams, groups are encouraged to donate items. The committee hopes to receive 5 to 10 items. Ideas are welcome; sign up to help and watch for an email closer to the date for specifics.

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Community Events:

League of Women Voters holding a Town Government 101 session on Sunday, November 20th.

Race to Nowhere will be shown on November 9th at 3:15 and 7 at McCall Auditorium. Dr. Brooks will hold a discussion on Monday night following the movie; RSVP is required. Tickets are available at Book Ends or by emailing Dot Butler.

A Cappella Fest will be held on Saturday, November 5th at Town Hall.

Guest Presenter – Dr. Gwin:

Dr. Gwin discussed the topic of “Communication” with PFA members. A Powerpoint presentation was shared discussing communication from school to home (handbook, course selection book, policies/stats in weekly email, Edline website with improvements underway, monthly drop-in with Dr. Gwin, daily announcement emails, PFA newsletter, meetings and high school website). Parents are also encouraged to attend Guidance events and subscribe to the Red and Black.

Communication from home to school was also discussed (email staff to set up appointment times or discuss a topic; email guidance counselor when family issues surface). A number of parents expressed concern about emails that are sent to staff going into “spam” accounts; Tom will check on this with the Technology Department.

Comments – Class Size Distribution stats should be shared; Tom clarified that Daily and Weekly Updates will continue thru email and also be listed on Edline; better communication is needed from the Music Department; all departments (especially Athletics) should communicate with Sue Carney to ensure timely email blasts; Club information will be added to Edline; Edline should be updated to include transcript history; it was suggested that a focus group or quick survey be conducted about Edline.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Audrey Loria, Recording Secretary

Minutes of the Meeting
December 7, 2011 Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

Attending: Jody Collins Skinner, Carol Cashion, Joanne Baldini, Carol Savage, Brenda Reishus, Cathy Costa, Susan Verdicchio, Jeanette Kolodziej, Jim Savage, Ana Vazquez and Lisa Vahey, Caren Connely, Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, Annie Grover, Anne Sharp, Maline Dutta, John Jenke

Carol Cashion called the meeting to order at 7:35pm. Motion to accept reports unanimously approved.

Principal's Report:

Budget 2012 -13 update: In order to keep up with growing enrollment WHS has requested that sections be added in the following: Math 2; Science 2; Social Studies 2; Foreign Language 2 - including an additional section of Chinese; English 2; Wellness 2; additional support for Reading

Budget request for WHS Materials: Textbooks for World History II; Math, Spanish and additional laptop carts.

Feasibility Study Update:

- Architects toured building last week
- Finalist will be named in mid-January
- Must consider options of new space or renovated space (end of June)
- Schematic design will be presented (July - November)
- Cost projections submitted
- Debt exclusion override
- Reminder State will pay 35% of total cost and Winchester will contribute 65%

WHS will be initiating a One-to-One Committee (1 student - 1 laptop) and is looking for committee members; WHS is still looking for host families for the visiting Chinese students Jan. 20th - 28th

Upcoming Events: Fall Play this weekend, Dec. 9th & 10th; Early Release Dec. 14th; Senior blurbs due Dec. 21st

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Programs: Technology in the Classroom, Eric Lister and John McCann

Eric Lister discussed the day to day interface with his website, class notes, homework and project descriptions. In addition, he showed us how he can prepare a video and audio review of a student's paper with comments that the student can link to from any computer.

John McCann passed out iPads to the group and then introduced several important iPad applications ("apps") that his students are using. The group was able to see first hand how the students are using these apps.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted, Joanne Baldini, Secretary

Minutes of the Meeting
January 4, 2012
Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

Attending: Jody Collins-Skinner, Marie Sabatino, Debbie Benedict, Eileen Milner, Audrey Loria, Carol Cashion, Jen Trevett, Tobey Kelly, Cheryl Eagan Donovan, LuAnn Stackhouse, Paula Michienzi, Joanne O'Donnell, Ana Vazquez, Carol Savage, Ingrid Geis, Cindy Bohne

The meeting was officially called to order at 7:32 pm.

Parent Freshman Advisors: The slate of advisors was voted in by the attending members. They are Marie Sabatino, Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, Jen Trevett, Tobey Kelly. The advisors report that they have an excellent slate of class officers; the class participated in a community service project for Transition House with the senior class; they have been selling sweatshirts, sweatpants and pj pants.

The December Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved after first and second motions for the same.

Treasurers Report & Direct Appeal: The Direct Appeal is just shy of the goal by \$1200; participation is down somewhat (30% vs. 37-38% in prior years); average donation amounts are also lower this year. A postcard mailing will be sent in January to families that have not participated. It was noted that a strong push must be made to collect money at the Open House.

The Treasurers Report was unanimously approved after first and second motions for the same with no discussion/corrections.

Principal's Report: The MSBA is expected to select the designer of the feasibility study for WHS on January 10th. The FY2013 budget is still being discussed; currently the budget is 9% over last year's; a working session is expected to reduce the overage to 6-7%. The budget is expected to be presented to the School Committee on Tuesday, January 10th. Midterms will be held on January 17-20; early dismissals will occur each day. Dr. Gwin extended thanks to the PFA for the holiday breakfast; special thanks were given to the Social Committee for the same.

Town Meeting – 21st Century Technology Discussion: Susan Verdicchio moderated the discussion. Dr. Gwin shared the letter that he had included in the December newsletter regarding the 1:1 computer initiative, similar to the program at Burlington High School. (This can be found at the PFA website.) The following notes were documented by Susan at the meeting:

Intro: We all know there are deficiencies and problems with technology at WHS at the present. We wanted this conversation not to focus on the present, but to look ahead, focus on what would be better, or what we envision replacing or fixing the current situation. Tom Gwin has formed an exploratory committee to study school-supplied iPads or other tablet devices issued to students and teachers on a 1-to-1 basis, with Wifi access to the Internet throughout the building, modeled on an on-going iPad initiative at Burlington High. This would replace paper textbooks with online texts.

There are at least two sets of issues with this proposal. First, issues concerning replacing paper textbooks with e-textbooks, and, second, concerns about the device to be used and Internet access.

Discussion

- need to fix existing problems with Wifi access in the building first; whatever device you decide on won't work without proper infrastructure; this needs to be fixed now to use the equipment already in the building and then would be in place for new device

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- if WPS to supply devices and expect students to use them, must have infrastructure in place
- Burlington has a fairly old building, and needed \$1.5M to upgrade for universal Wifi access; Tom thought they got a grant or some kind of private funding from Cisco or other company to cover this; his intention was to move forward with this, not necessarily wait for renovation project; funding is a concern
- not clear how this would fit into districtwide technology plan; need both infrastructure and technicians for tech support & maintenance, so not workable unless these needs are addressed
- one of the main uses for the device is note-taking; iPad has no real keyboard; laptops would be better
- right now, online or e-textbooks are bad; no page numbers, difficult to refer back and forth; force the user into a more linear reading experience than you want to have; several parents had asked their kids and kids preferred paper textbooks
- simply moving from paper to electronic textbooks is not progress; should be moving away from old-fashioned “read the textbook/take a chapter test” direct instruction
- in order for e-textbooks to evolve, there would need to be user demand; they are evolving & having interactive features
- scientific data showing people do not read from a screen the same way that they read from print sources; data about use of multiple windows online, and/or use of Internet, actually being harmful to memory and attention; data that multi-tasking is a delusion
- scientific data showing use of active screen (like iPad or laptop) interferes with sleep; should read using “e-ink” screen only close to time you go to sleep
- scant data showing link between technology use and better academic performance
- look at Maine’s statewide computer initiative, or Arizona’s, for track record, data on technology’s impact on student learning
- not fair or realistic to require parents to buy laptops for over \$1000 (like in Beverly?)
- on the other hand, if school allowed students simply to bring in laptops or devices if they own one, that would cost less and allow limited school dept. funds to be used to supply devices to those who can’t afford them; seems crazy to use scarce tax dollars to duplicate equipment kids already have
- could be better to use laptops and web-based applications (like GoogleDocs) than pay for device-specific applications
- learn from Eric Lister’s approach; he focuses on low cost & ease of use; his classroom technology enables students to write more, do peer editing, they feel empowered
- any initiative needs to be teacher-driven or it will not succeed; start with a pilot with a group of motivated teachers, they will motivate (or shame) others into getting on board

- raises equity issues about expecting kids to have computer & Internet access after school; collaborate with public library (or have after-school access to school library)
- dangers of 24/7 schoolwork, teachers posting homework at 6 p.m., students feeling adults expect them to produce work without any breaks; potentially increases pressure & stress
- wary that this is coming from administration, not teachers; we need to step back and ask, “What is the goal? What are we not accomplishing now that technology would enable us to do?”
- need a well-written survey that teachers would take and articulate the needs & goals
- teacher survey done for Focus on the Future showed teachers wanted the technology they already had to work reliably, and to be able to troubleshoot or update software independently (not be dependent on technicians)
- cost of technology has come down, but benefits unclear
- 1-to-1 Committee is not tied down to evaluating tablet or e-reader; will consider laptops

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Audrey Loria, Recording Secretary