

WiHi PTO Meeting 11/9/15 in the Media Center

Attendees: Kelley Bezrutch, Kim Vnuk-Kronick, Meg Wallace, Alexabelle Talbott, Naina Chethan, Paula Drummond, Carol Knight-Drain, Caitlin Olmstead-Phillips, Karen Morey, Jen Barba, Khadija Peracha, Cindy & Ken Ward, Sarah Stone, Jocelyn Stitt, Kelly Guthrie, Wendy Roberts, Karen Zaruba, Barb Askew, Sunil Nair, Christine Bruxvoort, Mira Leerer, Jing Liu, Halimah Al-Qadi, Anna Broughton, John Powell, Angie Smith, Tuba Khan, Lisa Garafetian, Sue Barker, Osman Korkmaz, Celeste Green

Introductions

Principal's Update Nhu Do:

Changing the Academic Climate at WiHi—WiHi's goal is to move from an atmosphere of academic competitiveness to one of academic collaboration. Students, staff, and parents have all mentioned that there is a lot of competition at WiHi. This reflects the larger climate of competition in our society such as rankings, etc. We are fortunate to live in a high-achieving community but the ugly side of this culture is that it creates imbalance. Our staff is not promoting that imbalance. Teachers don't rank students or publish class averages. WiHi has a lot of deliberate policies. We want a culture where students are free to ask questions without embarrassment. We want them to know that learning involves struggle and asking for help. To help address these concerns, the students will have Passport team to discuss academic bullying and how to remedy it. The staff will continue to emphasize that the "score" is not the focus. Staff has been reading "Mindset" by Carol Dweck and talking about strategies/phrases to insure that WiHi is promoting learning & growth rather than "score." What we care about is what is actually learned. We hope this practice will diffuse and eliminate the competitive culture. We tell students not to share scores. Grades should reflect growth. To support families to make this change we will have a "Culture of Collaboration" committee. First step: gather information with a survey. There will also be a book study for the parent group which will meet 30minutes before PTO meeting starts. Students sometimes seem to one-up each other about how much work they have. WiHi would really like to address this and be strategic.

Concerns of one parent:

To administration: One parent thinks WiHi needs to chill out. Her 9th grader is getting the message that the IB degree so much harder and because of this she is losing the expectation that learning is fun. Her teachers say that need to do really well in 9th grade or she will not be able to pass the exam.

Comments of another parent:

Another 9th grader boy is not feeling that way. His parent is not hearing that. He says he is liking it because his teachers are great. He really likes "hand-on" portion of the curriculum.

Ms Do comment:

We work hard to choose teachers who like working with students.

Student (Alexabelle) comments:

WiHi was hard at first. But came to love it. Love the hands-on learning.

Comments of another parent:

Her daughter started mid-year freshman year. Because she was feeling a lot of pressure, they set up a meeting with counselor. He told her that which colleges and universities would be a good fit for her. Told her what GPA she needed to get into these schools. This took a lot of pressure off. If you get a plan, then then there is less stress. The best school is what fits for individual student.

Comments of another parent:

Would like school to emphasize the intellectual joy. Would like to introduce her son to people who went to "lesser" colleges who have done very well in life. Sometimes she wishes her son cared less and had more time to read on his own.

Suggestions:

Encourage Gap Year?

Class parents can help by creating small class events to give students more opportunities to socialize.

Goal is to develop a love of learning and happy, healthy individuals.

One parent recommended the TED talk "Superchicken." Data shows groups more successful and productive when everyone has a voice and is heard rather than when groups are dominated by one super-successful person.

What our children need to learn at school:

- 1) Critical thinking skills.
- 2) How to work in a collaborative environment. Because the group will be more successful than any one individual.

Another parent comment:

Children are individuals. School should not promote mediocrity. Some kids put pressure on themselves while others do not. The teachers at WiHi are great and love to work with students and are engaging.

Culture of Collaboration Committee will meet on Thursday 11/19 2:45. First book club will not be until January.

The PTO leadership is working on a survey so that the process can be data driven. The anecdotes provide one picture, but we also want the bigger picture, with data.

Approved agenda, minutes, financial notes

Communications update:

- 1) If you signed up for text messages please understand that this will be used for events at school and many kinds of everyday stuff--not just emergencies. This is because people want timely reminders.
- 2) Our Facebook page is getting more updates.
- 3) Emails from deans (comment: Biweekly emails are sometimes outdated)
- 4) Automated phone messages are from WISD

EZ free money update:

Have you emailed to say you are participating?

Participation is still weak.

Discussed the possibility of donation so don't have to participate in scrip.

PTO leadership feels it is important to broaden participation in scrip.

Grants money must come from somewhere.

Busch's program is now like Kroger—it is just linked to Busch's My Way program. But have to go online to relink

Student Update:

Movie Night--February

Student vs Staff basketball game—some people thought it was not inclusive enough last year.

Trying to make more inclusive this year.

Senior stuff:

- 1) Auction. Not just for seniors. Dessert and coffee with auction. 6:30/7:00. Seniors donate something they have made of service. Teachers also donate stuff. Artwork. Hand made things.
- 2) First senior fundraiser at Panera in Canton on Ford road.
- 3) Senior skip day. A tradition. Your parents call you in sick but you are marked as excused. This year wanted an inclusive senior event. Ihop zap zone. Bonding experience. Teachers knew about it.

Teacher Rep Update: Mr. Garcia not able to be here. Save until next meeting

Big PTO announcement: Angie Smith will work with Kim to be co-president.

Other PTO needs:

- 1) Help with spirit wear
- 2) Help with process for grants
- 3) Also shadow Meg and Tami for secretary and treasurer.

Update 501C3 status:

501C3 status really helps fundraising because it makes it easier to reach out to corporations. But to do that, we need to be set up with the proper documentation. There are expenses involved (~\$2000.00) to apply, get, and manage 501C3 status. Angie's husband will take care of this process. Will start contacting businesses. Put together with mailing list. To do this, need a donation of \$1000 by end of year and then another by 1st quarter 2016 and the donors need to agree to delay taking a deduction until 2018. The Olmstead family has kindly agreed to make the first donation. They have agreed to start the process for us and not take the deduction until 2018. KW (Keller Williams) Cares will give the 2nd \$1000.

WIHi/WIMA Teacher/Staff Platters in December.

We love our teachers!!!! ...so help support our holiday recognition for them! Naina will send out a sign up for homemade baked goods and fruit. Please sign up! We will accept donations on Monday December 14 and Tuesday morning December 15. We will assemble the platters on Tuesday December 15. We need volunteers to help assemble these gifts.

January Meeting: Dave Dugger will give an update he is the CEO of WEOC.