

Minutes of the Meeting February 12, 2014  
Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

**Attending:** Audrey Loria, Jody Collins Skinner, Kathy Czeck, Leah Holber, Lisa Vahey, Sam Kunes, Eileen Marks, Susan Verdicchio, Susan Fagerstrom, Michele Nathan, Elaine Costales, Donna Clevenger, Beth B., Elena Langlois, Tom Gwin.

Audrey Loria called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Co-President's Report:

Thanks to all who went to the Meet-and-Greet for the Principal candidates. There will be a recommendation for the top candidate coming after February break.

VP Malini Dutta is in India, so past VP, Jodie Collins-Skinner, is sitting in for her for tonight's meeting.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the last PFA meeting on January 13, 2013 were reviewed. There were no comments. Minutes approved.

Principal's Report- Tom Gwin

An assembly was held today for all grades—called "I'll Never Do That". It was a performance by The Improbable Players who are all recovering alcoholics or addicts. The students were really engaged in the program. It was sponsored by The Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community.

There are 5 finalists for filling the Principal's position. The Superintendent will make the decision after Feb vacation.

The Superintendent's position will also need to be filled due to Bill McAlduff's retirement. The School Committee will be looking at an interim superintendent for one year, due to the late (in the year) announcement. An interim position is often filled by a retired educator and, in this case, one with experience in building renovation.

The teachers' contract was voted down on Monday. They are still working without a contract.

The architects for the HS Renovation have met with all of the HS departments to review the schematic plans. The architects have presented a plan which will include student parking. There will be about 130 parking spots located behind the building that is adjacent to the Skillings Field parking lot.

The Winter sports season ends next week. There will be baseline concussion tests for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders who have not done a test already. This will be on Tues, Feb 19, from 9-1.

AD Marc Arria will be holding a meeting on March 12 at 6 pm for all Spring Athletes and their parents.

Course registration for Fall of 2014 begins in early March. Course selection is all online now.

Q. Is the process for the Superintendent search the same as for Principal search? No, because of the interim position, decision will be made by the School Committee.

Q. Will there be teacher planning space in the renovated building? There will be less planning space than we have now, (because of larger classrooms, etc.) but it will be there.

Q. How will teaching be affected by the renovation/ use of modular classrooms? Word is that the modulares are nice; will have full science labs in the modulares. Specifics of the transition to the modulares has not been fully detailed yet. This will be worked out by EFPBC—they meet every Wed night.

Vice President's Report

Jody Collins-Skinner reported that she attended the School Committee meeting when the Athletic Budget was discussed. AD Marc Arria was asked to put together a budget that was realistic to fully fund the Athletic Dept. The projected gap to fully fund the budget is \$162K. Because of this, a committee will be put together to figure out how to bridge this gap. Two public forums will be scheduled. Possible/potential solution might be payment on a sliding based on expense of each sport.

Committee Reports:

**Direct Appeal-** The Direct Appeal has raised \$27,385 to date. We are still \$3500 short of goal. 733 families have not contributed to DA. We have authorized a release of the funds to fully fund the approved faculty grants.

**Treasurer** – Leah Holber stated that we are right on budget; just where we expected to be at this time.

HOT TOPIC: STEM

Guests: Tom Haver, Math Dept Head; Michael Marchand Science Dept Head; and David Petty, STEM Coordinator

Guests gave a brief summary of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program. Mr. Marchand said they are always looking for community interaction in the form of internships for students interested in STEM. There is a STEM Certificate that has a few students working toward this each year. Certificate has requirements in math, science, and art or technology. Typical students take 4 years of math and science, but STEM Certificate has additional requirements. All of the electives necessary for the STEM certificate are always filled up. Mr. Haver talked about new math courses in computer science. Math department is waiting for the PARCC (national curriculum) decisions to see how it will affect curriculum. The math department has online courses for those students who have covered the curriculum and are looking for higher level courses, beyond AP. Online courses are done during school hours as a regular course block, but at the student's pace. The feedback on self-paced courses is that they cause less stress for students, not more, even though the work may be more rigorous.

Mr. Petty said there are 4 students this year in the STEM Certificate program. Ideally the student will have a "Capstone" project or an internship after the junior year. This would ideally provide great material for college application essays.

McCall has a 3D printer, and the HS is building a 3D printer. A paper will be presented at the IEEE Conference this spring about this.

HS is trying to expand the computer science (CS) courses, including trying to get another AP course in CS. This course will appeal to a broad range of students, not just those who will major in CS in college. Also there will be a new CS course next year for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders to get their feet wet in computational math.

Recently, during CS Education week, 4 teachers and over 1000 kids in Winchester participated in "Hour of Code" where kids from kindergarten thru grade 12 spent an hour on a computation problem that was grade appropriate. WHS kids went to all of the elementary schools in town to help the younger kids- it was a great experience for everyone.

There is an afterschool CS club that is being run by a parent who is a CS professor at Bentley.

There is a Robotics Club that has about 40 members who meet afterschool on Fridays.

There is a program called the Tech-Novation Challenge that is a program, only open to girls, that is a competition to develop mobile apps to solve a problem in their community. Winchester has over 20 girls involved—there are 4 teams of 4 at the HS and McCall has one team of girls.

Q. Do these STEM related clubs get grants from the PFA? Yes some of these clubs applied for grants and did receive money.

Q. Can you talk about new trends in Math? Blended Learning and Flipped Classrooms are relatively new concepts that are being used here. Flipped classroom is when the learning is done at home (via videos on the web) and the homework is done in class. There is at least one teacher at WHS using this concept; there are four flipped classrooms. Online math textbooks will be coming soon.

The current 10<sup>th</sup> graders were the class who piloted the new math curriculum when they were 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Is that going as planned?? Yes, we have made a few minor changes, but we are now waiting for the PARCC testing – that will give us good information.

Q. How do we get elementary aged kids in the pipeline for STEM at the HS? Currently there is not a person in charge of STEM in the district, but we have a quality program in 6-12 grades. The quality in K-5 is very school-dependent.

There was discussion about the number of girls in the science and math courses. It is about 50/50 here, maybe even more girls. There are only a small number of girls in CS courses here, though.

Audrey reminded the group that on February 25<sup>th</sup> there is a “Coffee with the Superintendent” event at McCall in the morning.

The next PFA meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2014. Hot Topic: English, Social Studies and Media.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elena Langlois  
Recording Secretary