

**Muraco Elementary School Parents Association
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2011**

Approvals Minutes from the June 15, 2011 MESPA meeting unanimously approved.
Budget for the 2011-12 school year unanimously approved.

Budget Update

MESPA Treasurer, Jennifer Wilson, presented the draft budget for the 2011-12 school year. She touched upon the various revenue-generating events, such as the Holiday Craft Fair, photo sales and Box Tops, and explained that, starting this year, Enrichment now includes bus transportation and admission fees for Field Trips. She noted that the Multicultural Fair has been funded in the past by a generous grant from the John and Mary Murphy Foundation and that plans for this year include an all-school enrichment program. As parents incur expenses for MESPA-related events and programs, they should leave their receipts in the MESPA box in the Main Office and Ms. Wilson will reimburse them. Alternatively, MESPA can issue payment directly to a vendor.

Discussions & Announcements

Annual Appeal

The goal for this year's annual appeal will remain at \$19,000 because many businesses have decided to stop their corporate matching programs, which historically brought in significant dollars to MESPA. MESPA's annual appeal letter has gone out and its drive commenced at Open House, with incentives to give at Open House (families who gave at Open House were eligible to receive gift certificates to Thirty Petals boutique in Belmont or Kids Footstop in Winchester).

Muraco School Advisory Council (SAC)

There are 4 parent member openings on the Muraco School Advisory council: two two-year positions and two one-year positions. Candidate statements were due Friday, September 23rd. For more information regarding SAC, please visit the MESPA website: <http://www.muracoparents.com>.

Principal Update

Laurie Kirby noted that morning drop-off is going well and encouraged parents to speak up if they see anything amiss. She stated that Sgt. Tom Groux (the Safety Officer) is very responsive and eager to help with traffic-related issues. This year, Linda Flaherty, our crossing guard at the intersection of Washington Street and Bates Road, has been given authority to direct traffic to ease congestion. Mrs. Flaherty's dedication to the safety of the children was roundly acknowledged.

We are fortunate to have Ladibug document cameras and LCD projectors in almost all of our classrooms. Mrs. Kirby would like to see 2 more Ladibugs and 4 more LCD projectors because they are such valuable learning tools.

Principal Kirby is also looking for carpet squares for the children to sit on at Community Meeting in the gym. Please contact her if you have any ideas about how to procure 470 carpet squares.

Parents Inter-School Council (PISC)

PISC is an informal council consisting of the PTO chairs, representatives from various community groups such as Parent to Parent, Winchester Special Education Parents Advisory Council, and Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community, and Superintendent, Bill McAlduff. PISC meets monthly throughout the year, with one principal from each of the 7 schools in Winchester attending each month. Shawn Macannuco, MESPA chair, reported that at the first meeting, Bill McAlduff presented an enrollment update. Both Parent to Parent and the Winchester Special Education Parents Advisory Council were hoping to recruit a representative from each school. If you are interested in serving as the Muraco representative to either of these, please contact Shawn.

Winchester School Committee Update

Chris Nixon, School Committee member and Muraco parent, reported that the renovation at Parkhurst was completed in time for the Vinson-Owen community to be relocated and start their school year at Parkhurst (including their playground equipment). The existing Vinson-Owen will be torn down this year and work commenced on the new building, which is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2013. At that time, there will be a town-wide redistricting, with approximately 60-100 students moved from Muraco to Lynch and/or Lincoln. **A redistricting committee will be forming soon and anyone interested in serving on that committee should contact Bill McAlduff at wmcalduff@winchester.k12.ma.us by Monday, October 18th.** There will be lots of opportunity for public comment on the redistricting plan and notice will be given to parents of such opportunity.

Mr. Nixon reported that the All Day Kindergarten (ADK) program was very successful and that there had been discussion at the School Committee about expanding to 5 days (perhaps in 2012). The School Department is considering a survey for ADK parents and staff.

MESPA Committee Updates

Science Fair:

Lilian Busse will do the Science Fair again next April. This will be the last time as her daughter is in 5th grade. It would be good to have someone to help who can then take it over in 2012/13 (lilianbusse@verizon.net).

Grants:

Jodi Cranston just sent out a grant application to the Winchester Cultural Council for an all-school assembly and in-class workshops with a performance artist. If anyone has other ideas for projects, etc., that need funding, please have them get in touch with Jodi (cranston@bu.edu)

Box Tops:

Stacy Ralphs and Kristen Bellaire will do a collection in October and another one in the spring. Usually the spring collection is the bigger of the two.

WCSC

The Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community had its first meeting and it was very well attended, with members from the Board of Health, Police Department, School Committee, School Department, school parents associations, Parent to Parent and the Superintendent of Schools, Bill McAlduff. There will be a School Resource Officer at the High School again this year and school-based flu clinics again this Fall (information will be forthcoming). The Winchester Hospital has funded the training of coaches in automated external defibrillators and the “medication take back” program is continuing at the police station. Future programs include a talk by Sal Caraviello, the Youth Minister at St. Mary's Church (October 18), and nationally acclaimed psychologist, Dr. Robert Brooks (November 14).

Math Club

Math Club for 4th and 5th graders will begin meeting on Tuesday, 9/27. It will meet every Tuesday morning 7:50-8:25, in the art room. An information sheet/enrollment form will be available next Monday. (10/11 Note: registration is now closed).

Muraco After School Programs (MASP)

The registration for the Fall session of MASP will open on 9/26. To the extent that there are more registrants than there are spots in a program, students will be chosen by lottery. It is important that parents sign up by the deadline or their children will not be able to participate in any lottery.

WFEE Update:

Turn out to support Principal Laurie Kirby in her Winchester stage debut! Winchester's NextDoor Theater is producing the Tony winning musical “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” on October 20th at 7:30 p.m. Half of the ticket sales that night will be donated to the Winchester Foundation for Educational Excellence, WFEE, in support of teacher grants. Buy your tickets (\$20.00 a ticket) at www.nextdoortheater.org – this musical contains comic adult material, a kids' matinee is set for October 16th at 2:00pm.

WFEE has already funded a number of grants for Muraco teachers this year:

- Thanks to WFEE, Leah Ferullo will be using Raz-Kids, an on line leveled reading library plus instant response devices to assess student learning;
- All 2nd grade teachers across the district will have LCD projectors plus document cameras for their classrooms to enhance the curriculum;
- Dina Jacobson will be purchasing CD players plus MP3 players to help students strengthen their reading skills;
- Susan Borges, Pat DiFranco and Principal Kirby will be attending the International Dyslexia Association Conference to learn techniques for teaching reading and writing to children with a variety of learning styles.

If you have any questions or would like to get involved with WFEE, please contact Sue Kim at sue_kim@post.harvard.edu.

Spirit Items

Samples of water bottles with Muraco school logo were ordered from Spankywear, as well as, embroidered pink and green winter hats. Jill and Kristine are expecting the samples to be ready for orders on Open House nights.

Book Fair

The Book Fair is taking place during Open House, 9/19 and 9/20. Wish lists have been sent home. Amy Dalton is looking for volunteers to help cash out purchases during the Open House (aldalton@verizon.net).

Holiday Craft Fair

The Holiday Craft Fair will take place at Muraco on Saturday, December 3rd. If there are any crafters in the Muraco community who wish to rent a table, they can do so for only \$25 a day. Please contact Dee McCurry or Erica Kleinkopf if you are interested in renting a table.

Enrichment

The Enrichment Committee will be having a kick off meeting on September 21st. The enrichment coordinators for each grade will be contacting teachers over the next few weeks to set up the year's enrichment activities. If anyone has any suggestion or feedback from previous years, please contact Bettina Parks (bettina_in_ch@hotmail.com) or Joanna Wright (jwright1974@yahoo.com).

Staff Appreciation Breakfasts

On behalf of Staff Appreciation Breakfasts, we are planning the same schedule as last year. We'll put on the breakfast the first Thursday of every month.

This year I asked around town for donations. We've received donations from Starbucks (100 cups of coffee) and The Gingerbread Co. (a dozen muffins). I'm still waiting to hear back from La Patisserie and Dunkin Donuts. I'm wondering if any other event could better use the coffee donation since it is so large.

If anyone could help do some of the breakfast setups including coffee pick up that would be great (s.leslie@comcast.net)

School Directory

The school directory is a wonderful resource to stay connected to others in the Muraco community. Currently, all data is being gathered and organized with help from Lori McKinney. Linda Pointon is hoping to have them printed and distributed in the next 2 to 3 weeks.

Upcoming Events

- Monday, September 19 Open House and Book Fair (K-2)
- Tuesday September 20 Open House and Book Fair (3-5)
- Tuesday September 27 School Photo Day
- Saturday October 1 Multicultural Fair 5-7 PM
- Wednesday October 5 School Council Meeting 4 PM
- Thursday October 6 Staff Appreciation Breakfast
- Monday October 11 No School Columbus Day
- Wed-Fri October 19-21 Early Release Days/Teacher Conferences
- Thursday November 3 Staff Appreciation Breakfast
- Thursday November 10 No School Professional Development Day
- Friday November 11 No School Veteran's Day

Upcoming MESPA Meetings

- Wednesday, October 12, 7pm
- Wednesday, November 16, 8:45 am

Websites

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