**Wheelock PTO Meeting Minutes**

**January 12, 2017**

**Attendees:** Donna Olson, Amanda Spears, Karen Seitz, Kelly Wysocki, Jill Werner, Mary Fraser, Sarah Powers, Kristen Careau

4 of 5 Executive board members were present allowing a quorum to vote:

**Special Presentation by Bethany Robertson, Library Media Specialist**

Bethany shared about some of the amazing ongoing library initiatives happening at Wheelock. One of the biggest tasks she has taken on is to organize the books into different genres, making them more attractive and accessible to the students. Rather than walking in and seeing all the spines of the different library books, students are finding labeled baskets of books organized by genre. They can flip through the forward-facing books in a favorite genre and gain exposure to a new authors and texts. It is a time consuming process but already Bethany is seeing students exploring more and ultimately checking out a greater variety of texts.

Bethany runs an amazing set of library clubs for students to participate in as an alternative to outdoor recess. Currently they are running Reading Rocks, Comic Club, Express it Club, and Maker Club during recess blocks, as well as an additional Book Club that she runs during the day to supports students in their growth as readers. The recess clubs are typically 25 minutes long. They run in trimester sessions and require student sign up at the start of the semester. Some clubs are more popular than others. Bethany works hard to keep track of all the students and make sure everyone gets into their first choice at some point during the school year.

Bethany spent some time sharing further about the Makers Club showing us her Makerspace in the the library. The Wheelock Library website she has created (<http://whlmc.weebly.com/>) includes tons of examples both tech and non tech of the challenges students are taking on in Makers Club. There are pictures and videos that show amazing learning through exploration. Bethany sees this club supporting students’ growth in teamwork, self-directed learning, problem solving, and creativity.

Bethany encourages parents to explore the Wheelock Library website to find information on grade level projects, clubs, upcoming special events, educational links/games, book recommendations, as well as volunteer opportunities. Here is the link to the slideshow she shared with the PTO: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1qNmDobGGgqRLD--1E0JVChJpIt_0OX_v9w335KHDn_I/edit#slide=id.p>

Bethany is doing such amazing things with our kids in the library--we are really lucky to have her!

**Vice President’s Report:**

Karen Seitz will be looking for volunteers for the ice cream social to be held at the end of March or the beginning of April. (Date is TBD) The plan is for it to be much like last year’s with ice cream being served in cafeteria while a DJ plays dance music in the gym.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Kelly Wysocki shared the budget and the recent cash flow reports. The Book Fair/Game night brought in about $700. That combined with the Box Tops has brought in about $900 from fundraising. The Ski Stop fundraiser money should be coming in soon, as well as the disbursement from the town wide Medfield SpiritWear fundraiser. Expenses are mainly tracking where they should be. Kelly is also going to be looking into a small bank fee.

**Secretary’s Report:**

Minutes are now voted on between meetings and will be posted via the newsflash following every PTO meeting. They will also be posted on the PTO Website.

**MCPE Report**

Mary Fraser shares that MCPE has been funding many grants this year across the schools. Wheelock had 2 big grants pass recently. One was a collaborative grant with the PTO that will supply lap desks to all the Wheelock classrooms, giving students alternate options for comfort while completing their school work. MCPE also approved a grant for a special performance group called Urban Improv that will be coming to both Dale and Wheelock this spring.

On Monday, January 30th, the Treasured Experiences Auction will begin. Teachers and specialists across the district volunteer to donate their time and skills for special individual and group experiences to be auctioned off to families and their students. The kids love the opportunity to have this special additional time with their teachers! Keep an eye out for it. The auction will run for one school week and will be wrapping up on that Friday.

Look for additional upcoming MCPE sponsored events: the LCR tournament to be held March 24th and the Spelling Bee to be held in April.

**Principal’s Report:**

Donna Olson offers a warm thank you for the holiday lunch. The teachers greatly appreciated it!

It has been a very busy year as Wheelock remains committed to fostering Respect, Responsibility, and Safety within the learning community. The staff has focused on modeling and recognizing positive student behavior and taking different approaches for teaching accountability and responsibility for one’s actions. Many of the grants Donna and Wheelock have requested are building upon this respectful foundation by providing helpful tools and resources to students and staff. The teachers recognize the importance of allowing students to have mindful breaks and alternate work spaces so they can do their best learning. The program “Go Noodle” provides movement breaks for the students and helps reduce distraction. There are accessible sensory stations for students that need a break and there are standing desks, and lap desks, on the way, that will allow students to have comfortable positioning alternatives in the classroom. All of this can help lead to more focused learning.

Grants have also supported the goal of building Diversity, Mindfulness, and Empathy at Wheelock. Each classroom, as well as the library, is getting 10 new picture books that promote Diversity, Mindfulness, and Empathy. Donna picked out a special one titled Friendship Rules and traveled to each classroom to share this book with the students. Students then spent time brainstorming in their classrooms about this idea of “what is a friend?” Representatives from each class reported back to Donna and there is now a school friendship video that is being made. There will also be a group called Urban Improv coming to both Dale and Wheelock to promote these social themes of being open-minded and thoughtful of others.

Donna is thankful for the grant funding. She has been happy with the positive impact the grants have had at Wheelock. She and Dale principal, Stephen Grenham, have been sharing successful grant ideas with one another, so the benefits of excellent, new programming and tools are spreading beyond one school.

This spring, third grade will be taking MCAS. Donna clarified that the state is not staying with the PARCC test. Instead the state came up with a hybrid, now known as the Next Generation MCAS (formally 2.0). This new test reflects the Common Core Standards as well as standards from the Massachusetts Frameworks. There are more accommodations available for all students with this test than previous MCAS and there is hope that this will help provide more opportunities for student success. Stay tuned for more info on MCAS in months to come.

**Updates**:

A PTO grant written by Jim Kuehl for 18 lap desks was recently approved.

Now all the PTO funded grade level books have been distributed to the classrooms. The 2nd grade classrooms were waiting to receive a very special book that, for a period of time, was hard to find. They have now received it. It is called The Invisible Boy.

The student inspired mural painted by Bren Bataclan is now finished. It is on the 2nd floor and it looks amazing!

**WInter Carnival Update:** Amanda Spears and Kelly Wysocki are heading up the Winter Carnival fundraiser this year. The Winter Carnival is a huge fundraiser for both Memorial and Wheelock. It will be held March 11th from 10-3. Amanda and Kelly will be going to a faculty meeting to discuss the importance of this fundraiser with teachers. They are exploring the idea of trying to have teacher experience booths as part of the day’s events, so they want to get feedback on that. Donation and volunteer requests will be coming! Your help is needed to make this a successful event!!

**Box Tops**: There is a town-wide Box Top collection competition being held now through March 31st, with the winning school receiving a special reward. Keep sending in those Box Tops!

**New Business:**

There are a few PTO positions that will need to be filled for the fall of 2017. We will need a new 2nd Grade Co-President and a new Vice President. Both are 2 year positions.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 9th 7:00 PM**