

Muraco Elementary School Parents Association
Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2011

Approvals 2010-2011 Budget unanimously approved

Committee Updates

WFEE

The annual **WFEE Trivia Bee** will be held **Wednesday February 9th** at 7pm in Town Hall. The Trivia Bee is a town wide community-building event that raises funds for the Winchester Foundation For Educational Excellence. Over the years, WFEE has supported innovation and excellence in Winchester schools through grants and system wide initiatives that are beyond the reach of available public funds. Every child has been impacted by WFEE and we are grateful for the community's support of this event! Muraco will have 3 teams represented at the BEE: faculty team, parent team and a 5th grade student team! If you are interested in forming a team of three (\$300) to represent your business, book club, neighbors, friends, etc., please contact us. You need not be a trivia buff- it's all in good fun! If you are unable to participate, but would like to sponsor a team, we welcome your support as well. Questions, please contact Sue Kim at sue_kim@post.harvard.edu

School Directory

The directory committee will shortly be sending out an addendum to the school directory containing updates and corrections. Please email any items for inclusion to MuracoSchoolDirectory@gmail.com.

Discussions and Announcements

Budget Update

We have recently met our Annual Appeal goal, thanks to the generosity of Muraco families. However, our revenue is coming in a little under budget in certain areas. We will continue to track expenses to make sure that the budget stays balanced and MESPA will continue to accept Annual Appeal donations all year. 146 families have contributed out of a total of 346 families, with a participation rate of 42%.

Science Fair

The annual Science Fair will be held on April 27th (Grades K-2) and 28th (Grades 3-5). Look for information to come home about science projects in the next few weeks.

Update on MESPA gifts

The Ladibug document cameras have been ordered, as has the interactive board and LCD projector for the library. The installation date for the new climbing wall for the gym is March 17, 2011, pending School Committee approval in February. The purchases of the interactive board, LCD projector and climbing wall are made possible by the continuing

generosity of the family of former Muraco, student, Suzanne Russo Callahan, and MESPA expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the family.

Update on Traffic Flow at Washington Street and Bates Road

Principal Laurie Kirby and MESPA extend deep appreciation to Linda Flaherty, our long-time Crossing Guard at Washington Street, who does a tremendous job protecting our children from the traffic at the Washington Street and Bates Road intersection. In addition to helping the children cross the street safely, Linda makes sure the children are following their walking routes and she has been known to contact the school and/or parents to make sure children are accounted for. Many parents have contacted MESPA, as well as the Winchester Police Department, to voice their support and to praise Linda's excellent work. Due to town policy, crossing guards are generally not allowed to direct traffic and Linda has been instructed not to assist with the traffic flow during the morning and afternoon pick-up. The enforcement of this policy has resulted in significant delays at drop-off and pick-up. Winchester Police Safety Officer Groux has been monitoring the traffic patterns at drop-off and pick-up. He is exploring the possibility of opening the passageway to Irving Street (now blocked with boulders) to create a new traffic flow. There is also a possibility that Linda might receive the special training that would enable her to direct traffic and ease congestion. Parents who have questions or concerns about the traffic flow issues at Muraco can contact the Winchester Police Department directly.

School Day Start/End Time

Laurie Kirby reported that the District is currently revisiting the School Day Start/End Times for all of its schools. Currently, Ambrose and Lynch begin their school day at 8:45 a.m. and finish at 2:50 p.m. (except for the half day K, which releases at 12:30 p.m.). Their Early Release Days end at 11:45 a.m. If Muraco, Lincoln and VO move to the same schedule as Ambrose and Lynch, then this could have a positive effect on the bus routes, allowing children who take the bus to arrive home or to the after-school program much more quickly and efficiently.

Classroom Wish Lists

The teachers have updated the classroom library wish lists. The lists and Google sign-up sheets remain on the MESPA website for parents who would like to donate to the classroom libraries.

Clarification of Teacher Gift Policy

The memo issued by the WPS in December regarding teacher gifts generated some questions. The ethics rule has been in existence for many years and the changes made in December changed some of the reporting rules and expanded the yearly gift aggregate from \$50 to \$150. MESPA is considering issuing some guidelines for parents regarding the new Teacher Gift Policy.

Muraco Memorial Fund

This fund, which was originally started with annual donations from the parents of Francis J. Muraco, was supplemented significantly this year by generous gifts made in the memory of Mr. Francis Muraco, Sr, who passed away last fall. Ideas for the use of this

