

Willard SAC Meeting Notes, April 10, 2017
(Approved)

Present: Liz Berk, Pat Fernandes, Katie Kerr, Rachael Morris, Kate Mullen, Carolyn Ferraioli, Rebecca Comjean

Absent: Anne Kilroy

Minutes from the March 6th meeting were approved.

Classroom News:

Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2 (presented by Rachael Morris.)

Kindergarten-

- Welcoming Spring - talking about what they like to do in spring but also having fun talking about the craziness of New England weather
- Author Suzanne Bloom is coming on Friday (7th)
- planting beans, sunflowers, pumpkins, peas.... observing and recording growth. comparing and contrasting the plants and plant growth
- Math- addition and subtraction, understanding word problems, measuring, weighing
- Literacy- segmenting and blending sounds, writing workshop- writing three page stories with a beginning, middle and end

First Grade-

- Finishing up All About Books - this is a big informational writing project for first graders
- Math learning about Fact Families and Geometry
- Health - March is nutrition month, learning about Healthy Plate
- In literacy working hard on Bossy 'R'

Second Grade -

- In the thick of research (Great Apes, Whales, Bears) getting ready for Research Breakfasts - will create informational writing binders
- Day 14 of Chick Lifecycle watching and learning how the embryo is changing
- Finishing up Unit 6 in EM4 and beginning Unit 7 - adding and subtracting larger numbers and measurement

Grades 3, 4 and 5 (presented by Katie Kerr)

Third Grade-

-Literacy- working on figurative language in tall tale stories, had an idiom parade throughout the school on Tuesday March 28th where they came dressed as their favorite idioms. Started learning about fairytales

-Writing- narrative writing, using many forms of figurative language

-Math- using multiplication and division to solve number stories, learning about grouping symbols

-Social Studies- starting to study Colonial Concord

Fourth Grade:

-Magazine project

-Immigration unit- literacy and social studies, going on a field trip to the Lowell Mills after vacation

-Math- finishing up division

-Science- working on ecosystems

Fifth grade:

-Willard Food Drive- in charge of telling younger grades, collecting, and organizing cans

-DARE program- learning about making safe and healthy decisions

-Science- learning about the solar system and how the objects in the solar system interact with each other

-Writing- in Mrs. Lyons and Mrs. Hehn's class, they encouraged students to submit a piece of writing to the Will McDonough Writing Contest sponsored by the Sports Museum in Boston. They had some girls who participated and even got an honorable mention.

-Math- students applied what they've been learning about volume to determine the total volume of the famous Willis Tower in Chicago.

Specials classes (presented by Kate Mullen)

Art - Kristin Saunders

-**Kindergarten:** Drawing and collage: We read The Mixed up Chameleon and Planting a Rainbow for signs of spring drawings and collages.

- First Grade:** Paper sculpture. How to make paper stand up. Making animals and habitats, cylinders, supporting tall shapes of paper.
- Second Grade:** Printmaking - the theme is classroom animal research (great apes, bears, whales)
- Third Grade:** Puppets! Papier-mâché and felt puppet making
- Fourth Grade:** starting paper sculpture unit
- Fifth Grade:** clay island sculptures and Art Retrospective prep (framing work)

Physical Education - Mike Germond

-**Grades K-5** are in the midst of a fitness unit working through the obstacle course. We are using this unit to discuss the importance of fitness, what the body's response to exercise is and with grades 3-5 teaching them how to reach a target heart rate. This unit will run for 2 weeks

Music - Charlyn Bethell

- Kindergarten** classes will be learning opposites in music: fast-slow, loud-soft, short-long. We will start doing a musical play, the Three Nanny Goats. We will learn about instrument families and sing spring songs.
- First graders:** singing Earth Day songs focusing on animals' habitat. We will be learning about putting beats into groups that we call measures. We will explore high and low sounds.
- Second graders:** We have now learned the notes: So, Mi, La, and Do. We will read and write those notes and learn some new games: Billy Billy, Here Comes Sally, Dinah, and Telephone.
- Third graders** just wrote a song that we notated at the computer lab. We will continue to read notes and play the recorder--and add xylophones as we play.
- Fourth graders** are learning the musical form, Theme and Variation. We will do some poems in Two Parts (book by Paul Fleishmann) and sing some rounds.
- Fifth graders** will start learning about Renaissance music, do some sight-singing, and start to learn the note, Fa.
- Our chorus** is singing: Fun Train, Circle Round the Moon, 12 Gates, Thula Klizeo, and the Crawdad Song. I am looking for some rounds that are more difficult for them, as they sing rounds SO well!

Library – Erica Josselyn

- Kindergarteners** will be listening to books about spring.
- Grade 1 students** will be starting a research unit on weather words.
- Grade 2 students** are finishing their Digital Citizenship unit. In second grade we focus on talking with a parent or other adult with you when you go online because not all websites are safe for kids.
- Grade 3 students** are doing research on arthropods. They will be sharing what they've learned by making eBooks.
- Grade 4 and 5 students** are doing their Media Literacy units. In grade 4 we focus on the truth behind food advertisements and how advertisers use persuasion to sell their products. In grade 5 we'll be looking at how the media uses stereotypes to tell a story.

Willard News (presented by Pat Fernandes)

- Principal Search:** On April 4th, Matt Lucey, current principal in Weston, was officially named next principal of Willard School. Pat contacted him. They will work together to make sure the transition is smooth.
- SAC next year:** SAC will need two new teacher reps and 2 new parent reps next year. Pat will advertise these openings.
- MCAS:** Last week MCAS (ELA) was administered to Grade 3. This week MCAS (ELA) was administered to Grade 4. Willard did a trial run prior to MCAS starting. Some glitches were found. The tech specialists from Ripley came to fix any issues and found a faulty wireless base. All set now. After vacation, the fifth graders will take the MCAS (ELA). After that, the same MCAS schedule will be implemented for math. All of the above testing was conducted on-line. Later in the spring, the fifth graders will take the science portion of the MCAS. That will be a paper and pencil assessment.
- Science Fair:** The science fair is scheduled for Sunday, May 7th. Sign ups have been slow, so Pat is working hard to promote the fair. She has asked teachers to promote the fair, as well.
- Spelling Bee:** The spelling bee was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. It has been rescheduled for May 7th, directly following the Science Fair.
- Food Drive:** The food drive is in full swing. Families are traditionally very generous. All food collected will go to Open Table, which is very grateful for supplies during this (slower) time of year.
- Art's Night:** Art's Night is scheduled for May 24th. This event allows

fifth graders to show a body of their artwork through their years at Willard. Each student is provided a large paper panel. Students decide which work they would like to have displayed. They will also write a narrative to explain their artwork and why they chose particular pieces.

At 7:00 PM that same night, there will be a chorus, band and orchestra concert. This event kicks off the end of the elementary experience for the fifth graders.

-Willard Carnival: The Willard Carnival is scheduled for Sunday, June 4th.

-Fifth grade celebration: The fifth grade end of year celebration is scheduled for June 15th.

-Capital Plan: Willard grounds update: Article 14 coming up at town meeting relates to capital improvements at CPS. \$200,000 is designated for seeding and an irrigation project. Rudd Coffey has met with a group of interested parents. They created 3 separate (but similar) surveys designed to gather information about ideas for improvements and enhancements to Willard's landscaping. The surveys were geared toward parents, teachers and students. One question on the parent survey raised the idea of fund raising. Pat felt that it was premature to discuss fundraising before the Town Meeting vote. Since the funds have not yet been approved, it was felt that this question should not be raised until funds have been committed. Pat also mentioned that any initiative connected with fundraising should be spearheaded by the PTG not the Willard SAC. So if the Town Meeting article passes any next steps should be coordinated with the PTG. What is important now is to ask for ideas/concepts around landscaping and what else should be considered. Pat showed the SAC committee the parent survey so that we could see first hand the questions that this planning committee wants to pose to parents.

-School Improvement Plan for year 2017/2018: Pat feels that we should not come up with many new initiatives. This will give the new principal the time and opportunity to adjust the School Improvement Plan with his guidance.

Most goals remain the same, however, Pat noted some changes in the new School Improvement Plan:

***Item 5 Within the ELA goal** has changed to reference Nancy Boyles' resources and recommended picture books. Nancy Boyles has developed thematic based lessons using literature texts. Katie Lyons (grade 5 teacher) had applied for a Concord Ed Fund grant using Nancy Boyles resources and was not funded, however, Diana Rigby stepped in and funded this proposal.

At a faculty meeting, Katie and Sharon Hehn (grade 5 Special Ed teacher) shared their experiences with the Nancy Boyles' units and her recommended picture books. All teachers at Willard will have access to these resources.

***Math:** This has been the first full year of implementation of EM4.

Teachers are "teaching with fidelity" to make sure that they understand the complete intention of the program. This will take a couple of years to "set".

Pat is very optimistic that over time, we'll see tremendous growth in our students performance math.

***School Climate: Item 3** regarding all school meetings and assemblies has been loosened up some so that the new principal can explore options around how to gather as a whole school. **Item 5**, which addresses promoting social/emotional opportunities via Mindfulness and Open Circle, will continue.

Item 9 addresses Willard School's philosophy of inclusiveness, ensuring that all families and students experience a welcoming atmosphere. The ELL teacher will host a parent meeting yearly (and will translate when needed.)

All classroom teachers do the same. The outcome will be that all families will feel connected to our community as measured by their feedback. **Item 10**

references homework. Last spring parents responded positively to a parent survey about the climate at Willard School. The only issue from that survey was around homework. In response, the Leadership Team reviewed current research and policies in other districts. This team chose several relevant articles and shared them with the Willard faculty. The faculty will review these in May to see if they can come to a consensus. Teachers will also

discuss their homework policies within their grade levels and will come to a consensus to ensure consistency within the grade level. Currently, our homework policy follows the district guidelines, but within that framework there is some discrepancy. By the end of the year, a clear goal around homework may be established. **Item 11** addresses Spanish instruction to be implemented next year (2017/2018). If this item passes the budget vote,

Spanish will be taught 2 times a week for 20 minutes in kindergarten and 2 times a week for 30 minutes for grades 1 through 5. Spanish teachers have been interviewed and are available (one per building) should this item pass.

***Technology: Item 3:** Last year the Google Drive platform was launched. Professional development around Google Drive was offered to all teachers.

This year, Genoveva Matheus (technology specialist), helped individual teachers as the need arose. Going forward, this will continue. **Item 4**

addresses Grade Level progress meetings. This year these meetings, formerly held during the school day and requiring substitutes, were

conducted on Tuesday afternoons on a quarterly basis . Grade level teams will need to reflect on whether four meetings per year, is adequate. This will affect scheduling for next year. Scheduling these meetings needs to be systematic. Also, because the principal, language arts and math specialists need to be at these meetings, their availability will need to be taken into account. **Item 7** refers to the "Hour of Code" experience this year. The entire Willard school community experienced The Hour of Code on one particular day this past winter. This was very successful. The Hour of Code will continue to offer teachers a way to offer students coding opportunities in the classroom.

Adjournment: The April meeting was adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Mullen