W-L PTA Meeting

Monday, January 9, 2017

Meeting Minutes

WELCOME

SCA UPDATE: CO-PRESIDENT ALICE NALAND

* Preparation is under way for two key programs that are coming in the next couple of months:
  + Love Week: will happen February or March; specific timing still being finalized in partnership w/the Administration. This is a week of promoting acts of kindness including a Compliment Wall in front of Cafeteria and giving away wristbands. The week is funded by PTA grant (thank you!).
  + Blood Drive: in March; last year 100+ people donated. Each donation can touch up to three people’s lives. Students, faculty - anyone in the community can participate. Older students and parents are welcome. It will be publicized via the regular channels.

PRESENTATION ON THE CAPACITY ISSUE BY APS FACILITIES ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER AND W-L ALUMNI JOHN PECK:

* 342-400+ students will be moved out of W-L in the next four years, as part of the redistricting action the School Board took late last year.
* The goal was to keep W-L underneath 106% capacity, and the reasoning is that we don’t want to exceed that number because we don’t want trailers on the site once construction begins at the Ed Center site.
* Ed Center site will definitely be utilized to alleviate capacity in some form or another Ed Center staff are preparing to move to the Sequoia site on Washington Blvd.
* Neighborhoods that are getting moved in this fall could potentially move back to W-L when we do a large-scale boundary change in 4-5 years.
* The Ed Center site could potentially be an addition to W-L capacity — the idea of an “anex” or an “academy” for 9th graders.
* It could be a choice program for high school, it could be an elementary school site.
* Several decades ago, W-L was the biggest High School in the county by quite a large margin, with a student population of 3,000+. There has been research done on the pros and cons of a large high school.
* When the three compressive High Schools were in the planning stages, populations in the High Schools were consistently below 1,300 though the 80s and 90s. W-L was planned for 1600 students. Wakefield and Yorktown were planned in similar ways. No one could have predicted the growth we’ve seen.
* The School Board has also recently released demographic information on Race and Free/Reduced lunch populations.
* Lots of options are under consideration. Lots of people have visions for what the site could be. No decisions are made.
* For Washington-Lee, whatever the program that gets placed at the Ed Center site, because of its proximity it would impact W-L at some level in some way.
* W-L families are urged to make their voices heard as the process moves forward.
* Next Steps:
  + ACI is taking the lead on the program type the High School seats will be and what program will go at the Ed Center site. These meetings are open to the public.
  + ACI will make recommendation to the School Board
  + The decision will be made in the Fall; construction to start shortly thereafter. Seats will come live by 2020-2021
  + Public comment opportunities will be a priority throughout the process.
  + Make your voices heard.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

* The last Transfer Orientation was today. This is an event for students/families who live outside of the W-L attendance area but that want to attend W-L as a transfer. There were 40+ participants. At High School Information Night, we had a packed house. Last year there were 60 spots and 150 students applying for them. This year, the cap will be 64 spots.
* Last year’s state champion Boys Soccer Team will be having a ring ceremony during the game on January 10 at 8 p.m. in the Gymnasium. Students are returning from college to participate in this. They players will receive a ring for winning the State Championships.
* Hall of Fame: On January 13 at 7 p.m. in the Gymnasium there will be an induction tot the Hall of Fame for Staff or alumni who had a significant impact in sports/athletic world.
* Reminders: No school on Martin Luther King Day (1/16) and Inauguration Day (1/20)
* Science Fair will be on 1/21
* January 26-31 is second quarter exam week
* Pippin, the Musical, will be performed on February 2, 3 and 4.
* The last day of the Quarter is 2/3. No school for students - Teacher work day.
* On 2/10 there will be early release with a 12:30 dismissal.
* Fran DeRocco is W-L’s Teacher of the Year and will represent the school to the next level. Letters of endorsements can still be submitted.
* Student of the Semester Pizza Lunch will be - February 2. Each teacher can recognize four students with this honor using criteria of their choosing. Honored students get to have a pizza lunch.

DIRECTOR OF COUNSELING UPDATE

* The last college help sessions has concluded. Seniors are winding down the college app process.
* Post-Secondary Planning night scheduled for 1/17. Families of Juniors and Sophomores are urged to attend.
* Planning is under way for scheduling for next year. Eight grade families (rising 9th graders) will have a planning night on 1/31. There will be another session on 2/1 for rising 10th - 12h grade families.
* On February 6 and 7, Counselors will be going into classrooms to speak with students directly about their scheduling and get that work under way.

APS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTION PRESENTATION BY PTA REPRESENTITIVE TO ACI KYRA BUCHKO

* ACI is a group that has 1-2 representatives from each school in the County.
* ACI provides input and makes recommendations on instructional programs for APS.
* During meetings, ACI members listen to reports by committee members (there are 13 committees), ask questions, give comments and then vote as a group on the recommendations proposed by the committee.
* The challenge (because of timing) is to get input from members of the broader W-L community. For people interested in getting more involved, just reach out. There are many paths to contributing. Pls just signal your interest.
* DISCUSSION
  + IDEA: Expand the IB program to accommodate any child in the county who wanted to take IB, rather than putting a cap on it and having a waiting list. THOUGHTS: There would be trade-offs. (more below)
  + PERSPECTIVE: We’re proposing a major expansion and we don’t really know what the populations will be 10 or 20 years from now, just as in the 80s and 90s, no one could have imagined the growth that we’re having now. Things to up and down. Given this uncertainty, as taxpayers, how much and what we’re going to invest — there’s a feeling that the train has left the station. All options don’t seem to have been fully vetted. Office space as an option, for example, doesn’t seem to be getting serious consideration. It seems like it’s too hard to change boundaries (the right way to address the problem) and that it’s easier to spend $100M on building a new structure. THOUGHTS: We also have 1,000 more kids in the building than the structure was designed for, so there is a real sense of urgency. John Chadwick (APS facilities lead) has said publicly that whatever we build needs to be a flexible space.
  + PERSPECTIVE: I’d like to see something done at the other schools as well to make sure the growth is more equalized. Why is it that W-L is on a growth trajectory but the other high schools seem to be spared from having to accommodate this explosive growth?
  + QUESTION: Is there a plan to put IB into any of the other high school? This might make sense to help address the growth, as it’s hard to start up an IB program at the other High Schools. FEEDBACK: There’s quite a process. It’s expensive and it takes time. Several years ago, Wakefield explored it but decided that it wasn’t the right path for that community.
  + COMMENT: We as a community should push for making sure we get the money to have the support systems are in place to support the growth as well. Ensure there are enough counselors, enough sports teams so that everyone who wants to have an opportunity to participate will be able to.
  + WRAPPING UP: The PTA is going to make every effort to keep our community informed. We have a number of ways to get people plugged into different committees as folks express interest in participation. We’re happy to do more surveys as our community determines we needs to.

TREASURER’S REPORT

* Since the last meeting, we’ve written the checks for the Teacher Grants and the grants to the student clubs that the Grants Committee recommended. With that, we’ve accomplished our big spending for the year.
* We’re a bit behind on the Grocery Card programs in terms of income. Please be sure to link your grocery store account to W-L to help us meet our income objectives.
* We wrote the first deposit check for the Senior Boat Party. Parents of seniors: Please get your ticket purchases in.
* QUESTION: Who manages Class Dues and how does that work. Response: Dues go to the school; they’re kept in the accounts for each class (Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, Senior) and they get transferred and follow the student. The school keeps track of payment for individual students. The dues pay for Cap and Gown, Graduation Costs, Senior Prom, Senior Picnic. Once the Seniors have graduated, if there is any money left in the account (and there is usually not) then it rolls back to the underclassmen to help defray costs for upcoming classes.
* We need to find a new Treasurer as Lee is graduating this year. Please step forward if you’d like to take the baton.

PTA PRESIDENT’S REPORT

* We will need volunteers to serve for the Nominating Committee. An announcement will go out in the next newsletter.
* If we have an announcement go out on the Listserv saying we need help for some PTA event, please consider stepping forward to help.

PTA COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

* On January 18, in the Theater, Reflections winners will be honored. W-L has a number of winners.
* On January 12, the Hispanic Parents will meet at 6:30 for meet-and-greet and then the meeting will start at 7 p.m.

NEXT MEETINGS:

* February 13: Social Media: Opportunities and Threats
* March 13: Alcohol and Drugs
* April 3: TBD
* May 8: What to Expect the First Year: Outreach to the parents of 9th graders
* June 12: End-of-Year Picnic