

**The Butler Playground:
*Where have we been and where are we
going?***

Butler PTA Presentation
11.8.11

1989

- The new Butler playground was built and dedicated to former Principal Barbara Hunt.
- As a wooden structure, it was projected to have a 15 year lifespan.

2001 (12 years old)

- The “Butler Community Playground” was renovated.

2005 (16 years old)

- Coralie DiTommaso started to investigate what it would take to get a new playground.
- She was told that the equipment probably had 5 more years in it, but that it was not in need of replacement immediately.
- A decision was made to do some upkeep in the short run, including power washing (which Coralie did herself!), wood sealing, new stones, etc.

2009 (20 years old)

- McAllister started as Butler's Principal and held several "Community Input Meetings."
- It was clear that there was a strong desire to make some progress on this issue.
- People who were passionate about the issue were invited to join the committee.
- Committee members traveled to many surrounding towns to take photos and get ideas of playgrounds we liked.

2010 (21 years old)

- Committee interviewed Goric Construction, Ikon Park Design, and Miller Design.
- Butler PTA and BEDP provided \$8,800 in funds for the design process with Miller Design, LLC.

2011 (22 years old)

- Public input process – 5 meetings in all – with stakeholders that included Parents, BEDP Staff, Teachers, and Neighbors.
- Online opportunities for input, parent coffees, several PTA presentations, and countless e-mail exchanges.
- School Committee approved Pre-Phase (MJ Court) and postponed approval of Phases I-III of the playground plan.

2011 cont'd (still 22 years old)

- Final design unanimously approved by the Belmont School Committee on September 13, 2011.
- Playground committee kicked off formal fundraising campaign on October 13, 2011
- In response to parent concerns about safety at *several* school playgrounds, Superintendent Kingston began inspection of Winn Brook, Burbank, and Butler's playgrounds on October 18, 2011.

2011 cont'd (still 22 years old)

- CPSI John LaRue issued inspection report and recommended closing Winn Brook and Butler playgrounds on November 2, 2011.
- Superintendent Kingston closed Winn Brook and Butler playgrounds on November 3, 2011.
- Perimeter fence erected on November 4, 2011.

2011 cont'd (still 22 years old)

- Playground Committee and PTA leadership met with Representative Brownsberger on November 7, 2011 to discuss different funding options.

Where are we going?

- We will be consulting with a different playground inspector from a company in Connecticut to advise us about the various costs of mitigation for the Butler equipment.
- Once we receive the mitigation plan from the consultant, the district will determine a plan moving forward. Our hope is to be able to fix some equipment to expected safety standards and reopen much of the structure, if possible.

Where are we going? cont'd

- We will be purchasing a rolling cart of recess supplies that will provide additional opportunities on the hardtop and in the fields in the short run.
- We will move forward with fundraising efforts for the new playground, while still keeping a close eye on the district's efforts to remediate the existing structure.

Takeaway #1

- We are committed to working with the School Department and town departments and we trust that everyone has the best interests of children in mind. Our mutual goal is to bring a resolution as quickly as possible: a safe, fun playground.

Takeaway #2

- All of the PTA/PTO's in town are committed to doing the best we can for all of Belmont children. We are working together to bring a resolution to this current playground issue while discussing the longer term question of deferred maintenance as eventually it will affect everyone.

Takeaway #3

- As requested, the Butler Playground is looking into the funding arrangement with the Wellington playgrounds.
- Part of our committee is looking into whether their playground was funded by a combination of PTO funds and town funds and whether we can expect a similar resolution and the other part of the committee is continuing to explore private fundraising opportunities.

Takeaway #4

- We are formulating a *revised* playground plan and are gathering more information to solidify that plan.

How can parents help?

- Stay engaged in the process by checking out <http://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/butler/playground>
- Volunteering for our committee.
- Contribute to the new playground fund.