

**Muraco Elementary School Parents Association  
Meeting Minutes  
May 17, 2011**

**Approvals** April 2011 Minutes unanimously approved.

**Tri-Community Bikeway Update: Fay, Spofford & Thorndike**

The Tri-Community Bikeway is a bike path that will link Winchester, Woburn and Stoneham. The bikeway is currently in development phase. Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST), the engineering firm designing the bikeway, is planning to have the 75% design phase completed by this Fall.

An FST representative presented the current design and solicited feedback. The proposed bikeway will extend along the rear of Leonard field, crossing Tufts Road to run in front of Muraco and exiting across Irving Street to Florence Street. A route running behind Muraco was considered, but ruled out due to costs and other obstacles. Traveling south from Tufts Road, the current proposal runs the bikeway to the left of the current walkway that extends up from Tufts Road. The bikeway will then turn left and run along the drop-off sidewalk, crossing the parking lot in front of the island in the parking lot and then turning right and running along the Bates Road sidewalk, taking a left in the staff parking lot and running out towards Irving Street. The design includes the new crosswalk, which would cut across the parking lot, as well as a 12-foot path to Irving Street for both bikers and walkers. Part of the current island would be eliminated to allow for a wider path. Bikers would be expected to dismount and walk across the path in front of the school and appropriate signage would be posted to alert bikers that they are entering a school zone. The path from Tufts Circle towards Leonard Field would be widened to 10 ft.

Concerns were expressed about having walkers, cars, and bikers trying to co-exist in such a small space. Appropriate signage would be critical, especially to alert those less familiar with the area that a school zone is ahead. A suggestion was also made that bikers dismount on the edge of school property between the hours of 8-3pm.

The School Committee will be reviewing the design at their meeting on 5/24 and most likely voting on the proposed design at their 6/14 meeting.

**Budget Update**

The Winchester Public School Central Office will assist in managing the Muraco After School Program (MASP) for the 2011-2012 school year. MESPA will send MASP salaries to the central office and teachers will be paid through WPS payroll.

**Discussions & Announcements**

**Enrichment at Muraco**

Discussion was continued from April's MESPA meeting about whether to combine Field Trip dollars and Enrichment dollars. Currently, Field Trip funds cover the cost of transportation for one field trip per grade for each school year. Enrichment funds cover the cost of the actual Enrichment activities, which traditionally were in-school presentations such as the Japanese Tea Ceremony that enhances the Second Grade unit on Japan. Each grade's Enrichment activities are coordinated by the Enrichment Committee members, who work closely with the teachers to select activities, with the teachers selecting programs and the Enrichment Committee members taking care of booking the

programs and activities. In the past few years, more of the Enrichment activities have taken place outside of the school, including field trips to museums and theater performances. On occasion, the Enrichment dollars have funded the full cost of some of these field trips, including the transportation. There was a suggestion that if some of the grades were using Enrichment dollars to fund Field Trips, than perhaps it made sense to combine the two funds and not separate out a specific Field Trip fund. A motion was made and approved to combine the Field Trip funds and Enrichment dollars for the 2011-2012 school year.

Discussion also continued on whether MESPA should develop formal guidelines on how the Enrichment dollars are used. Each year MESPA provides every grade level with Enrichment funds to be used to enhance the curriculum and learning experience for the students. The current bylaws do not provide specific guidelines regarding what type of activities Enrichment dollars should fund. The discussion centered around what, if any, guidelines regarding the use of Enrichment dollars should be added to the bylaws. Additional discussion explored whether it is appropriate to limit the use of Enrichment funds to only traditional Enrichment activities such as classroom presentations by artists, musicians, scientists, etc. or whether Enrichment should be more broadly defined, with MESPA permitting the allocation of Enrichment dollars for the purchase of classroom materials that the teachers believe will enhance the curriculum. A motion was made and approved to draft general guidelines on how the Enrichment dollars are to be used and to leave discretion up to teachers. Ongoing communication with the Enrichment committee on how the funds will be used will continue.

#### **WFEE Teacher Tributes**

WFEE teacher tributes begin the week of May 23<sup>rd</sup>. For more information on how to make a tribute to your child's teacher, please go to: [http://www.wfee.org/events\\_teacher.html](http://www.wfee.org/events_teacher.html).

#### **Math Club for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Graders**

A Math Club for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will start in the 2011-2012 school year. The math club will focus on challenging, "problem-solving" work. The specific goal will be to participate in the five national Math Olympiad Contests during the school year. The club will be fast paced and is designed for students who truly love challenging math work and like to work cooperatively in small groups. The club will begin in late September and will meet from 7:50 am to 8:25 am, one morning each week. Enrollment forms will be available in September. This is a parent-sponsored activity. Volunteers needed! Contact Kristen Bellaire at [klbellaire@gmail.com](mailto:klbellaire@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping.

#### **Request for New Refrigerator**

A new refrigerator was requested for the teacher's room. If you are buying a new one soon and getting rid of an old one, please consider donating it to the Muraco Teacher's Room. Thank you! Please contact the school directly.

#### **2011-2012 Board and Committee Positions**

There are many volunteer opportunities, including several Board positions, available for next year, including Chair and Vice-Chair. For details about the available positions and how you can get involved, contact: Laura Colella at [colelladickison@gmail.com](mailto:colelladickison@gmail.com) or Maura Sullivan at [mdsullivan@comcast.net](mailto:mdsullivan@comcast.net).

**Cell Phone Use**

There was a question raised about Muraco's policy on cell phone use during field trips. The current policy is that cell phones are not allowed during the school day, whether in the classroom or on a field trip. This policy will be added to the Muraco Handbook.

**WFEE Grant**

Thanks to a grant from WFEE as well as MESPA's gifts and a private family donation, every grade and class will soon have LCD projectors and Ladibug document cameras next year.

**Upcoming Events**

- Wednesday June 1 All School Writing Day
- Tuesday June 2 Staff Appreciation Breakfast
- Monday June 6 Moving Up Day
- Thursday June 9 Field Day (Friday 6/10 Rain Day)
- Thursday June 16 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Project Adventure
- Wednesday June 22 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Moving on Ceremony
- Thursday June 23 Last Day of School (early release)