

Muraco Elementary School Parents Association
Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2011

Approvals

November 2010 and January 2011 MESPA Meeting Minutes unanimously approved.

MESPA 2010-2011 Budget update unanimously approved.

Committee Updates

WFEE

Thank you to the Muraco Faculty, Parent and 5th Grade Teams for representing Muraco at the WFEE Trivia Bee! A special thank you to Linda Pointon, Karin Sangster, and Tim Clewley! They all did a fabulous job with much good humor and all for a great cause! Additional thanks to the countless families who supported the BEE and WFEE behind the scenes. Stay tuned for the spring WFEE Prom and Teacher Tribute. Check out photos of the BEE at www.wfee.org or the Winchester Patch. Questions regarding WFEE grants, fundraisers, etc. contact Sue Kim at sue_kim@post.harvard.edu.

Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community Update

Members of the Coalition met with Youth Ministers from all the churches and temples in Winchester to discuss concerns related to our youth, their difficulties, experiences and how we can work together to support our youth. It was a meaningful and productive initial meeting and future collaboration is expected.

The 5th Grade Parent Transition Program will be held Wed. March 2nd, 7pm at the Jenks Center. This year's panelists are: Pam Saba (WPS Director of Wellness/Phys Ed Teacher, Muraco), John Dupuis (Phys Ed Teacher, Lynch), Phyllis Greenspan (Clinical Counselor, McCall), Jill Pappas (5th Grade Teacher, V-O), Lanie Higgins (6th Grade Teacher, McCall) and Jill Pylkkanen (WCSC Co-chair and Parent, Muraco & McCall). Reserve your seat by contacting Dot Butler at Butlermail@aol.com.

Updates from WHS, McCall, Counselors, School Resource Officer, etc. were shared at the last meeting. Feel free to contact Christa Russo or Sue Kim with questions.

School Committee

· **Override Vote** - A town-wide vote is scheduled for March 29th to determine if the Town will approve the proposed general override for the FY12 operating budget. The School Department is developing various scenarios to understand what the impact on the School Department budget would be if the override passes or fails. If the override does not pass, there will be cuts across the school system at

the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Should the override fail to pass, it is expected that there will be both staffing and resource cuts at every school. Different scenarios will be discussed at next week's School Committee meeting.

- **Redistricting** - With the passing of the Vinson-Owen override in January, redistricting will be moving forward. The Superintendent and the School Committee are looking to have an open and interactive dialogue with the community through a series of discussions and regular updates on its website. A steering committee with representatives from each school will be established over the next few months. If you are interested in being on the committee, please contact Superintendent Bill McAlduff at wmcalduff@winchester.k12.ma.us or follow-up with Muraco parent and School Committee member Chris Nixon at nixon01890@gmail.com for more information on the committee responsibilities and time commitment. A redistricting update link will be posted on the WPS website in early March: www.winchester.k12.ma.us.

- **Food-Borne Allergy Policy** - The district's existing food-borne allergy policy was established in the fall of 2008 with a recommended review to follow two years later. In November the School Committee solicited statements of interest from parents for subcommittee participation and it is in the process of establishing this group to review existing practices, as well as to make suggestions for change or improvement with Whitsons. Look for updates on this initiative from Central Office this spring.

- **Tri-Community Bikeway** - The School Committee recently received a presentation from engineers on this multi-town (Winchester, Woburn, Stoneham), multi-faceted project that is several years in the making. While the route of the bikeway is coming into better focus, some areas still being debated-- including the bikeway's relationship to Muraco. There is discussion as to whether the bike trail should run behind or in front of Muraco School. The pros and cons of each scenario were presented in December with no vote taken. Another option would be for the route to bypass Muraco and run along Washington Street for a distance. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, please follow-up with Chris Nixon (nixon01890@gmail.com) or Muraco parent and bikeway liason Jamie Fosburgh (jfosburgh@comcast.net).

Discussions and Announcements

Direct Appeal Update

The annual appeal has raised \$20,470, about \$1,000 over budget. The participation rate is approximately 42% with 145 families participating.

Update on MESPA Purchases

Mrs. Kirby expressed a thank you to the Muraco community and MESPA for purchasing the Ladibug document cameras and LCD projectors. As a result, all 4th and 5th grade classrooms have their own document cameras and projectors. The feedback has been very positive from teachers and students. There are 3 document cameras per grade in Grades 1-3; 1 document camera in Kindergarten; 1 in the Art Room and 1 floater.

An ENO interactive board and LCD projector will be installed in the library during vacation. The climbing wall was approved by the School Committee on February 8th and will be installed in the gym on March 17th. 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.

There was a suggestion to restock playground supplies (jump ropes, balls, etc.) with any surplus funds. A motion was made and up to \$1,000 was approved to be spent on supplies. MESPA will follow-up with Pam Saba to see what supplies are needed.

Tardiness Policy

Being on time for the start of school is important to help students get ready for their day and also for getting the lunch orders in on time, accurately. As a reminder, the first bell rings at 8:25am and the second bell at 8:30am. If students arrive after 8:35am, they will be marked "tardy." If students arrive after 8:30am, they go directly to the office to give their lunch order and get a slip for their teacher indicating that they already placed their lunch order. The situation is improving and more and more students are arriving on time (only 10 students/week in February were late, down from 65/week in December). Mrs. Kirby thanked parents for helping their children get to school on time.

Town of Winchester School Traffic Study and Muraco Traffic Committee

The Board of Selectman commissioned a study to understand the traffic flow at all of the Winchester schools. After observing the traffic flow and congestion, the consultants made several suggestions, which are being considered. One suggestion included opening the barrier at Irving Street and allowing traffic from the parking lot to exit through Irving Street. A suggestion was made at the meeting to make the traffic light at the corner of Washington Street and Swanton Street longer in order to help the flow of traffic out of Muraco. Mrs. Kirby noted that students may exit their cars at any point along the "drop off" sidewalk and not just in between the cones. The Muraco handbook will be updated next year to reflect any changes to pick-up and drop-off procedures.

Behavior Policy at After School Programs and Evening Events

During afternoon and evening school events and during after-school programs, students are expected to behave as they would during normal school hours. Adult supervision is required at all times; school events are not drop-off events. An official policy will be drawn up and included in the Muraco Handbook.

New MASP Program

Leah Ferullo and Patrick Gryp are contemplating offering a new version of Super Sports for Grades 3-5, with one program for girls and one program for boys (running simultaneously). The new program would incorporate confidence and

esteem-building into the fun and physical exercise.

Muraco Shopping Day at Wilson Farms

Shop at Wilson Farm on Tuesday, March 8th and 20% of the proceeds will be donated to the Winchester Public Schools! The official Wilson Farm flyer must be presented at the register in order to receive the benefit. [CLICK HERE](#) for the flyer. Additional copies of the flyer are also available in the Main Office.

2011-2012 Board and Committee Positions

There are many volunteer opportunities, including several Board positions, available next year. For details about the available positions and how you can get involved, contact: Laura Colella at colelladickison@comcast.net or Maura Sullivan at mdsullivan@comcast.net.

The Enrichment discussion was moved to next month's agenda.

Upcoming Events

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| o Thursday March 3 | Staff Appreciation Breakfast |
| o Friday March 4 | Rock Hop 7 PM |
| o Wednesday March 16 | School Advisory Council Mtg 4:00PM |