

# Minutes of the Meeting March 5, 2014

## Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

**\*\*approved\*\***

**Attending:** Audrey Loria, Malini Dutta, Kathy Czeck, Lisa Vahey, Anita Colasante, Susan Verdicchio, Tom Gwin, Eileen Marks, Heidi Driscoll

Audrey Loria called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

### Co-President's Report:

Reminder that the WFEE Trivia Bee which was postponed will take place on March 19. There is no scheduled PFA meeting in April.

Direct Appeal Update – Just over \$27,700 has been raised with participation from 30% of the families. We are hopeful that when we are approved as a 501c3 non-profit that more families will be motivated to donate.

Secretary's Report – The minutes from the last PFA meeting on Feb 12, 2014 were reviewed. There were no comments. Minutes approved.

No Treasurer's Report tonight because the Treasurer was not able to attend.

### Principal's Report – Tom Gwin

Little Me, the WHS musical production, will begin tomorrow. Over 100 kids are participating and it should be a great production.

Course selection is going on now and all students attended assemblies today. The course selections are due March 14. All recommendations can be appealed. The form for course appeal is on Edline. A separate form for each class being appealed is required. The appeal forms are due April 11.

Q. There is talk that some of the science AP classes may be limited due to size constraints and only available to seniors and juniors? That was the thought last year, but it worked out ok. Priority is always given to students based on seniority though.

Spring Sports meeting for parents will be March 12. After the main meeting, each sport will hold an individual meeting.

Concussion testing is going on now through next week in Room A103.

HS Project Update – Two upcoming meetings will take place regarding the HS Project. On March 13, a meeting will be held with the abutters to discuss construction and how it may affect the surrounding neighborhoods. On March 18, a general community meeting will take place. Both meetings will be in the auditorium at 7:30 PM.

The construction phasing of the project has been changed around. The new phases are as follows:  
Phase 1 – 3 new additions will be built; auditorium and music wing, dining commons and main office space.  
Phase 2 – Gym, Technology and Engineering, C wing  
Phase 3 - B wing and A wing

Enrollment is expected to rise enough to have 3 lunches starting next year.

**HOT TOPIC: WHS Social Studies English and Library.** Our guests tonight will be the Directors of these departments.

Christopher Kurhajetz, Director of Social Studies began the presentation discussing how they are in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of unlevelled History for freshman and are managing a 20:1 student to teacher ratio for these classes. However, they have decided to implement a new course next year for freshman, “Foundations in History”. This ratio for this class will be closer to 12:1. This class will offer more support for reading and writing.

With the help of a grant from the PFA, the Social Studies department will be doing the World Empire Bazaar later in the Spring.

There is a change in 12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum options. There will be a narrowing of elections to better be able to run all offerings. Philosophy, Modern Genocide & Human Rights, Modern Middle East, US History 1970-present are some classes being offered.

Living History Day will take place in late May and is due to the generous support of a PFA grant.

Judy Hession, Director of English presented next. She discussed that the Common Core Curriculum places a greater emphasis on non-fiction. One change to curriculum was the elimination of the journalism class. Also discussed was the elimination of a Journalism class this coming year. Judy addressed the difference between the PARCC test and the MCAS. The PARCC has more emphasis on depth of knowledge while the MCAS traditionally focused on breadth of knowledge.

Q. Is it required to have both Honors English and Honors History as a Sophomore before being eligible to take Honors American Studies as a Junior? It is required that both English and History be taken as Honors to be eligible to take Honors American Studies. However, the student who doesn't take those classes as Honors may elect to take College Prep (CP) American Studies. There will be an opportunity in the beginning of Sophomore year to apply to move up to Honors American Studies if the student's work supports this.

Andrea Zampitella, the library and media specialist, spoke last. She walked us through a typical day. The Library, English and History departments work closely together to utilize library resources, usually to support a research project. When the students are in the library, they are informed of the different databases and resources that all students have available to them. They also have access the Winchester Public Libraries on-line databases and resources. Each student may also apply on-line for a Boston Public Library e-card for access to their on-line tools.

The library recently hosted Tom Wooten, a graduate of WHS and an author of “We Shall Not Be Moved” a non-fiction account of the recovery efforts in post-Hurricane Katrina. This meeting led to a senior working with the History Dept in an independent study on Hurricane Katrina.

The library has recently acquired 3 Chrome Books. These are designed to download apps faster and are cheaper to buy. They are currently available for use in the library on the technology cart.

Christopher Kurhajetz thanked the PFA for their support of Living History Day which will take place in late May.

Audrey reminded everyone about Mr. WHS which will take place on March 23. She talked briefly about the visit by the Principal search team to Exeter HS to interview and meet with various groups to discuss Sean Kiley. She remarked that the meeting was overwhelmingly positive. Sean Kiley and Gerry Chapman are the 2 final candidates for the Principal position at WHS.

The next PFA meeting is scheduled for May.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita Colasante  
Acting Secretary