

December 6 PTO notes

Mena's report

Starting this week, all communications from the main office are being sent electronically. The Newsletter will come out at the beginning of the week and additional flyers will be sent on Thursday. Report cards will also go out this week.

22 fifth graders will begin reading with younger kids who need extra reading support this week.

The Winter concert is next week.

January 18 will be registration for PK and K. Please let any neighbors now. See Mena's flyer attachment for additional information. It will go out again this week.

Christine Rono, Cunniff reading specialist, is Mena's special guest this week. She spoke about the following programs:

Last spring Cunniff was awarded a grant for a parent/child book club for reluctant readers. This program will start in January for 4th grade and then in the spring for 2nd grade.

Read across America day is March 2. Ms Rono may be asking PTO for support with an all school activity

The book swap at the end of last year, and the school-supplied summer reading book were both successful programs and will hopefully continue this year

John Brackett, our Interim Superintendent was also present at the beginning of our meeting. He spoke about the following:

He asked to be on the agenda in an attempt to get out to all schools --

most recently he was an interim Superintendent in Weston, prior to which he was at Sudbury.

He started in Watertown on Nov. 1. It has been different coming in mid-year because teachers are already in their routines.

There are a number of initiatives in place with which the district would like to keep moving forward. His office is working to try our best to make the best year possible with what is in place. There is no need to make a lot of changes from now until the end of the year, especially given all of the new positions in the educational and town offices in the district.

The office is already planning for next year in terms of budget, enrollment, the office will also be looking at start times for middle and secondary schools more seriously in January.

Master plan update: on Dec. 19 the School Committee and Town Council will meet to get the master plan (the assessment for needs of all 5 schools) underway. They will discuss the need to refurbish and update space, they will also make sure there is adequate space. This plan includes a 200 million dollar master plan project. No decisions (to questions like Where do we start? Where do we put the students during potential building or renovations?) have been made yet. Currently there are lots of

questions, but no answers. However, there is a lot of energy and support to invest in the town's school facilities. Stay tuned for more detail because we (the residents) will be able to see and comment on the proposed plan.

The town has also begun the process of finding a new superintendent. They hope to have the person announced in March and start work on July 1.

The office is also working on the transition to Power School, the new on line computer system. There have been problems and the transition has not been easy.

John would like to hear from the parent community about concerns, interests, questions. On December 14 (at 9AM and again at 7PM) there will be the first of a few Superintendent coffees.

Again, there is a lot going on in the district. They are really trying to figure out how to think about all of the current issues in a logical and cohesive manner. John has and will continue to talk with principals and coordinators about the organizational structure of our schools and about next year.

Space at Cunniff: looking at the space with a team of people to talk about use of space and to perhaps think about it differently. How can we make the existing space work? Looks like the enrollment will be at or just below our current enrollment, so this space should work for next year. There is some outreach being done about portables, though most likely this will not be a priority given the cost issues (for site prep, electricity, plumbing, etc.)

Lifetouch A school photography company also spoke at the meeting. Cathy Lis and Tom Bailey have been with the company for over 25 years. They currently take pictures at WMS.

They prefer to photograph inside for consistency. They use a blue screen so we can choose backgrounds later.

They photograph all kids in one day. The customer can customize backgrounds on line and can even change backgrounds within a package. We can pay on line, so there is no need to bring an envelope to picture day. We could also purchase digital portraits.

This is a national company with a territory in Marlboro, so it has a small business feel with only 5 people in that office. Because they are national they can offer safe cards for our students and also have photos that could be used for Amber alters if necessary.

They work closely with schools and often send the same photographers to each school. There is a Lifetouch portal to access all photos from the district, and the school could also make posters and items for teachers like bookmarks, certificates.

Treasurer's report: There is a new thermometer to track PTO donations in the hall on the PTO board. Please see the attached picture for an update on specific numbers.

By going to www.booster.com you can order hoodie sweatshirts in a variety of colors from now until December 20.

WSB voting is only open for a few more weeks

Book fair started today. All classes will be going to the sale during library time. Class reps will be contacted about teacher gifts and the fall fundraiser.

Spelling Bee is January 29. It is managed by the Ed foundation (this is their last year) but staffed by PTO volunteers from all elementary schools. Jackie Airasian will be running it for Cunniff this year. We need 2 more reps from Cunniff. If you are interested, please contact Lauren Stefano or Jackie. The Spelling Bee is an important event for us and was the biggest fundraiser last year.

February 10 is movie night run by Tina Brisson and Elaina Griffith. Details to follow.

Julie Weeden will coordinate Meadow Farms next year.

5th grade update:

Sargent's Camp parent presentation is 12/12 at 7pm in the community room at Watertown Police Dept.

Next meeting is Tuesday, January 10, 2017.

In attendance:

Mena Ciarlone

Maura Hurley

Britt Days

Milton Contreras

Donna Driscoll

Christine Rono

Erica Villiotte

Jackie Airasian

Margaret Sherman

Lauren Stefano

Lindi DeLorio

Lee Haley

Elaina Griffith

Tina Brisson

Julie Weeden