Parent Guild Meeting

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Meeting called to order: 8:15 am
Number of people in attendance: Approximately 65

Welcome
President – Chris Smale

- Chris called the meeting to order by recognizing school had already been underway for two months. She reflected on the many events that had already taken place at Windward as follows:

- Seniors submitted early decision applications to colleges
- Juniors have taken PSAT and are on East Coast Trip
- All students have taken tests and quizzes
- Most of the grade levels have taken their retreats
- Spirit Week
- Buy it on the Bridge
- Comedy Sports
- Homecoming
- Grand Friends Day
- Coffee House
- Upper School Musical, "Urine Town" has been rehearsing
- WW Student Musicians working with adults with Alzheimer's have had a benefit concert
- Robotics have been in competitions and received a Judges award
- Middle School Debate team placed fourth in the New Roads tournament
- Upper School Speech and Debate team received individual 1st, 3rd and 4th and won three debates as a team
- World Language Honor Society has held their induction ceremony
- Cum laude and National Honor Society has also had their induction ceremony
- Middle School playoffs with the 7th Grade Royal FF team took home a league championship
- Upper School sports have participated in playoffs
- Student and Parent Prospective Open Houses have taken place

Next, Chris enthusiastically introduced the Party Book Committee to announce the launch of Party Book.

Party Book - Carolyn Caines, Lisa Hofheimer, Joan Kramer

- Carolyn Caines, Lisa Hofheimer and Joan Kramer took the floor to inform everyone about the launch of Windward's Party Book.
- Carolyn explained "Party Book" is a year long fundraising platform that provides Windward parents and students the opportunity to host, sponsor, and attend a variety of special interest parties.
- This year, Party Book is has a new format which allows parties to start earlier in the year and to add parties as the school year unfolds. For example, the first party was held on Sunday night for parent's of Windward Juniors leaving on their "College Trip". Parent's went out to share an evening together after dropping students off at the airport early the same morning.
- Everyone is encouraged to host a party if they have a hobby or interest they would like to share. Please contact Carolyn, Lisa or Joan who will be more that happy to help discuss ideas and offer support.
- The names of the first 50 people to sign up for parties were entered into raffle. Carolyn and Lisa selected a name out of a hat. The winner of the raffle was Sherri Zigman who won 2 tickets to the Blue Plate Oysterette Party.

Guest Speakers

Assistant Head of School, Director of Middle School – Eric Mandel

- Eric Mandel took the floor to introduce Senior student, Stella Ginsberg. Stella was one of the three student representatives on the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Eric explained that he and Stella were at the meeting to discuss one of the major topics that surfaced during the Strategic Planning process. He reported that both faculty and students expressed the need for a better approach for organizing the day to be as productive as possible.
- Specifically, one key question was raised: **How do we best organize the day to enhance our students' learning, to enable our faculty to create dynamic, engaging lessons, and to reduce unnecessary student stress?**
- The question inspired the administration to do research and look at different models for structuring the school day that might improve the current plan.
- In the process, one potential schedule emerged as a possible solution to change the current school day. The new schedule would involve students having fewer classes per day for an extended time period. For example, students would have three classes per day broken down as two classes for 80 minutes and 1 class for 55 minutes. The model would provide the same number of instructional minutes at the current schedule (215 minutes), but the classes would meet less often for longer stretches of time.
- The possible benefit to students would result in fewer transitions during the day with more focused study and homework. The thought would be that having fewer subjects per day, would allow students to be able to spend more concentrated time in each class. As well, students would have one less class per day to study and prepare homework which could help reduce stress.
- As a result, the administration has designed a pilot program to experience what a schedule with longer class periods would offer. The current plan is to try the experimental schedule for a two week period beginning March 6 and ending March 17.

- Piloting the program for two weeks will allow students, staff and administration to explore the potential of restructuring the schedule without fully committing to an unproven solution.
- A draft of the proposed schedule has been presented to both the students and staff.
- Stella Ginsberg took the floor to discuss the student perspective of the proposed new schedule of few classes for longer periods of time.
- Stella recognized three potential benefits for students as follows: 1) Artistic classes will have greater time to set up and clean up; 2) Fewer classes per day will result in less homework due each day; and 3) Reduced class meetings per day will alleviate time spent transitioning between subjects.
- Eric retook the floor to share that certain departments were extremely excited about having longer class periods. For example, Science loved the idea of longer lab time. The Arts could use more time for setting up and rehearsing. As well, the Athletic department liked that students would have more time to change and practice. Many of the Humanities faculty was happy to have longer classes to engage students in more hands on activities.
- Eric acknowledged that teachers would possibly need some help adjusting lesson plans to maximize the longer class time. As a result, the CTL is working with teachers by providing support and input on creative ways to utilize the extended time.
- After the two week trial period, students and faculty will be surveyed to provide feedback on the pros and cons of the experimental schedule.
- Based on the feedback and more research, the administration may decided to pilot a new program next year. By looking at different options, the administration aims to explore the best possible ways to provide a schedule that will work best for WW faculty and students.

Associate Director of Diversity and Inclusivity, Upper School Counselor – Roger Bridges
Associate Director of Diversity and Inclusivity, Director of Middle School Counseling – Tammy Clem

- Roger Bridges took the floor to pose an important question which he and Tammy are asking students to consider: **How can all members of the Windward community advance the School's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, creating a sense of belonging for everyone and an environment where difference is celebrated?**
- Tammy followed Roger by explaining how one of her objectives is to ask all members of Windward community to explore how they see themselves as instrumental in helping others. Her desire is to get students and faculty to acknowledge their own personal strengths that they can use to contribute to the outcome of inclusivity.
- Next, Roger shared a question that had been presented to Windward students: **What is the first thing you thing of when you think of diversity?** One common initial response is "ethnic" diversity. In reflection, the view of diversity in terms of ethnicity is very narrow. He wants students to realize diversity is much more complex.
- Further, his goal is to help students recognize they have the power to change perspectives by looking for small ways to be more inclusive. He challenges students to ask themselves how they can make every student at WW feel more welcome. For example, a student may take the first step in speaking to another student eating alone at lunch. As a result, he hopes to inspire students to discover how they can be leaders in inclusivity.
- Tammy expanded her approach to inclusivity by asking students to dig deeper to look for ways to get involved in social inclusion. She hoped that students would open there eyes to the possibility of engaging in new relationships with students who may feel isolated

- Both Roger and Tammy shared how they are working on student task forces to promote "Student Engagement" at Windward and to have greater awareness of what is happening socially on the Windward campus. By employing the following Task Forces, Roger and Tammy aim to build a Windward community that is inclusive and welcoming.
  - Task Force #1 - Student Engagement: Fostering inclusive and nurturing connections in the Windward Community (Leaders: Tammy Clem and Roger Bridges)
  - Task Force #2 - Faculty and Staff Recruitment: Identifying and recruiting highly qualified diverse candidates (Leaders: Peter Christian, Francis Jones and Ernie Levroney)
  - Task Force #3 - Curriculum: Examine and look at ways to ensure the curriculum reflects Windward's commitment to diversity and inclusion (Leaders: Dan Walker and Sarah Clark)
  - Task Force #4 - Admissions: Strengthening partnerships and create new partnerships to attract a diverse group of students (Leaders: Sharon Perline, Lisa Walker and Eric Mandel)
- Lastly, Roger discussed how he and Tammy plan to meet regularly with the Task Force groups to gather information and set goals to improve inclusivity at Windward.

Head of School, Tom Gilder

- Tom took the floor to express how the administration wants the Windward community to feel free to share their thoughts and concerns. He asked everyone to please let the school know when they hear about a concern. By getting the message to the right person, the administration can help address whatever the situation may be.
- Next, he presented the latest version of the campus master plan. This version incorporates ongoing program research and site visits, as well as the insightful feedback of the students, faculty and parents.
- As well, Tom asked for support of the pilot schedule program. He offered that by experimenting with different scheduling models Windward could improve the current approach.
- Lastly, Tom acknowledged Peggy Proctor's departure from Windward to accept a new position as Head of School, at Echo Horizon. Tom congratulated Peggy and shared how he looked forward continuing to work with her at her new school.

Parent Guild President, Chris Smale

- Chris retook the floor. She motioned to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2016 Parent Guild Meeting. The motion and minutes were approved.
- Next, Chris acknowledged the following Parent Guild Committees for all of their hard work.

Parent Guild Would Like to Thank:

Alumni – Sheri Altieri, Kathleen Boltiansky, Sharyn Levey, Lisa Platt

- Thanks to everyone on the committee and who volunteered to help with the first mailing for college Freshman. Several of the WW alums have reported how special it was to receive the care package.

Grandparents' Day – Anne Factor, Julie Sandor, Linda Solomon

- This year, Grand Friends Day was especially gorgeous. Thanks to everyone who helped to make the event so amazing!

Homecoming – Ann Gianopulos, Lisa Lewin, Maria Mancuso-Gersh, Dana Kaller

- Homecoming was wonderful. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and efforts to make the event such a success.

Volunteer Opportunities – Monica Rice

- A big thank you to Monica Rice for helping organize the Parent Guild volunteers.

Additionally, Lisa Provisor wanted to announce to the Parent Guild that they were all welcome to help the Alumni Committee with their next mailing which takes place on February 8. She encouraged interested parties to get in touch with the committee for more information on how to help.

Committee Reports

Faculty/Staff Holiday Gift Program – Alisa Farkas, Kristen Hodess, Lauren Samuel

- Soon, the Faculty/Staff Holiday Gift Program will begin. The program offers Windward parents the opportunity to make a monetary contribution which is given as a bonus to the faculty and staff during the holidays.

Spring Event – Nadine Bell, Jennifer Malaret, Jennifer Sliskovich

- Nadine Bell took the floor to talk about the Spring Event. She shared how this year's event will be held at the Sony lot on April 29. She encouraged people to feel free to give feedback and offer suggestions on how to improve the event.

Teacher Conference Treats – Mandy Dumas-Stein, Sheri Green, Linda Goldsmith

- Sheri Green took the floor to speak about Teacher Conference Treats. She explained that the first event was happening on November 15. The committee provides snacks and goodies to teachers during conferences. She expressed that the committee was a little short on volunteers and is looking for people to drop off food items for the event. She encouraged people to sign up and explained that the items needed were very easy to purchase. One suggestion that the committee may implement is a link to the website where people can sign up to bring requested items. She thanked everyone for their interest.

Wrap Up

President – Chris Smale

- Chris took the floor to thank everyone for their presentations at today's meeting.
- Similarly, she thanked the group for the great suggestion to add links to the Parent Guild tab on the website for signing up for "Teacher Conference Treats".
- Chris encouraged people to contact her with any suggestions and thoughts.
- Lastly, she reminded people to submit any receipts for reimbursement to Elinor Lewis.

Meeting adjourned: 9:26 am

Next Parent Guild Meeting (#3):

Tuesday, January 31, 2017, 8:15 am, 2nd Floor CTL