



Emerson-Williams PTO Meeting  
Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Minutes

**Call to Order/Opening Remarks**

Nathalie Trevitazzo/Darka Jara

7:01 p.m.

- Principal's Breakfast on Monday 2/29 had only 5 attendees. Encourage greater participation for these events. This month's event had 9 guest speakers and is an opportunity for parents to ask questions. Participant work hours could be an issue.

**Officers' Reports**

**Principal's Remarks**

Ms. Neela Thakur

- Bring Someone Special Dance – the 1<sup>st</sup> year annual event chaired by Janet Carbo was highly successful with 245 people in attendance. The event was enjoyed by parents and students alike. Thank you to Janet for the detailed planning and organization and the help of many volunteers.
- SBAC Standardized Testing – students in grades 3-6 students will take the SBAC in May. Changes from last year's test include: three components of the test have been eliminated for grades 3-8 (teachers and students will have 1 hour and 50 minutes less of testing) and high school level SBAC was eliminated. Not a lot of SBAC test prep. The curriculum will prepare students for the test.
- Superintendent's budget has received Board of Education approval at the 2/23 meeting. The budget is now pending town council approval. The budget proposal slide show presentation from the meeting can be accessed on the Board of Education website. The next two meetings are open to the public on 3/21 and 4/18 7pm. The Town Council will vote on the budget and the following major topics for Emerson-Williams at the 5/15 meeting:
  - Security personnel at the elementary school level. This position is not a full time person and would be assigned to all of the elementary schools in the district.
  - Increased clerk hours (from 25 to 29 hours)
  - New teacher for grade 5 due to the high class size (currently 50 students). This year a long term substitute teacher helped to maintain class sizes at 17 students. At 25 students it is very difficult for a teacher to reach all of the students.

**Secretary's Report**

James Langdo

- Approval of 2/11 Meeting minutes motioned by Colleen Mattatall. Seconded by Leslie Williams and approved.
- Thank you cards to the PTO from Linda Ciarcia for the medicine cabinet and from Mrs. Harris' 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for the stability balls.

**Treasurer's Report**

John Williams

- Revenue: 6<sup>th</sup> grade fundraiser (\$232); Butter Braids (\$1200); Someone Special Dance (\$454); Yankee Candle (\$3000).

- Expenses: Paid insurance; Paid High Touch – High Tech Balance; Paid Wolf Pack; Paid Stripes costume.
- Stop and Shop gift cards - \$970 in the general school account (for teacher and school supplies).

### **Teacher Representatives**

Mary Fox, Music (Choral)  
Emily Caravella, Music (Instrumental)  
Erica Richard (Art)

- Art Department:
  - School-wide Art show – 6/2 4:30–6pm. 500 pieces of art and tables for 3D art work. Each student will have at least one art work. There is no limit to the number of friends or family that you would like to bring to the show. Art work will be setup by grade level throughout the hall. Volunteers are needed to mount and label the art work and setup and volunteer at interactive stations (clay materials and painting). Email Erica Richard to volunteer: richard@wethersfield.me.
- Music Department:
  - Thank you to Colleen and Diana for organizing the Wolf Pack fundraiser. Wolf pack raised just under \$2000.
  - The music department is currently in need of instruments. EW currently has over 150 instrumentalists. The wish list items were received: 8 instruments and 15 piece percussion set for the bucket drumming group.
  - Thank you to the PTO for the 25 lapdesks.
  - March is music in schools month. In March there are several events to celebrate music in schools:
    - Wolf Pack event on 3/18 (Yard Goats could not guarantee a date)
    - Family sing-a-long (music songs and games) on Tuesday 3/29 and Wednesday 3/30. 52 have signed up for Tuesday and 54 on Wednesday. Thank you to Autumn/Nathalie for creating the flyers.
    - Bulletin board for music in schools showing what the children have been doing throughout the school year
    - New Britain Bees event on 5/25. Colleen and Diana organizing the event. There is a 4/21 deadline to get the total number of ticket requested to the Bees (4/8 is our deadline). \$12 per ticket located behind home plate. 120 tickets reserved.
  - Emerson-Williams has 4 risers for concerts but is need of 2 more risers due to the 421 children currently in our school. Webb and Hamner have 5 risers and Highcrest has stairs. The 2 additional risers would cost \$3980 and ensure that no students would have to be on the floor during concerts, parents would be able to see their children, and would be the safest option for our students.

### **Guest/Visitor**

Kevin Hill, Wethersfield Board of Education  
Janet Vassel, Board of Education

- Board of Education Janet Vassel encouraged involvement in PTO as a means to promote information sharing. Kevin Hill, chair of the public relations committee on the board, said that communication is lacking to not just parents but everyone in the community.
- Emerson-Williams PTO can request support at the Board of Education level by emailing any concerns or sharing any information that the PTO wants promoted or shared with the larger community.
- Kevin and Janet requested to follow Wethersfield public schools social media as they are trying to use this as a medium to get info out to people and encourage others to like the page and follow.

## Committee Reports

### Committees

### Chairs

#### Budget Committee

John Williams

- Need to form a budget committee by May. Need a budget by June. Email John Williams at [Treasurer@ewpto.com](mailto:Treasurer@ewpto.com).

#### Cheer/Teacher Appreciation

Darka Jara

- In need of more volunteers for Cheer/Teacher Appreciation monthly activities.
  - February – 2/14. Hearts given to the staff (1 person sent in hearts)
  - March – 3/17. Green/St. Patrick's day theme. Signup was posted on the PTO site by Chrissy. Bring items to the main office.
  - April – date unknown
  - Principals Day – Principal's day is Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> but would need to be celebrated on Monday May 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - Nurse's Day (5/6)
- Email or text Darka at 8603351473 if you would like to volunteer or send in anything for these dates.

#### Enrichment

Jacqueline LaPerriere

- High Touch High Tech is now paid in full.
  - 12/01/15 – Grade 4 - \$500
  - 03/01/16 – Grade 2 - \$500
  - 03/08/16 – Grade 1 - \$500
  - 03/11/16 – Grade K - \$500
  - 03/14/16 – Grade 6 - \$500
  - 03/28/16 – Grade 5 - \$500
  - 04/08/16 – Grade 3 - \$500

#### Future Projects

Colleen Mattatall

- **K-1 Playscape Replacement** - decided at last meeting to explore possibility of K-1<sup>st</sup> grade playscape replacement. Playscape is currently 17 years old (with average life of 20 years). Current playscape is up to code and was last inspected in December. Visited other playscapes in town. Many playgrounds in town were built by Miracle Recreation: Mill Woods, Highcrest and both Emerson playgrounds. Mikey's Place and Glastonbury's Riverfront Park were built by Landscape Structures.
  - Obtained quotes from Landscape Structures, Creative Recreation (Miracle playgrounds) and APC Play, a national company with no playscapes built in CT, nearest one is in Westfield MA:
    - Creative Recreation/Miracle Recreation – option 1 is \$36,904 (includes playscape, professional install and mulch, landscape and drainage costs). Option 2 is \$34,554 (includes playscape, professional install and mulch, landscape and drainage costs).
    - Landscape Structures – option 1 is \$42,587 (includes playground, professional install, border and mulch but does not include cost for drainage/land prep). Option 2 is \$49,678 (includes playground, professional install, border and mulch but does not include cost for drainage/land prep). Option 3 is \$43,266 (includes playground, professional install, border and mulch but does not include cost for drainage/land prep).
    - APC Play – option 1 is \$30,000 (includes playground, professional install, border and mulch but does not include cost for drainage/land prep). Option 2 is \$27,000 (includes playground, professional install, border and mulch but does not include cost for drainage/land prep).

- Cost would be the same to tear down the current playground or keep current playground and expand. Rubber surfacing instead of mulch would add an additional \$27,000.
- Marty Sitler recommended using Creative Recreation (Miracle playgrounds) because they have a local contact who has done a lot of work with our town and who is very helpful and knowledgeable.
- Met with Marty Sitler and Alan from Parks & Rec, Fred Bushy from school buildings/operations, John Hallerbach from Miracle Recreations, Darka Jara and Autumn Struk from the PTO and Neela Thakur to discuss next steps. We decided on a location for this structure that would not disrupt class, would not impede on open space or impact the fields. We discussed drainage issues and costs associated with flattening the land.
- Next steps are to gain formal approval from (in this order): (1) PTO; (2) Principal; (3) School Administration; (4) Fred Bushy; (5) Board of Education; (6) Town; (7) Present to Planning and Zoning commission
- Process will likely take 6 months to complete with a possible August 1 purchase date to have it installed before school begins next year.
- Autumn searching for grant money and ways to cut the cost. She has approached Creative Recreation who, through previous relationship with them, knows they offer grants. We have also found a website that, through March 30<sup>th</sup>, can apply for grant for a playground. Need to research more funding to cut costs (i.e., grants from Lowe's, state and town grants, and [www.togethercounts.com/healthy-playground-makeover.com](http://www.togethercounts.com/healthy-playground-makeover.com)).
- Proposal to re-discuss this at next meeting and vote on whether or not to go forward. Questions can be sent to Colleen at smiley9188@aol.com or 860-490-8760.

#### Media Center Coordination

Shana Smith

- Signups have been extended for the remainder of the school year. Added to Facebook.

#### Sixth Grade

Beth Gilbert / Claudia Miller

- Fundraising paint night on 3/23 - can still signup. \$45 per person
- Still working on buddy benches (Colleen, Neela)
- Light bulb fundraiser (4 for \$10) – LEDs. Can buy 3 sets of 4 per household.
- 6<sup>th</sup> graders – getting T-shirts; Pine Acres event coming.

#### Suggestion Box

Shana Smith

- PTO reminder flyer before meetings, reminding of free childcare available to bring in more PTO members. People might not be aware of the meetings or that childcare is available.
- Memorial Day Parade (5/28 9am by DMV) – Highcrest is marching in the parade. Maybe EW can be represented as well.
- Name plates at the PTOs meetings to help recognize people.
- Work on the flow of the PTO meetings (timing, decorum of meeting) – remember purpose of meeting (here for children).
- Maybe moving time or day of the PTO meeting.

#### Tiger Topics\*

Chris Thompson

- Need all submissions (events or fundraisers after 3/18 through the next PTO meeting on 4/7)

Wethersfield Schools Parent Council (WSPC) Joanne Pine / Karen Dicenso

- Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month from 12pm-2pm meetings. 2 representatives from every school. Last meeting was on 3/10:
  - Safe Route to School – March 30<sup>th</sup>. Kids in gym to talk about the different ways to get to school safely. Eliminate need for parents to drop off kids. Walk to school with friends.
  - School nurse communication (with all schools in Wethersfield not just Emerson-Williams)
    - A letter went out to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students in January due to lice (last time detected at school). School nurse policy is for nurses to wait until 2 cases are found per class before notifying parents. Would like whole school to be notified even if 1 case is found.
    - Forms for nurse's office – when a student goes into the nurse office the name, reason, time and cure should be documented. Parents should be notified if a child is injured at school to know that the child went to the nurse's office. There is a monthly computerized log of incidents that happen at school.
- Bike to school – 5/4 – flyers will be sent home.
- Volunteer recognition form – email Karen / Darka. Submissions are confidential. Nominate someone by 3/30 3pm. Recognition ceremony to held on 5/11 7pm in Webb Auditorium.

### **Family Events**

Someone Special Dance Janet Carbo

- 245 people attended the dance. Everything inclusive in the price to cover costs only and give the kids a fun event. Income of \$454.

Yard Goats Colleen Mattatall / Mary Fox

- Colleen talked to Yard Goats. They have asked if we would like to do a fundraiser. Colleen has volunteered to chair for a games in June or July. Purchasing less than 124 tickets is \$10 per ticket. Greater than 125 tickets is \$9 per ticket.

### **Fundraisers**

Box Tops Beth Gilbert / James Langdo

- \$292.60 submitted on 2/26. 2500 box tops still to be sent to the company.

Butter Braids Janet Carbo / Jessica Marvin

- Butter Braids are ready to be picked-up on 3/18. Flyer with pick-up schedule will be sent out.

Jog-a-thon Darka Jara

- K-6 event. Mr. Coursey / Ms. Thakur need volunteers for different shifts. Flyers will be coming out.

Mixed Bag Designs Leslie Williams

- Catalogs delivered to classrooms. Posted on Facebook. Email went out. Sale will be 3/7 – 3/18. Some sales online have been made. Funds will go to general PTO fund, wish lists and hip-hop program.

Wolf Pack Emily Caravella / Colleen Mattatall / Diana Iannucci

- Thank you to Colleen and Diana for organizing the Wolf Pack fundraiser (3/18). The music department has raised nearly \$2000.

Yankee Candle

Darka Jara

- Pickup before Mother's Day. Starting 3/24 – 4/7. 3 week turnaround. Darka will distribute and contact for pick-up.

#### OPEN Committees

- Board of Education – Autumn Struk will chair board of education
- Community Outreach
- Labels for Education
- Talent Show -
- TV Turn Off Week – the national week is May 2<sup>nd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> (but we do this in April). Proceeds go to Emerson-Williams. Ron-a-roll, Cherry Berry, Puerto Vallarta, Bingo, Dinner on the Lawn. Sunday through Saturday. Talent show is usually included.

#### **New Business/Open Forum**

- Charlie Hayes (a student in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and alumni of Emerson-Williams) is going through chemo. Proposal to donate to Charlie's Fund to cover costs to give back to a student who was here for 7 years. Charlie just came home from the hospital. John will determine how much to send from the Community Outreach fund and/or money from the dance. Could we receive town wide support or bring to WSPC to see if we can get matching donations from the other schools?
- PTO Email Communication Service - email marketing company to send out PTO emails. Beth Gilbert motioned for use of Parent Express Email (PEX), a customizable, reports/data, free plan, with templates email solution to send out PTO emails. Colleen Mattatall seconded. Approved.
- Teacher Wish Lists – purchased lap desks, medicine cabinet, 8 stability balls purchased
  - Ms. Charbonneau – AVR – projection is not clear. ELMO - use three times a day. \$327. Colleen Mattatall motioned, seconded by Beth Gilbert. Approved.
- Keane Foundation grant – grant application to be submitted by 3/31. Designees notified 6/30. Propose to have this grant fund hip-hop for 2016-17. Vote in September.

#### **Closing Remarks**

Nathalie Trevitazzo

Adjourn: 10:04 p.m.

**\*Tiger Topic submission deadline is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month:**

**Email to: [tigertopics@ewpto.com](mailto:tigertopics@ewpto.com)**