

**Muraco Elementary School Parents Association  
Meeting Minutes  
May 16th, 2012**

**Approvals**

- **March meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**
- Committee updates and Volunteer Opportunitites**

**MASP**

MASP has a new, dedicated website! Check it out at <http://muracomasp.wordpress.com/>.

**Staff Appreciation Breakfast**

The MESPA SAB would like to thank all of the volunteers who contributed this year! Muraco's staff has been so appreciative of everyone's efforts. There are two spots left to sign up for June if anyone would like to help out at the last SAB of the year. We are looking for someone to coordinate breakfasts next year. Responsibilities include sending out a reminder and setting up breakfasts for the first Thursday of every month. These tasks could be shared (*at the writing of this Constant Contact, this position has been filled*).

**Staples Schoolkidz**

Supply lists were requested from the teachers and have been received from 3 of the 6 grades. A follow up of the remaining three will be sent out so that a master list can be sent to Staples. Parents will receive information regarding next year's back-to-school supply lists via Constant Contact, as soon as we have the lists from the teachers.

**Stop \$ Shop A+ Rewards**

We raised \$722.36 (last year we raised \$432.43) with 67 cards registered. Muraco should receive a check in May or June. The program runs each school year from October through March and schools need to register each year. Maura Sullivan has coordinated it for the past 2 years and is happy to do it for another year (unless someone wants to take it on), but after that, MESPA will need a new coordinator, as Maura will no longer have children at Muraco.

**Curriculum Enhancement**

Last week, individual letters were sent to all of the remaining teachers and teams who did not spend their Curriculum Enhancement stipend yet. It looks like the hard copy of the letter has helped to encourage individuals to spend their money. Out of the total budget of \$5350.00, to date \$3401.36 has been spent and \$1948.64 remains. A few teachers who have not spent their stipend have contacted Kristen to inform her that they plan to do so soon.

**School Recycling**

There is nothing to report on the school front specifically, but the town is seeking feedback from residents about recycling, the transfer station, waste disposal practices, etc. There is a short online survey that will give the town important information it needs

to make decisions in these areas. Please take the survey if you haven't! There are incentives like weekly drawings for coupons from local businesses such as Mahoney's, Fells Tru Value Hardware, La Patisserie, Pairings, Wright-Locke Farm, and more! You can access the survey here: <http://www.winchester.us/>.

### **Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community**

The Coalition just had its last meeting of the school year. Among many other things (including the Medication Take Back Program and the 5th Grade Transition Program), we discussed the new summer lunch program that will be starting in Winchester this summer. This program will deliver a weekly grocery bag full of healthy food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, to families in need. You can find out more about the program -- register to receive weekly lunches or to volunteer -- on the Got Lunch web site: <http://winchestergotlunch.org/index.html>.

### **Enrichment**

Enrichment is happy to report that we have booked Karim Nagi for Friday, September 28th, for an all-school assembly. Karim is an Egyptian American and he will teach the kids about Arab and Muslim culture through a variety of traditional instruments, folk music and traditional dance.

### **School Directory**

Linda Pointon and Kim Cohen will be doing the directory for the final time next year, as their children will be in 5th grade and then moving on to McCall. Claire Pienar will be joining the Directory Committee next year to learn the ropes. We are also looking into the possibility of using Edline to publish an electronic version.

### ***MEETING DISCUSSION***

*Annamaria Schrimpf*, the WPS Director of Educational Technology, came to the May MESPA meeting to discuss iPads and other devices, such as tablets, that are becoming part of the Muraco community and the Winchester Public School District as a whole.

A parent expressed concern that replacing our current laptop system with iPads will be an expensive route and one that isn't necessary; laptops do the job just fine. According to Annamaria, an iPad/tablet would be an extension to, not a replacement of, the existing laptops. In the school district, iPads and tablets can extend current resources, but the downside is that apps and extras can get expensive.

"Xen app" allows you to log into server and get all the software that is on a laptop. This then "beefs up" the iPad.

WPS wants to run a Special Ed pilot program with iPads. The educational technology department will vet the apps, investigate the apps, and then place them on the iPads. All apps will be put on the iPads for a specific educational purpose.

According to the Superintendent, we need to look at the infrastructure first and ask what

are the parameters of the resources. Can we BYOD (Bring Your Own Device (a.k.a. 'resource'))? Will the parameters allow for a 3:1 ratio (vs. 1:1)? We need to add access points and rework the switches. Not everything will necessarily connect with what we have; we're using V.O. specs to think about the other schools. Will our infrastructure support a 3:1 ratio down the road?

**Brian Inglis** will make a presentation shortly to the Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent regarding how iPads can reach small groups, individual and whole classrooms.

**WFEE Grant:** The Winchester Foundation for Educational Excellence dedicated \$48,435 to Winchester Public Schools to purchase iPads, interactive projectors, student response system and Android tablets for the elementary level. Two teachers in either grade 3 or 4 at each elementary school will participate in a "model classroom" outfitted with these devices.

A question was asked: are the iPads for the students or teachers?

A laptop docking station is an all-inclusive unit, but an iPad allows for personal instruction with apps that are NOT available on laptops. This turns the iPad into a student resource. Annamaria believes that an iPad keeps teachers from becoming tethered to the front of the classroom. She calls the iPad or tablet "an extension of the resources currently in the classroom."

A docking station gives instantaneous access to resources. iPads don't need to be plugged in but personal iPads do need to be added to the wireless infrastructure.

A parent noted the inequity in technology purchases across the schools. The response was that the district tries to balance, recognizing where teachers are in what they need. Teachers teach one another what is best/needed. Professional development needs to be embedded in the day.

**Burlington, MA**, has a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program, as does Forsyth County, GA, which sees 35 schools in the district incorporating BYOD. This allows students to address their own learning styles.

It was noted that students on the free and reduced lunch program will be included in any BYOD program that WPS implements; financial means will be provided for them.

**Jodie Mullane** also came to the MESPA meeting. Jodie is a social worker who has spearheaded the **Lantern Walk Committee** (a committee that also includes Kristen Ritchie of 'Connect and Commit' at the High School and Rebecca Levine of the Winchester Youth Center at McCall).

**The Lantern Walk** will take place on November 11, 2012 (Veteran's Day Weekend), at dusk. The idea of the Lantern Walk is to "Illuminate the Idea of Stress." The Lantern

Walk will begin and end at the Winchester Common. There will be a Pledge Board, where all walkers can post a pledge about what they'll do to reduce stress. Lanterns can be made at home and they'll also be made next fall in the art rooms at all of the schools. There will be a web site with information about the walk and with stress-reducing tips.

A parent asked, "Since the schools support the Lantern Walk, have they looked at ways that schools might be causing stress and ways they might alleviate stress?" Another parent suggested that the over-emphasis on MCAS might be a source of stress and suggested a possible MCAS discussion at a PISC (Parents Inter-School Council) meeting.

***Fiscal Year:*** Currently, Muraco's Fiscal Year ends on September 30th. Meeting attendees voted to have the FY end on 6/30, like the Town of Winchester.

***School Psychologist vs. Assistant Principal:*** At the time of this meeting, nothing has been set in stone about whether Muraco will be hiring a half-time school psychologist or an Assistant Principal. It was suggested that Laurie Kirby might prefer a part-time psychologist to help assist with the workload of the current psychologist, who spends a lot of time evaluating and testing.

***Redistricting:*** Superintendent McAlduff will present a recommended redistricting plan on May 22. One parent noted that potentially 35-40 kids could be affected at Muraco; it is also unclear whether 5th graders in 2013 will be grandfathered to stay at Muraco for their final year.

There will be a final redistricting public hearing on **June 4th at 7 p.m. in the WHS Auditorium** and then the School Committee is expected to vote on the proposed Elementary School Boundary Map on **June 7th at 7:30 p.m. in the WHS Auditorium**. The recommended redistricting changes will be effective as of the 2013-14 school year.

***WHS Feasibility Study:*** This community meeting takes place on **6/5, at 7:00 p.m. in the WHS Auditorium**. This is your chance to hear about the project plans and how they could ultimately affect your current elementary-aged children.

**The next and final MESPA meeting of this year** takes place Wednesday, June 6th, at 8:45 a.m. Please join us as we say goodbye to MESPA friends who are moving on to McCall. In addition, parents are invited to have a Q & A with Laurie Kirby, who will be available from 8:45-9:15.