

Muraco Elementary School Parents Association
Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2012

Approvals: New Board unanimously approved.

Welcome & Introductions of and from Shawn Macannuco, MESPA Chair and Kristen Bellaire, MESPA Vice Chair.

WFEE (Winchester Foundation for Educational Excellence) Grant Update:
Caren Connelly, Executive Director, discussed the four (4) different grants currently benefitting Muraco staff and students.

The first is a \$48,000 grant enabling two (2) classrooms, both 3rd grade, to receive training and implement the use of iPads, Ladybugs, clickers, and interactive projectors. At Muraco, the classrooms are Capodanno and Ferullo.

Another \$1500 has been awarded to grades K-2 for support around fine motor skill development. Occupational Therapy staff will now be able to utilize “Helping Hands” with students.

The Music Department was awarded funding and received musical training with emphasize on group ensemble music making.

Finally, Teachers as Scholars allows for 15 elementary teachers, via a lottery system, to receive additional training. The process of selection is underway.

Introduction and Discussion with Muraco’s School Psychologists – Jessica Bennett & Caitlin Culhane:

Introduced Caitlin (.5) who will be at Muraco full days on Monday and Thursday and Wednesday mornings.

As a reminder there are several groups that occur at Muraco outside of services provided for children on Individualized Education Plans (IEP’s). Some of these groups include Lunch Bunches, Banana Split Groups, Anxiety Groups, and Social Pragmatics groups. These groups typically run for 6-8 weeks and they start at different points throughout the year. Students are selected to be in these groups for a number of reasons. Some students are asked to participate in a group because it is an area of weakness that we would like to strengthen, some students are asked to participate as role models because they have a particular strength in the area, some students are new to school and it is a great way for them to meet new friends and feel even more connected to Muraco... If you have any question as to why your child was asked to participate please always feel free to call or e-mail. You will always be informed and asked to consent through a permission slip before your child starts attending a group on a regular basis.

In Lunch Bunch groups we eat lunch, practice conversation skills, and play a game or do a craft during the student's lunch period. The purpose of the Lunch Bunch is to support children as they develop social skills such as contributing to conversations, listening while others are talking, being "good sports" during game playing, and interacting with a variety of peers.

Banana Split groups are for students who come from, or are going through a family separation or divorce. This can be a very difficult time for children and it is important for them to identify that it is not their fault; there are other children who experience the same situation, and most importantly how to deal with their feelings in a healthy way. If you are interested in this group please e-mail Jessica Bennett at jbennett@winchester.k12.ma.us. Groups are formed based on grade level.

Social Pragmatics groups occur during the day and are not during a student's lunch period. Social Pragmatics groups are more structured groups. Social Thinking developed by Michelle Garcia Winner, as well as other instructional tools, comprise group. Following directions, flexibility, and staying focused on topic are some areas that are addressed.

Other groups form throughout the year as a need arises. If your child is identified for a target group you will be notified. His/her participation will only commence with a signed permission slip by you. Permission slips will be distributed throughout the year.

Please feel free to contact Ms. Culhane or Ms. Bennett if you have any additional questions or concerns at 781-721-7030 ext. 120 or jbennett@winchester.k12.ma.us and cculhane@winchester.k12.ma.us.

School Committee Update:

Chris Nixon, Muraco parent and School Committee Member, provided information and updates regarding the matter of Redistricting and the High School Feasibility Study. More information regarding these topics can be found at the respective websites: www.winchesterredistricting.com and www.winchester.us and clicking on Winchester High School Feasibility Study.

School Committee has been working to develop design capacity targets based on an average of 20 children per class, program equity and specialist space. The target number of children per class is 21. Given 20 classrooms the target enrollment goal for Muraco is 420 children. Current enrollment is 484. The Committee, as a result, is looking to target 60 children to be redistricted to Lincoln, Ambrose, Lynch or Vincent-Owen (as appropriate).

Important dates relating to the Redistricting are as follows:

- Tuesday, October 5th – October 5th the Committee will be vetting alternative plans submitted by the Community.
- October 11th – the Redistricting Advisory Committee meeting
- October 18th – Redistricting Advisory Committee meeting

- October 23rd – Superintendent makes formal recommendation
- October 30th – Public hearing (location to be announced)
- November 5th – VOTE on Redistricting Plan

In regards to the High School, a feasibility study was conducted on 9 potential sites. Currently there are two locations being considered. The first is the existing site and the second is Skillings Field. The design plan is being based on an enrollment of 1340.

Timeline for decision making related to High School:

- November 2012 – Preferred Option identified
- December 2012 – Submit Preferred Option to the State for review
- Jan/Feb 2013 – Anticipated Feedback from State
- Fall 2013 – Debt Exclusion Over-ride to off set the cost. MSPA will be providing approximately 33% of the funding.

The time is now for the Community to provide input into the design; for example a community pool and a theater space. Please visit the web sites, attend the meetings, or watch meetings on Win Cam at www.wincam.org. Created on 9/21/12 8:03 PM
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Spirit Wear:

It was agreed that Kristine would look to change the font on existing t-shirt design for sale at upcoming Open House. Signs will be posted at doors and near pick up/ drop off lane as a reminder that Spirit Wear will be available to purchase at Open House. Other reminders will be in the constant contact notices and on the web site.

Additionally there was support for pursuing baseball hats, magnetic car logos, sweatpants, long sleeve shirts (in addition to existing short sleeve option) and sweatshirts.

It was decided to continue our relationship with local business Spanky Wear and that we would not take inventory, but rather utilize order forms.

There was a suggestion made to host a contest for a new logo. The contest will be held this winter, for next year's logo, and involve the Student Council.

Committee Updates and Volunteer Opportunities:

Multicultural Fair Committee: Amanda Lewis

The Multicultural Fair committee is hard at work preparing for the Fair to be held on Saturday, October 13 from 5-7pm.

We received a grant of \$1,500 from the John and Mary Murphy Educational Foundation!

And, of course, we hope everyone will come! We are in need of many volunteers to help pick up the donated food, help serve, assist with crafts, and more. A Google signup sheet will be emailed to families soon.

Also, there is a special opportunity for your kids to participate in a multicultural dance for the Fair. The kids will showcase different dance styles from around the world in a medley performance. Devi Narayanan and Silvia Topete are coordinating the performance. Please get in touch with them before September 18 if your child would like to participate. It will involve a commitment of two practices a week in the gym after school. We hope your kids will try it! It should be a lot of fun... and fun to watch too! Here is Devi's contact info: devisree@hotmail.com

Recycling Committee: Maura Sullivan

Beginning Tuesday, October 2, Winchester will move to a Zero Sort recycling program. This means you no longer need to separate plastic/paper/cardboard and glass. Juice and milk cartons can now be recycled! For a full list of what is accepted and what is not, click here: <http://www.winchester.us/index.php/news/308-zero-sort-recycling-starting-october-2.html>. Aluminum foil CAN be recycled along with the other items; Plastic bags and wrap CANNOT be commingled. HOWEVER, if Muraco collects plastic bags separately and disposes of them separately, the bag of bags CAN be recycled by the new facility. Here is the website of the new vendor: <http://zero-sort.com/>. Contact Maura Sullivan, mdsullivan@comcast.net with any questions.

Book Fair: Amy Dalton/Shawn Macannuco

The books for the fair will be delivered on September 25. The children will start creating their wish lists on September 26. We especially need volunteers for grades K-2 to help with the wish lists during each library session leading up to the Open Houses.

Also in need of volunteers for the nights of Open House (October 3 & 4). Help includes – showing parents where to find books, register transactions, books to purchase from the teacher list, fix bookshelves.

Please contact Amy Dalton (aldalton@verizon.net), or Shawn Macannuco (smacannuco@comcast.net) with any questions.

MASP: Diane Davies

Our new MASP Co-chair will be Geetu Wallecha.

Publicity: Sue Howland

If anyone has an event (classroom activity, enrichment event) for which they would like media coverage, please let me know. We can either invite the newspaper to attend, or send photos after the event. A few guidelines for submitting photos:

- Send along a brief description of the event
- Photos need to be submitted on Monday for Thursday's paper (Winchester Star)
- Please identify everyone in the photo (except for large group shot) as well as the class, grade and teacher

It would be helpful if people were sending photos they confirm with the teacher that the students photographed have signed photo release forms.

One upcoming event we generally try to get coverage of is the Multicultural Fair on 10/13. I will invite the newspaper to come, but it may be difficult to get a reporter to a Saturday evening event. I will be out of town unfortunately, so if we could put out a request for a parent volunteer to take photos and send them to me, I will submit them to the Star and Patch.com.

My email is svhowland@yahoo.com and cell is 617-699-4621.

Enrichment: Bettina Parks/Joanna Wright

On Friday Sept 28th, Karim Nagi will be at Muraco for all school enrichment. The 9:00 am show is for K-2 and the 10:15 am show is for grades 3-5. 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.

The enrichment budget has been approved for 486 children at \$34.57 per child. Total amount for enrichment is \$16,801.

Room Parent Coordinator: Cindy Quealy

Room parents are still needed for two classes: 2 for Mrs. Turney's. Please consider volunteering! It is a great way to connect with and support your child's teacher, get to know other parents and be involved in the fun activities of your child's class. Please contact Cindy Quealy, the room parent coordinator, at cquealy@me.com. *****These Room Parent positions have since been filled*****

Treasurer Update:

Jennifer Wilson will be stepping down as Treasurer and Jon Carlisle will be assuming the role of Treasurer for the 2012-2013 school year.

Upcoming Events:

Monday, October 1	School Photo Day
Wednesday, October 3	School Council meeting 4-5pm
Wednesday, October 3	Open House/ Book Fair (K-2)
Thursday, October 4	Open House/ Book Fair (3-5)
Thursday, October 4	Staff Appreciation Breakfast
Monday, October 8	No School, Columbus Day
Saturday, October 13	Multicultural Fair 5-7pm
Wed-Fri, October 17-19	Early Release/Teacher Conferences
Thursday, November 1	Staff Appreciation Breakfast
Tuesday, November 6	No School, Professional Development Day
Monday, November 12	No School, Veteran's Day

Upcoming MESPA meetings:

Wednesday, October 24 7:00pm at Muraco School

Websites:

MESPA <http://www.muracoparents.com>
Muraco http://www.edline.net/pages/Muraco_Elementary_School