

March 28, 2006

SBIT Members in Attendance: Terry Jordan, Sam Holmes, Carolyn Goodrich, Claudia Albert, Emily Noyes. Guest: Karen Hamm

Information Items:

1. Update on Book Chats:

- ❖ Although, 40 books were given to interested parents and community members, only 12 people attended the Book Chat with Mrs. Jordan, Mr. Glover and Dr. Liguori. Two books were discussed by the group Reviving Ophelia and Raising Cain. It was decided that future Chats will be limited to one book for the discussion and a protocol will be utilized for the next book chat, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak. The next book to be discussed will be A Whole New Mind by Daniel Pink. Mr. Pink identifies six “essential aptitudes” and describes how they will be necessary for both professional success and personal fulfillment in the future. The group will discuss implications for the educational system. 20 copies have been ordered. The book chat date will be set for sometime in May.
- ❖ Mrs. Goodrich suggested another book for a future book chat: A Special Education: One Family’s Journey Through the Maze of Learning Disabilities. She will investigate interest amongst parents at West Vine and Pawcatuck Middle, as well as West Broad, prior to our ordering the books.

2. CMT Feedback from teachers (Emily and Karen)

- ❖ Karen reported that the third grade test seemed more developmentally appropriate compared to the off-level tests of the past
- ❖ Some kids felt that it was “easy” ☺
- ❖ Students were much more prepared and at ease
- ❖ The time length of each sub-test was very manageable (from 70 minutes-45 minutes) -students were able to finish the tests easily.
- ❖ Other changes such as doing away with answer booklets and allowing reading strategies like highlighting were also very successful
- ❖ Both teachers reported that the district’s review materials were well developed and the timeframe for review excellent.

Discussion Items:

1. Budget

- ❖ Stacy Cassata (Our PTO president) has requested that a Board Member come to the next PTO meeting on April 4th. We are hoping to have many parents attend this important meeting. Parents will have the opportunity to ask questions about the budget. The business meeting will be held from 6:30 – 7:00 and the Budget discussion will begin at 7:00 in the school auditorium.
- ❖ Mrs. Goodrich asked Mrs. Albert for clarification on a couple of budget questions. Mrs. Albert reiterated that:

Parents are concerned that all paraprofessionals are being eliminated in this budget proposal. This is not true. Hours are being reduced in grades 2, 3 and 4 for literacy paraprofessionals, only. However, both literacy tutors and literacy paraprofessionals are being replaced by certified teachers. One is assigned to WBSS, one to DMS, and one will be split between the two middle schools.

There is a misconception that special education paraprofessionals are being eliminated. This is not true. Four positions are being eliminated because they are being absorbed into programs designed to deliver direct services to students. In addition, 3 certified special education teachers are being added. In addition, WBSS has an additional .4 special education teacher that was added this year and that position is planned to stay in the proposed budget.

The Board of Education's reallocation plan is moving towards putting the most qualified teachers into positions. NCLB requires this as well.

- ❖ April 10th is the date of the public hearing: Voting is from 12:00-8:00.

- ❖ It's important to remember that the Board of Education Budget is part of the Town Budget. A Town Budget can be approved at the Town Meeting.
- ❖ We would like to encourage everyone to remember to vote!
- ❖ Post the PTO meeting on the website and invite WVSS parents as well.

Agenda Items:

- ❖ Mrs. Goodrich suggested that we start planning some parent involvement/activities now for next year. She suggested three pre-planned dates where parents can learn about a part of the curriculum at an evening program and then visit classrooms during instructional time as a follow-up. Possible topics could include: reading, writing, math, science.

Other topics discussed were:

- ❖ A clear need that came out of the CMT parent night was to have a fall meeting to help parents interpret their child's scores.
- ❖ Making a change in our First Day of School celebration was discussed, perhaps moving it to later in the week or the second week of school.
- ❖ We are looking for anyone interested in filling the community member seat on our SBIT.