

Muraco Elementary School Parents Association

Enrichment Policies, Practices and Guidelines

June 2011

Muraco Elementary School Parents Association (MESPA) is a 501(c)(3) Massachusetts association, registered with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office of Non-Profits and Charities and the Internal Revenue Service, whose mission is to "to promote the understanding of school objectives and methods, and to encourage full cooperation between parents/guardians and faculty/staff in order to foster the full development of Muraco students." In addition, its purpose is "to fund and coordinate activities and to provide volunteer support in order to enhance the academic experience and build a sense of school and community pride."

In order to fulfill its mission, MESPA raises funds through an Annual Appeal to parents and caregivers, which typically begins in October and through other programs such as photo sales, Box Tops, Staples and Target. MESPA's Assistant Treasurer collects donations and deposits them in a bank account held at the Winchester Savings Bank. MESPA's Treasurer manages the funds and provides monthly reports to MESPA regarding revenue and expenses.

For Fiscal Year 2011, approximately 85% of MESPA's annual budget was budgeted for programs and materials that directly enrich and enhance Muraco students' learning experience, with the remainder budgeted for student and family programs (Welcome Back Picnic and Coffees, School Directory, Field Day, Science Fair, etc.), teacher support and appreciation and administration (Constant Contact, MESPA website, etc.). Within the "Enrichment" budget category are "Enrichment programs" and Field Trips. MESPA's budget is available online at http://www.muracoparents.com/?page_id=105.

Each grade's Enrichment activities are coordinated by MESPA Enrichment Committee members, who work closely with the teachers, with the teachers selecting programs and the Enrichment Committee members taking care of booking the programs and activities. The amount of money budgeted for each grade for Enrichment is based on the number of students enrolled in that grade.

Historically, Field Trip funds have covered the cost of transportation for one field trip per grade for each school year, with teachers planning the trips and MESPA's Field Trip Coordinator making arrangements for the buses. MESPA's Coordinator makes the arrangements and MESPA's Treasurer pays the bus company, whether or not MESPA is paying for that particular field trip.

Given the challenges of our increased enrollment and lack of common space, it has been harder hold traditional Enrichment activities in the school building during the past few years and alternative uses of Enrichments dollars have been pursued. As a result, there have been more field trips to museums and theater performances, with some grades using Enrichment dollars to pay for the cost of admission, as well as transportation. In addition, some teachers have decided to use the funds towards classroom supplies, such as games or technology that can be used in the

classroom to enrich the curriculum.

MESPA's bylaws do not provide specific guidelines regarding what type of activities Enrichment dollars should fund, nor do they provide guidance regarding Field Trips. Given the blurring of Enrichment and Field Trips over the past two years, after discussion (during the April and May 2011 MESPA meetings), MESPA has voted to combine the two funds beginning with the 2011-12 school year.

MESPA has also decided formally to allow a broad definition of Enrichment, giving discretion to the teachers --working with MESPA's Enrichment Committee -- to design an enrichment program that is appropriate for their particular grade and curriculum, which program is subject to ongoing review by MESPA's Board, with regular reports to Muraco families on the use of Enrichment dollars via email communications or at MESPA meetings.

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, therefore, Enrichment funds may be used for:

In-school programs, such as Kidstock, Techsploration, Discovery Museum programs, etc.

Field Trips, including museum admission fees, historic site admission fees, tickets for music, theater, dance, puppet and other artistic or educational performances, and bus transportation.

Technology, that enhances or enriches the learning experience of children, such as document cameras, flip cameras and RM ePads.

Classroom Materials, such as books and supplies for science, art and crafts.

Use of funds for items in any of the categories above will be made as decided by classroom teachers with communication to MESPA. MESPA may revisit and further define or change these categories as it deems appropriate and will give notice of any such modification to classroom teachers for planning purposes.

Adopted by MESPA by vote on June 15, 2011.