

**Wellesley Middle School PTO
Executive Committee Pre-Meeting
Followed by
Meeting with Principal Ito
Monday, October 16, 2017**

Attendees

Chris Norcross, Co-President	Lisa Collins, Co-President
Barbara Hirsch, Co-Vice President	Brenda Nicolazzo, Co-Vice President
Helen Hwang, Treasurer	Susan McCormack, Secretary

Pre-Meeting

Agenda

- 1) Email Contacts Update
- 2) Financial Update
- 3) School Dance / UNICEF Drive
- 4) Upcoming Events / Meetings
- 5) PTO Contribution to METCO raffle

Ms. Norcross and Ms. Collins called the Pre-Meeting to order at 9:30a.m.

1) Email Contacts Update

Ms. Nicolazzo reported that the PTO has merged its email contacts list with the MySchoolAnywhere list. This resulted in an increase in email addresses from 980 to over 1,700. The bulk of the new email addresses appear to have come from the parents of sixth grade students.

The Executive Committee expressed concern that some sixth grade parents may not be aware of the PTO and/or the ways it disseminates information about both WMS and the community. **The Co-Presidents asked Ms. Nicolazzo to generate a targeted e-mailing to sixth grade parents welcoming them to the PTO and explaining in brief the PTO's functions and methods of communication.**

2) Financial Update

Ms. Hwang provided a summary of PTO dues collections to date which revealed:

- a) Approximate dues paid to date = \$61,700. The overall participation rate among WMS families is 43%.
- b) The Weekly Blast will be altered to remove the dues request section but will continue to show the "participation thermometer".

3) School Dance / UNICEF Drive

The WMS Dance is on Friday, October 27. The PTO will set up a UNICEF donation box at the door and encourage students to make a donation as they enter the dance. Ms. Nicolazzo will include an announcement about the UNICEF drive in the School Dance section of the Weekly Blast.

4) Upcoming Events / Meetings

a) Thursday, October 19 – WMS Parent Social at The Local

- i. Ms. Nicolazzo will send out a separate email to the PTO distribution list regarding the Social by the end of the day Tuesday, October 17, 2017.

b) Thursday, October 26 – iPad Parent Night in the WMS Cafeteria

c) Monday, November 13 – WMS All-Parent PTO meeting in the WMS Cafeteria

d) Thursday, November 16 – METCO Combined High School / Middle School PTO meeting in Boston

5) PTO Contribution to METCO raffle

The WMS PTO has contributed two gifts for the raffle which was held at METCO's October event.

Meeting with Principal Ito

At this point (10:00am), Ms. Norcross and Ms. Collins adjourned the Pre-Meeting and the members of the Executive Committee joined Principal Ito in his office.

Agenda

- 1) Email List and Financial Update
- 2) Upcoming METCO PTO Meeting in Boston
- 3) School Dances
- 4) WEF Spelling Bee
- 5) Future Guest Speakers / Evening Events
- 6) Active Shooter Drill(s)
- 7) Back-to-School Night Review
- 8) School Facilities Update
- 9) Weight of Student Backpacks
- 10) Other

Ms. Norcross, Ms. Collins and Principal Ito called the meeting to order at 10:05a.m.

1) Email List and Financial Update

Ms. Nicolazzo reviewed the increase in the PTO's email mailing list brought about by the merger with the MySchoolAnywhere database.

Ms. Hwang updated Principal Ito on the PTO's financial position.

2) Upcoming METCO PTO Meeting in Boston

The PTO has earmarked \$250 in its budget for dining expenses for any staff who would like to attend this event. Principal Ito informed the PTO that this money will most likely not be needed. Ms. Norcross, Ms. Collins and Ms. Nicolazzo from the PTO Executive Committee plan to attend this event.

3) School Dances

Principal Ito informed the PTO that the decision has been made to hold only two school dances this year. The first will be on Friday, October 27 and the second will be toward the end of the school year.

While students will not be allowed to wear costumes to school on October 31, they will be allowed to dress in costume at the October dance if they wish. **Ms. Nicolazzo will include a statement about students' option to wear costumes in the School Dance section of the Weekly Blast.**

4) WEF Spelling Bee

The PTO has a team for the Spelling Bee. WMS has a team of teachers and is working on pulling together a team of students. The event is to be held November 2, from 7 – 8:30pm at Sprague School. The Co-Presidents encouraged all PTO Executive Committee members to attend.

5) Future Guest Speakers / Evening Events

The PTO and Principal Ito are actively working to put together engaging programming for WMS parents and students. This includes at least two evening events. The following are currently under consideration:

- i. Katie Greer, Thursday, February 8, 2018 – Ms. Greer has been invited by Principal Ito to make a presentation to all current sixth and seventh grade students during the school day. She will speak on various “screen-related” topics. Ms. Greer offered to present to parents the same evening and the PTO gladly accepted her offer. The PTO will use its funds to pay for all of Ms. Greer's presentations that day / evening. [N.B. While this will put the PTO over budget in its “Guest Speakers” category for this academic year, the Executive Committee is confident that other sources of funding can be found to make up the difference. The Guest Speakers line item in the budget will be addressed in the future.]
- ii. *Screenagers* film – A date has not yet been set for the presentation of the movie *Screenagers*. The most likely timing is March of 2018.
- iii. The PTO has been contacted by a company in Needham that focuses on executive functioning in children and young adults. The company has offered to make a 45-minute presentation to parents about executive functioning strategies that can be used

at home by middle schoolers and how parents can help. Principal Ito encouraged the PTO to pursue this offer, potentially for early December. **Ms. Norcross and Ms. Collins will call the company as soon as possible.**

6) Active Shooter Drill(s)

The PTO noted that there has been discussion on the “What’s Up Wellesley?” Facebook site regarding Active Shooter drills for the public schools. Principal Ito reported that a recent drill was conducted for all WMS teachers but that the District has decided not to include students in such drills at the present time.

7) Back-to-School Night Review

General consensus is that Back-to-School night was successful. Complaint areas were parking and crowds. Principal Ito asked the PTO to help explain to parents that it is not possible to have more than one Back-to-School night due to staffing and thus all three grades must be presented in one evening.

The PTO will generate a flyer next year tentatively titled “What to Expect on Back-to-School Night” to help guide parents through the process.

8) School Facilities Update

Ms. Collins asked for an update about School Facilities improvements. Principal Ito reported the following:

- iv. The boilers are a top priority at the present time.
- v. A problem in the photography dark room with moisture against the sink walls is being fixed.
- vi. The school is considering installing some form of gates in the hallways to block off access to certain areas of the school after school hours. The building is used heavily in the evenings (stage, music rooms, gymnasiums, etc.) by various members of the Wellesley community. Principal Ito would like to ensure continued access to critical areas while limiting access to unneeded areas.

9) Weight of Student Backpacks

The PTO engaged in a general discussion with Principal Ito regarding the weight of materials in students’ backpacks. The PTO encouraged Principal Ito to work with teachers to continue to reduce the amount of unnecessary paperwork in student backpacks.

10) Other

Principal Ito noted that WMS will hold its annual “Candy Collection for the Troops” in the days following October 31. Large bins will be set up near the WMS office for candy donations. **Ms. Nicolazzo will inform parents of this in an upcoming Weekly Blast.**

Ms. Norcross, Ms. Collins and Principal Ito adjourned the meeting at 11 a.m.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on Monday, December 11, at 9:30a.m. in the faculty dining room at WMS.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan McCormack