

MESPA Board Meeting - Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Welcome – Joanna Shea O’Brien and Sandy George, MESPA Co-Chairs

Muraco Update – Leslie West, Muraco Principal

MESPA Updates – Joanna Shea O’Brien and Sandy George, MESPA Co-Chairs

Fundraising Update: Annual Appeal, Book Fair

5th Grade Committee updates: Wreaths & Loaves, BINGO

Enrichment kickoff

Safety Committee updates: Ruby Bridges Walk (11/16), etc.

Mentor Program

Ideas & suggestions!

MESPA Treasurer’s Report – Sarah Jaffe, MESPA Treasurer

Budget approval

Leslie regarding Professional Development Day – We know that scheduling a PD Day in the middle of the week can be disruptive, and but I want to stress how important it is for staff to have the opportunities to develop their skills and it’s so impactful for the staff. Teachers choose where their next steps for growth are, some options are 1. How to utilize technology as a way to talk through literacy and context, 2. Using tech for performance based performance, 3. Incorporating justice into curriculum, etc.

You will get a slight change in the calendar, there’s an additional half day in January, I believe it’s the 11th, this will be communicated soon but please keep that in mind. We’re adopting a new and improved safety protocol which is even more streamlined. A big plug for our November 29th coffee talk, it will be a quick session about executive functioning on Wednesday morning at the start of school. We had a first new parent meeting, and it was great.

Sarah –We have a line item for \$200 for the Special Education coffee talks, if they want to provide coffee or breakfast snacks please submit receipts.

Fundraising. Annual appeal we have 10626.76 so far, so we’re at 53% of 20K goal and we’ve had 54 families giving donations. We will continue to fundraising through giving Tuesday on November 28th. Funds have been trickling in, but we’re on track to have 15K through the end of the annual appeal.

Is there anything we should do as a final push? I get emails through giving Tuesday and if I knew was a deadline I feel like I would be more inclined to do so. Is there any messaging we can do, do we have a slower month where we can focus on asking for additional funds? Putting an end date out may help, discuss with Shamus and Hamilton.

Does everyone know if their company does fundraising matching? Let’s include a focus on company matching in our next communication since we received a significant amount in matched donations last year.

We had a former Muraco parent stop by who received a grant for academic achievement in Shanghai. His son received a 5k Yen award and he has donated it to MESPA, it's the equivalent of 700 dollars, which is excellent. Send Sarah their contact information so she could send something. Would that student and the family like to be spotlighted in any way? Do they have any stipulations on how they want us to use the money?

Blackbaud grant, has it been forwarded to Shamus or Hamilton? The deadline may have passed but it's a grant up to 5K, but we do have to apply and there was a deadline. Don't know if it's passed or not. If so Eleni to nominate the next time it's available.

The fundraising committee's tasks are undefined. We need to build that out with Mespa. Would it make sense for the three of us to have a meeting, and then Beth will discuss with Hamilton and Shamus so they have more clearly defined roles?

Last year there were more constant flyers and reminders for the annual appeal than this year. This was purposeful because last year was our first year after Covid we were pushing the annual appeal and we needed to raise a significant amount of funds.

Book Fair – We made \$12K in sales which is on track with the last two Book Fairs. You can either get 25% cash, or 50% to use on scholastic books. We took the cash option of \$3K this year since we have a large balance with Scholastic Books already. We discussed the possibility of doing a fair with Book Ends, they came by and think they can recreate the Book Fair and run it for us. Book Ends would be responsible for restocking books, running the registers, etc. Proceeds would be about the same, and we'd be supporting a local business. They're open to doing a test book fair in the spring on a smaller scale and go from there.

5th grade committee – We had a very successful fundraiser at the Stones where we raised \$350, looking into other area businesses where we can do a similar event. Coming up we have the Wreaths and Loaves fundraiser, deadline for Wreaths is November 10th but we may extend the Loaves to make more of a profit.

Request to tap into the 5th grade committee to see if there's anyone who would be interested in sending out the communications/newsletters.

Enrichment – We have a full roster of volunteers, 2 per grade level. We'll be having a morning meeting on Monday and Friday evening by zoom to discuss responsibilities. The enrichment budget is per student by grade. They'll meet with teachers, identify which topics they want to do, and the parent volunteers work on that, booking the busses, etc.

Safety – Next week, on November 16th, is Ruby Bridges walk to school day. We can do the golden sneaker for that one but last year we also had purple feathers and a pumpkin to commemorate the event. Mark from Safe Routes to School will be there, and it would be helpful to have more parents participating. Walk to school percentage was great, include an announcement on Wednesday letting students know that November 16th is walk to school day

Leslie to connect with Betty Beauchamp so she can highlight who Ruby Bridges was, and incorporate into the social studies curriculum.

We got some disappointing news regarding our request for funding for the security cameras. Winchester didn't get selected. They're going to be exploring other options, we have other things we're thinking of such as what's going on with current repairs, start with Chris Nixon to get an update, and start addressing what are the priorities.

We know that there was some money for Muraco to update but what are the priorities, we need to express that we're concerned about not having cameras. We need to have a strong advocacy and keep putting the pressure on, show up at public meetings, etc.

Menina was at town meeting Chris gave a detailed presentation, Muraco is still in the timeline to be done 2028-2030, for now they'll do as much as they can to keep Muraco in good shape. They're also asking for an additional \$1M because costs went up, we haven't voted on it just yet. We should still meet with him 1x1, make it a follow up in the town meeting.

\$1M was for the covert, it was budgeted for 9M but needed additional funds for costs going up to prevent flooding. There's more information about it in the Lynch project website.

Raine had met with them in May and been acting on our behalf, but we didn't get selected for the grant. This is the beginning and we need parents that push for Muraco. Menina would love to get more involved, we think we need cameras, but it's really expensive, cost for McCall was greater than \$100K. Frustrated on behalf of Muraco, McCall was truly a priority but I know that the more we have parents pushing the more they will have to act. I don't think anyone was going to call us to tell us we didn't get the funding, we just have to keep pushing.

The Muraco playground got fixed because Stephanie wouldn't stop calling him. We don't want to be jerks but we start with Chris, he has the longevity information and can probably tell us where the funding for McCall cameras came from. Can someone look up who's on the building planning committee.

EFPBC Committee Members include: Brian C Carlisle, Donald Cecich, Emily DeFlorio, Frank Hackett, Todd M Kosterman, Geethanjali Mathiyalakan, Lisa A Matrundola, John Miller, Gerald Nardone, Christian D Nixon, Mark Brady Scott, John Sicilano, Colleen Ryan Soden

Joanna to reach out to Brian Carlisle who is a former Muraco parent and neighbor.

Mentor Program – Sandy doesn't have any volunteers, I've had one parent mention it, we would need a committee of parents to run it off the ground. All the logistics of finding parents, and matching it all up. We'll do a spotlight on it, try to including a link in the newsletter asking who is interested in the mentor program and gather interest/volunteers from there.

Menina is going to put up another message about composting for the week after thanksgiving.

Budget – Sarah provided and emailed all the budget report, much of the costs are repetitive, but we also have a balance from last year, we just take into consideration what we've raised. If there's a particular line item where we go over it should be fine, it always works out in the end. Over the course of the year people send me requests for things, if I was to do something that's out of the realm, or anything out of the budget you would know about it. The second half of the year is when we have more going on and we look at this on a monthly basis. Budget reviewed and was approved.