

FISKE PTO GENERAL MEETING 2009-2010
Meeting Minutes: Friday February 5, 2010
Fiske Library at 8:40 a.m.

Board Members: Jenn M., Kerri K., Laura H., Kathy V., and Julie B.

Others Present: Elaine H., Linda W., Beth P., Sharon G., Laura E., Susan C., Moe B., Susan R., Danmei L., Jennifer M., Margaret L., Debbie B., Sue C., Christy R., Wendy N., Jeff K., Irene K., Beth M., Debbie C., Amy V., Sue M., Kim F., Trina F., Karen G., Teresa E., Jessica G. and Nichole B.

Welcome & Introductions- Kerri K. welcomed everyone to the meeting. She also introduced the WPS Panel of Services guest speakers: Linda W., Beth P., Sharon G. and Laura E.

Approval of December 3, 2009 PTO Meeting Minutes and Motion to Accept- A motion to approve the December 2009 PTO Meeting Minutes was made, and it was unanimously approved.

Thank You to Multicultural Festival Committee Members and Volunteers: Jenn M. informed the audience that the Multicultural Festival that took place on February 3rd was attended by hundreds of people. Jenn thanked all of the committee members and volunteers who made this year's Multicultural Festival an enormous success. Special thanks to Sree B., Teresa E., Belinda V., Katie S.M., and MaryAnne U. for their leadership and organization. In addition another special thank you to the Kids Care Club, who helped with the set up. There will be an article in the Wellesley Townsman recounting the event. It brought the entire Fiske community together!

Board Updates:

Auction Status by Sue M. and Karen G.- Sue M. reminded everyone that the Auction date is Friday April 9th at 7:00 p.m. at the Wellesley Country Club. The Auction will be held in a new room at the WCC, which will offer a great flow for the event. The "Guide to the Auction" was distributed via student back packs. The guide is full of very important information:

- *Family Donations-* All Fiske families are welcome to participate and donate a gift to be auctioned off. Some ideas are vacation homes, sports tickets, services, etc.
- *Class Donations-* Trina F. is leading the class gift initiatives. Each grade offers an event or item to be auctioned off. Room Parents will be contacting families to organize the class gifts.
- *Corporate Donations –* The corporate sponsors are critical for the auction success, they fund paddles for the auction as well as donate significant gifts. If you know of any corporations that may be interested in participating in the auction please contact Sue M. or Kathy V.

After the February vacation break there will be a real push to finalize all areas. The committee would love to have more help, if you are interested in assisting with any aspect of the auction, please contact Sue M. or Karen G.

Art Appreciation Update by Christy R.- Christy R. stated that the volunteers will be completing the Aborigines sessions by the end of February. The next session will start in Spring and the art theme is still being determined.

Wild West (W.W.) by Jenn M.- Jenn M. reported that the chair positions for the W.W. are still open; if anyone is interested please contact Jenn M. or Kerri K.

5th Grade Update by Jenn M.- The 5th Grade class will be hosting a Bertucci's night on Mon. Feb. 8th. In order for the class to receive 10% of the spending, all families attending will need to bring the flyer to the restaurant. A copy of the flyer is in the Fiske Family Bulletin and hard copies were also distributed in the back packs. Please come out and support the 5th Grade.

The Central Council has decided to move forward with the HALE Reservation 5th Grade trip, this outing replaces Thompson Island. Fiske, Upham, Bates and Hardy 5th Graders will go on June 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th. They are day trips and buses will pick up and drop off the students. All teachers will attend. The cost is \$220 and scholarships are available.

Committee 21 Update by Susan R.- Susan R. distributed a handout regarding the School Budget. Susan stated that there is a \$3.5 million budget shortfall. The Town of Wellesley is reluctant to seek an override to close the gap. Reductions may be necessary to cover the gap, which would include cuts to art and music. The School Committee is trying to hold the line but cuts will need to be made. The next meeting is Feb. 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. If you cannot attend the meeting please e-mail the Advisory Committee, the individual Board of Selectman and the School Committee, conveying your opinion about the budget.

Guest Speaker Panel of Services, Members: Linda W., Beth P., Sharon G. and Laura E.

Linda W. has been the Director of Student Services for Wellesley Public Schools since July 2009. Her main responsibility is with Special Education and her other focus is Health Services Title 1. Special Education has been mandated by law since 1975 and Massachusetts leads the way in this endeavor. All of Wellesley's Special Education services meet the required mandates. Linda recognizes and appreciates the dedicated staff and parents who support the children. Beth P. is an Elementary Special Educator who teaches children in grades 3-5.

Federal law dictates that services will begin at the age of 3. If a special need is determined it is important for parents and teachers to work as a team keeping an open communication together. For Wellesley, approximately 16.9% of the district receives special education and that is slightly under the State average. If Wellesley cannot offer services for the child in town, they will pay for services in a different town. The children in special education are separated by age and need. There is a great deal of paperwork that is required for special education services. Families can pay for additional services to supplement the services that are being offered through the Public Schools if they desire. The "circuit breaker" program reimburses 75% of cost over \$38,000 or more, unfortunately this program continues to be cut year after year; even as the costs in particular transportation continue to rise year after year.

In assessing the overall special education services in Wellesley, Linda would say we perform these functions very well:

- Staff and services are extremely dedicated and offer considerable value
- Outcome oriented
- Collaborate well with families

Some areas where Wellesley could improve are the following:

- Inconsistencies with IEP (Individualized Education Plan) program
- Transitions from Elementary to Middle to High School can be improved

Sharon G. is the Fiske Psychologist; she performs a wide range of services because there are no guidance counselors at the school. She works with children on behavior and/or friendship issues. She also works closely with the specialists to achieve goals for the IEP. In addition, she is the 504 Coordinator – the 504 program is a federal statute that levels the playing field for all students.

In addressing questions about "bullying issues", Sharon stated that if there is an incident the "bully" and the "target" are questioned. Then actions are taken as deemed necessary on a case by case basis. At Fiske, they are teaching children to be "up standers". As part of the curriculum children are taught the difference between tattling and telling. If anyone should have a concern about an issue, please contact the teacher, Sharon G. or Elaine H.

Sharon recommends the book "School Where Everyone Belongs" By Stan Davis.

We hope that a greater awareness and understanding of the services has been obtained through today's panel.

Principal's Report

Elaine H. informed the audience that Progress Reports will be distributed to the children today. Please keep in mind that all children are continually in progress. There should not be any surprises when receiving the reports. "3's" should be celebrated. "4's" are only given when the child has a very solid understanding and command of the

subject. Please take time to fill out the comments section, the teachers find it very helpful and informative. A guardian signature is required on all reports.

Miss Hall and the 5th Grade class are holding a fundraiser for Haiti. They will be selling pencils and erasers all next week. Elaine and Mrs. Hall are very proud of the class as they produced the idea and they are implementing the initiative on their own. Please send in money with your child to support the cause.

Every Friday morning there is a School Base Management Team meeting. The team consists of the teachers and their goal is to address and resolve issues/concerns/problems happening at school. Any staff member can add a concern and the group will get together to solve the problem. An example is around the Fiske Fundamentals, issuing "DD warnings" when a child is not behaving. The team is reviewing the current process/policy and is identifying ways to improve the way things are done. It is a very effective group and it is very important that communication remains open and concerns are addressed.

At the next meeting Bella Wong, Superintendent of Wellesley Public Schools will be the guest speaker. Elaine encourages everyone to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m. Next meeting is Thursday March 18, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Fiske Library.
Respectfully submitted, Julie B., PTO Communications Coordinator