

**WHSPFA Meeting- October 5th, 2015
Approved**

All present: Over 50 present at the meeting. Though we asked all to sign in, we were not successful in getting people to do so. All of the PFA board was present, including: Lori Scully, Mikie Ulwick, Malina Dutta, Jenny Rappole, Kathy Czeck, Karin Sangster, Julie Piantedosi, Cheryl Myers, Lynn Philips, Anita Colasante, Susan Wolf, Alison Bayiates, Lauren Costello, Denise George, and Margie Peterson.

This is the first WHS PFA Meeting of the school year 2015-16. Lori Scully and Mikie Ulwick welcomed everyone to our new Dining Commons and Lori introduced all PFA Board Members.

Co-Presidents	Lori Scully Mikie Ulwick
Vice President / Programs	Malini Dutta
Treasurer	Leah Holber
Secretary	Jenny Rappole
Budget/Grants	Kathy Czeck Karin Sangster
Direct Appeal	Julie Piantedosi Cheryl Myers
Gifts	Lynn Phillips
Newsletter	Anita Colasante* Susan Wolf**
Nominating	Malini Dutta Lori Scully
Publicity	
Social	Mary Ellen Melaragni Denise George Margie Peterson Alison Bayiates

Lori said that we have a full agenda so we will move through the PFA business quickly to allow plenty of time for our guest speakers.

PFA Business:

Secretary's Report- Minutes from June

Motion to approve minutes from June 1st, 2015 Meeting were presented by Jenny Rappole. A motion to accept the minutes, as amended, were approved.

Treasurers Report - spoken by Lori for Leah who could not be at the meeting. Lori offered for all those present to look over the budget sheet. Expenses for last year are up to date. Not a lot has happened yet for the new school year. Direct Appeal will be addressed at the end of the meeting tonight. Lori asked that we allow our guest speakers to go next and finish with PFA business at the end of the meeting.

Motion was made to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion accepted.

Introductions were made for Dot Butler and Sgt. Dan Perenick, leaders in our community for the Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community.

Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community:

Both Dot and Dan opened comments with how fortunate they feel to work with our town and our schools. Dan has been the School Resource Officer since 2001, when a grant from the town was put in place to prevent and educate our students and community. He offered his email and phone number and said if any parent here ever has any information regarding parties, he can be called, anytime. The tips to the police station can be anonymous. His information is:

Sgt. Dan Perenick

dperenick@winchesterps.org

781-721-7020 ext 4111

781-850-5240 cell

The goal of our community is to keep kids safe and our community safe and we must work together to make this happen.

Dot Butler then spoke about all the upcoming programs available to the public this year. Dot explained how important it is for us as a community to understand what to do with prescription drugs, how to prevent people from abusing them and how to help those in our community. Dot passed out a flier for a program at the Jenks Center on Oct 6th, tomorrow night, regarding prescription drugs. She asked that if there were any other programs that parents would like to see offered in our community, then we should contact her. Dot and Dan will continue to come to PFA meetings to speak about upcoming events and talks. In November, the discussion will be about "hotspots" and home invasion. Dot can be reached at:

winchestercoalition@gmail.com

Superintendent's Report:

Judith Evans introduced herself. She has had a career in education in Medfield and Shrewsbury. This is her 10th year in administration, and 30th in education. She has a family with adopted children from China and her youngest is in high school. She feels blessed to have this job.

Her goal is to see every school and every classroom this year. She started with Lincoln and the Middle school and has worked her way through most preschool classes at Lynch (the preschool at Lynch that is part of the public school system). She recently met with several high school English classes. She is interested in making sure our children have opportunities to study beyond Winchester, especially in humanities, arts and adding languages to the curriculum.

She is invested in STEM as she was in her previous district. As she meets with science and math, she would like to bring in and expand our programs through classes and local universities. She said, "It is my job to help create a world class education for whatever their passions are".

She is working on a "Calendar Study" with our community. She says we are squeezed on both ends of our calendar- professional days, end/start times. We have 40 who have volunteered for the Calendar Study and selections for this committee will be chosen at random. Meetings will begin next month, meeting twice a month until we determine a k-12 schedule to present to the board.

She is also starting work on next year's budget for town meeting. Enrollment has increased, so we will work with the School Committee to use all current data for this next budget.

She thanked the school committee for their professionalism and hard work. She said, " Our interim principal is going to heaven for stepping in to this roll at the high school."

She does bi-monthly chat's open to any and all in the town. Bring your questions and bring a friend. She posts regularly on her Facebook and Twitter page and encouraged all to check it out, as it will be the first place for school closings and winter snow days. She also has a blog that she updates weekly.

Questions from the parents:

Q: Wondering about your thoughts on community behavior and concerned about the stress level of our students in the school. Are there any plans to get feedback from teachers to help students?

A: It is a district goal to address student's emotional well-being. We are taking action steps to look at sources of student stress. In a high-performing school like this one, there are going to be many sources of stress and it is our job to figure out what stress is good and bad and how we can help them.

I believe that students should learn a bit of grit and resilience. Can we allow our children to fail safely? Part of the source of stress is that we expect our children to follow an unmanageable schedule-with no room for sleep.

Q: Will there be forums?

A: In the Newsletter this week, I address keys issues looking at behavior health in general. We have a lot of good people doing a lot of good things, but not necessarily together. Teachers are doing a good job of teaching them to be excellent. But it's a bigger question of rigor and work load.

I met with Amber Hanes, she will start parent conversations- coffee/conversations every month for casual drop in for questions.

High school should *not* be a huge uphill battle to the college of their choice. Students should enjoy their time here. Parents need to work on that too.

Q: Is any one looking at curriculum leveling?

A: Yes, curriculum needs to be clear about expectations- how teachers get there and what students do. Part of that is evaluating grading and what the purpose of grades is. Traditional grading is bad for teachers and students, after much research. So, currently, in school, we give students one chance. They should not get one chance. This needs to change. We need to be consistent and fair to students.

Our feeling is that we have many professional and hard working teachers who want the best for the students. But they are not working together. Students should not be up all night for a single teacher. This is not healthy.

Q: What is the vehicle you will use to get parents feedback?

A: This is up to Kelley, but we need to talk to students.

A: (from Kelly) I have had many one to one conversations regarding teachers . I have set up some focus groups- talked to student council, with specific questions. The goal is to have urgent issues addressed by mid-year.

A: (from Chris Nixon) The committee did a community wide survey- 2011-14 about school culture with open response questions. There were 1400 responses and that data is in a report that we gave to Judy Evans. Process and survey- student stress and wellness was kicked up to the top of the agenda after this survey was done.

Q: Is that information available?

A: No, it is not sorted, so it is not available to public.

Q: How does the teachers union work? Can the director of a department say something to a teacher regarding course mapping?

A: We are fortunate to have the Director of Mathematics, Tom Haver, here to answer.

A: (from Tom Haver) Autonomy is what we do. Curriculums are hard because the concern has been high for the past dozen years, well balanced and grossly inadequate. It's important to kids to have it be fair. We try.

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We use Authentic feedback: we have a comprehensive evaluation. Teachers have to fill out a rubric for culture, curriculum. etc.- teachers union does not have an issue with this.

Q: We have a new auditorium. Any thoughts of beefing up the theater program, that seems non-existent here?

A: This is big on Kelley's list. Our world-class auditorium should match the program- but no budget. We will discuss with the theater and drama and we anticipate those conversations will be happening more often this year and going forward.

Q: PSAT question- This was the first year taking the test during the school day and we had to pay? Why the change?

A: The College Board requires it and they suggested a new date- during the week. Juniors were automatically signed up, but you always had to pay for it.

Q: If someone has not registered, then what should they do?

A: We will figure it out. Students will go to their history class and take the test during school. It starts in the morning. Working every one around it. Teachers are involved in this. And it's 3 blocks. Sophomores can take it. We will check on information and send a new blast about juniors to make sure it is clear.

Q: PSAT- Does the school have a recommendation of when they should take it?

A: The school recommends that juniors take it. Sophomores can, but it's not necessary.

Q: Special Education Department, how they are settling in to the new HS?

A: (from Kelley) The percentage of students on IEP plans with special-ed is 20%. We have a lot of special education programs- regular disabilities, specialized instruction, and co-teaching classrooms.

I have met with every single staff special educator. I'm excited about programing and we have a new psychologist coming on board.

Q: Is there an issue with turnover in departments?

A: (from Kelley) We added many new people with co-teaching curriculum. I would not say that's turnover. Most of our new staff is co-teaching. We have done some very good hiring and I am very impressed with the new staff.

A: (from Judy): Typically in districts you see that in part time staff. District-wide we hired over 50 new teachers. Some of that is growth, some is moving away for geographic reasons, or new jobs. In general we have had many teachers here for a long time that set a good foundation for our special education program

Q: Language program? Should students start foreign language earlier?

A: (from Judy) YES! They should start languages by 6th grade. Immersion programs would be hard, with our short days, especially in elementary schools. I'm a big believer in multiple languages. Not wedded to mandarin, but we need a non-

western language option. Unless we extend the school day, there is not enough time. Starting in 7th grade, it seems like we are already way behind everyone else.

Q: Co-teaching: Is it an adequate working environment?

A: (from Kelley) The best teams of co-teachers are meeting more often. The teachers are sensing that they need more time to make the program work, and are extending their days to see what is working and what is not. What team is working great? What are the best practices that are allowing co-teaching to work? Time is our biggest resource.

Lori Scully closed the questioning for Judy Evans and introduced Principal Kelley. Judy Evans reminded everyone that she was always available to talk.

Interim Principals Report:

Interim Principal Christine Kelley introduced herself saying she has been an educator for over 24 years, a principal in Woburn, and principal in Winchester. She feels like she grew up professionally in this town- great educators, principals, superintendent's. and families who put their trust in me.

She has a family, two daughters both through high school and a son, a freshman at Reading HS. "I love my kids, but I love your kids!" We have 1238 kids in the high school. The kids are thoughtful, kind and talk to me about all sorts of stuff. She tries to spend a lot of time talking with your kids, especially all three lunch periods. She also has lots of adults in and out of my office and there are many things we need to work on and improve. She loves to mentor teachers. She thanked us for sharing our children with her.

High School Updates from Principal Kelley:

She thanked the PFA for the new donation. The kids are going to be very excited about the new tables for front area and the back area of the Commons from both PFA and WFEE. She really likes the space in the dining commons because it provides a lot of options for the kids: the quiet kids, the homework kids, the group lunches, it works for all.

She said the building project is going well. Hundreds of punch list items to still complete but Columbus day weekend they will be finishing it. It is not too destructive this year.

MCAS scores came back- Math and language were advanced; Science- 94%, Math 98%, English 99%; 23 students qualified for National Merit for MCAS.

We had our first school dance with no issues and all students safe. While the students were at Town Hall for the Junior Class Dance, there was a parent class fundraiser at Lucia's that was successful.

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Communication is very important to Kelley. She uses Twitter for daily tweets about the HS, weekly memos to the school, and daily announcements. She also has a monthly newsletter and just wrote her first article for the PFA Newsletter. The staff has been very supportive and receptive. She thinks things are going well. The goal is to keep everyone in the same loop.

Questions for Principal Kelley:

Q: I respectfully disagree about lunch and believe the space is cramped. Why were there 3 lunches last year, and only 2 this year

A: Yes, last year there were 3 lunches, but you had to split a period. This was not ideal and it did not work. The feedback was that staff did not like it last year. Now we have two lunches with a break in between.

Q: Could we offer grade lunches?

A: Most high schools cannot offer that because of scheduling. We could do 3 lunches, but it would be hard. With growing enrollment, we will likely go back to 3 lunches. One of the things we did have a problem with is that we have 4 bays for food, but we only had 3 for the past month. The 4th bay has been fixed and should help with congestion.

Q: Was it worse on the rainy day?

A: "Monsoon day" was the busiest day and there were no extra seats; when winter hits, and they all stay that's going to be a problem.

Lori wrapped up the questions by thanking everyone for attending and participating, especially the time from our WHS staff.

PFA Business Reports- continued

Vice President/Programs Report: Malina Dutta said she was happy to work in the new Dining Commons space for the Open House/ Fair . The custodians and the staff were very accommodating and helpful. It was a challenge to be fair to all the groups wanting the prime space and a logistical nightmare for some, especially those groups upstairs. But it all worked out and it was a successful night. Everyone thanked Malina for her hard work.

Direct Appeal: Cheryl and Julie, the chairs of Direct Appeal, said the budget for this year is \$30K. To date, \$17K has been raised. Unfortunately, only 147 families have donated, so that the percentage of family support is down. They encouraged everyone to participate as PFA supports so many programs at the High School, so please keep giving.

Grants: Kathy and Karin opened by stating that "we spend what you donate". The grant form has guidelines on the PFA website. All technology grants now go through POWERED UP Campaign of WFEE, so our budget is \$13K this year. Application forms for grants went in teacher mailboxes last week (September). Grant requests are already coming in. On the PFA website, there is a list of the grants from last

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year. Examples were given of different grants, i.e. probes for chemistry, robotics club, music department, living history day, foreign language awards night, ... we try to get a nice sampling from all. We collect all grants by Columbus day and let teachers know in November.

Gifts: Lynn introduced herself and spoke of the gifts given in the past. Most recently, a donation to Youth Enrichment Service and a card signed by the PFA Board in honor of the Soper Family.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jenny Rappole