

Willard PTG Meeting
December 3, 2018

Attendance

Denise Carleton, Jennifer Desrochers, Jennie Garofalo, Marieke Herrero, Peony Keve, Janet King, Matthew Lucey, Kristin Martines, Alex Ruhmann, Susan Wagner, Kathryn Watson

- Approved minutes from November 5th PTG meeting.

Principal's Report (Matthew Lucey)

- School Improvement Plan is done ahead of time. Matt is meeting with the school council this afternoon and discussing some of the practices put into place, plus goals for social/emotional curriculum.
- Budget for next year looks good.
- New business manager, Jared Stanton, under Laurie's direction, has put together zero-based budgeting, which is how most districts do their budgeting. Matt feels confident that we'll be able to maintain what we're doing, take into account things that are no longer needed, and take a look at some of the things we haven't been able to do in a while.
- Some new Willard staff babies are coming, so Matt is looking ahead at coverage.
- New music teacher, David Piper, is extraordinary and has added a lot already.
- There is so much discussion and resources dedicated to those students falling behind, but the question was raised, what about the kids who need to be additionally challenged? Matt highlighted several programs, i.e. math swap, small group reading instruction every day, a new 5th grade book club, so maybe those need to be communicated a bit more to Willard parents, i.e. a grade-specific update in the Weekly?

Recap of the Month (Alex Ruhmann & Susan Wagner)

- Center for Parents and Teachers asked for Willard PTG's annual \$1k donation. We have it in the budget, and it would go toward the social media program that has already been advertised. Board voted to approve the donation.
- Liz Nadzo did an amazing job getting Willard Wear up and running. Given that it's the holiday season, Kathryn will get a blast out this week.
- Treasurers, Vice Presidents, Presidents for all three elementary schools got together to discuss best practices, how schools spend their money, etc.
 - Alcott and Thoreau do a number of fundraisers and tend not to collect much from their annual appeals, so Willard is the opposite in that way.
 - The schools' book fairs and handling of financial aid was also discussed – i.e. how do we assist kids who may not otherwise have the means to participate in the book fair, carnival, etc? Alcott and Thoreau each give their guidance counselor \$500 to spend at her own discretion. There is not a check box for financial aid for before and after programs, any student can just sign up and then afterward submit for financial aid through the guidance counselor – that way the PTG remains "blind". At each book fair there is a bin of donated books in very good condition (priced at \$1 each) so kids can pick a book if either they have forgotten money or don't have the means.
 - Willard needs to continue the conversations about how to manage financial aid for programs so the process is streamlined and well-communicated, but also maintains privacy.
- International fair was outstanding. So well done. Motoko has agreed to do it again next year.

By-Laws (Alex Ruhmann & Susan Wagner)

- Every three years we have to review our by-laws. They are available on our website. All board members should read and review them for discussion in the January meeting. They will be dealt with and voted on by February, and then will not be revisited again for another three years. A couple of questions to consider: Should room parent coordinators be on the board? How do we handle dues and school directory?

Social

- No update.

Communications (Kathryn Watson)

- Sam is doing well with the Weekly.
- Tara seems happy to take on the school website.
- This week's newsletter will include an announcement about our teachers winning Concord Ed Fund trivia night.

Before and After (Denise Carleton)

- BOKS started last week.
- Chess registration is this Friday, Dec 7th.
- Chorus is going strong. They have a concert next Tuesday, Dec. 11th.
- Thoreau's effort to join forces with the Concord Rec Dept. has stalled a bit – there are still some questions to iron out, and they are weighing the benefits of administrative advantages vs. added cost and less connection to the kids.

Fundraising (Marieke Herrero)

- Annual Appeal is a little behind this time last year – does it make sense to send an email blast? Print a backpack flyer? Only about 6-7 fewer families have participated than this time last year, but the average donation per family has gone down.
- Will revisit back-to-school night format so new families do get to hear the annual appeal presentation.
- Discussed whether the request to buy school supplies may have affected annual appeal donations.
- Looking into finding a vendor across all three elementary schools to purchase school supplies.

Treasurer's Report (Kristin Martines)

- Nothing new to report; working on taxes.

Other

- 2nd graders will be collecting cans for deposit (working on 5s and 10s in math), then using the money to help families purchase flocks of chickens to give people means to get eggs, etc.

- Matt discussed the opportunity for 5th graders to do some real world learning through KIVA, who does micro-lending – it's a database of entrepreneurs around the world who do not have access to funding; it's a means of real angel investing. Students can go through the database and decide who to fund, i.e. female entrepreneurs are under-represented in ___ part of the world, or let's support this organization who is near completion in raising funds to launch. It is an investment so they could lose the money, but in Matt's experience the money has been returned. In Weston five parents each donated \$20 to get started. Matt asked Kristin if \$300 from Kim Rivers and Matt's \$150 could be used to support four classes. A small bit of interest gets paid back. It is an opportunity for real world education, the whole child, etc. Laurie Hunter suggested it should be considered a consumable expense and not to anticipate that it will come back.
- Kristin remarked that it's a tricky situation for one non-profit to give to another non-profit, especially for tax purposes, etc. and suggested that it may be better to ask parents to support the effort and place the money in its own fund, or even better yet seek out a grant from the Concord Ed Fund.
- Jennifer Desrochers put together a draft of a vendor list. It needs some further whittling down. There may be opportunities for price cuts and/or sponsorships from vendors we are using exclusively. The vendor list should be part of the committee guidelines going forward.
- Math Night committee is requesting March 9th as the date of the event.
- The phone system has been horrendous – something to do with the hand-off getting wet and malfunctioning. This will be one of the capital items that is recommended at the town meeting.