



# Wellington Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization Annual Report 2018-19

The Wellington Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is an all-volunteer 501c3 charitable organization that relies on the generous involvement of parents and teachers. By working together, we are able to make a big difference to the school!

The purpose of the PTO is to enrich the educational experience of the children; build a stronger school community; and facilitate and foster communication between the home and school. We are pleased to report on this year's progress towards these goals.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the PTO! Have a great summer, and see you next year!

*Meryl Junik & Ray Johnson*

Wellington PTO Co-Presidents 2018-19

## ***Enriching the Educational Experience***

A significant portion of the PTO's budget supports experiential learning opportunities to enhance the curriculum in grades Kindergarten through four. This year, the PTO funded over \$45,000 to support a wide variety of in-school enrichment programs and field trips (see box on right). In addition, the PTO funded \$2,510 for student news subscriptions in all grade levels.

PTO events also provided opportunities for families to come together and celebrate learning. Science Night saw enthusiastic participation from amazing 3rd and 4th grade scientists. This year's Games themed Multicultural Night had the largest number of family-sponsored tables ever and was an impressive display of diverse culture and backgrounds. Our first annual Wellington Storytime brought together over fifty families to celebrate literacy with some teachers' favorite read alouds.

The PTO also ran an outstanding After School Enrichment (ASE) program that offered a wonderful variety of after school clubs to complement and enhance students' learning experience. In addition to being a modest fundraiser, ASE provided students with opportunities to explore enriching activities and socialize with other students in a fun, no pressure environment. For the 2018-19 school year, there were:

- 262 individual students in the program; 46% of K-4 students
- 22 choices in the fall (with 230 registrations), 22 choices in the winter (with 235 registrations) and 24 choices in the spring (with 250 registrations)

### ***Science & Math Enrichment***

- Mass Audubon's Habitat (K)
- Force in Motion by Acton Discovery Museum (K)
- Liquids & Solids by Acton Discovery Museum (K)
- Weather by Acton Discovery Museum (1)
- Sound by Acton Discovery Museum (1)
- Aquatic Invertebrates by Mass Audubon's Habitat (1)
- Rainforest Reptiles Show (1)
- Pollinators by Mass Audubon's Habitat (2)
- Physical Changes of Matter by Acton Discovery Museum (2)
- Museum of Science (2)
- Forces & Magnetism by Acton Discovery Museum (3)
- Weather & Climate by Acton Discovery Museum (3)
- Sound Workshop by Techsploration (4)
- Energy Workshop by Techsploration (4)
- New England Aquarium Field Experience (4)
- Honey Bee Presentation (4)
- Peabody Museum & Harvard Museum of Natural History (4)

### ***Language Arts & Social Studies Enrichment***

- Cinderella by the Tanglewood Marionettes (K)
- Elizabeth McKinney Author Visit (K & 1)
- Puppet Showplace Theater (1)
- Julie Falatko & Ruth Chan Author/Illustrator Visit (1)
- Jambo Africa by Gail LaRocca (2)
- David Kelly Author Visit (2)
- Belmont Walking Tour (2)
- Plimoth Plantation (3)
- The Owl Lady (3)
- Freedom Trail, Old North Church, & Swan Boats (3)
- Boston Tea Party Ship & Museum (3)
- Colonial Day (3)
- Sharon Kennedy / Mill Girl (4)
- Lowell Mills (4)

## ***Building a Strong Community***

The PTO builds community at Wellington by helping families connect with each other and with the school.

This year, the PTO spent \$3,510 on community programs and social events. Friendships deepened as we picnicked together, walked to school together, and supported our children's education. We saw terrific participation by families, from our first day Welcome Back Coffees to a fun-filled Movie Night and meaningful Coat Drive to support Wellington & Boston families in need.

The PTO nurtured school pride by providing every kindergartener and new student/staff with a Wellington t-shirt to welcome them to our community. The PTO supported funding for each 4th grader to receive a t-shirt with the names of their classmates & a memory book.

Though funded independently from our general budget, PTO volunteers also coordinated a Fourth Grade Send Off (4GSO) celebration. This event was held just for the fourth graders and their parents/guardians to celebrate the end of the students' time in elementary school and the transition to middle school. All students received small souvenirs. The volunteers also coordinated Spirit Wear sales so families can show off their Wellington pride and a 4th grade class gift of a colorful and welcoming mural in the school's main hallway!

Our Green Team had a very busy year! To help make our community a little greener, the PTO sponsored the Trex Recycling Challenge, to recycle as much plastic film as possible. We also started participating in the Crayola ColorCycle program. Additionally some K-2 students learned about the environment through the Planet Protectors ASE club.

## ***Facilitating Communication***

For the second year, PTO provided an upgraded, more durable plastic Home-School Communication Folder to every student. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped stuff and bundle the folders at the end of the summer for delivery to each classroom on the first day!

The PTO also held three alternating morning and evening meetings during the school year to share updates about school happenings as well as to provide an opportunity for parent learning. This year, we hosted the following special guest speakers: Superintendent Phelan shared an update on the principal search and curriculum specialist Jaynene Dellitt-Young presented about district-wide ELA updates.

Moreover, we continued to modify our communications to reduce redundancy and streamline our messaging. In addition to a short blurb in the principal's weekly electronic newsletter, we provided a monthly newsletter with a summary of PTO news, upcoming events, and opportunities to get involved; and news and events were also posted on the Community Bulletin Board and lettered sandwich boards near the main entryways.

The PTO created and distributed the School Directory (using information the school district shared with the PTO), a great resource for connecting with your student's classmates and other Wellington families, planning play dates, birthday parties, etc.

The PTO offered an end-of-year survey to gather information from parents & caregivers re: member & volunteer experience, meeting & program participation, as well as fundraising & spending priorities. We received 41 responses, and 30 of the respondents were PTO members (i.e. paid annual dues). Here is a summary of key feedback:

- 98% of respondents felt very or moderately informed about PTO activities
- The most preferred method of PTO communication were: monthly newsletter, weekly newsletter, and room parent email. We'll continue to streamline communications from the PTO, eliminating redundancy and striving for short and concise messages whenever

possible. We'll also explore alternate locations for the lettered sandwich boards to ensure maximum visibility.

- The most popular reasons for not attending PTO meetings were: too busy and inconvenient time of day. We agree! Our community has many needs and varied interests, and we will continue to offer both daytime and evening gatherings on different days of the week so that all families have an opportunity to participate when it works best for their family. In addition, we will continue to provide free childcare for evening parent gatherings when possible. Please join us when you can! All are welcome!
- 34 respondents (81%) volunteered with the PTO and shared the following feedback.
  - Ease of signup - 100% satisfied
  - Advance notice - 93% satisfied and 5% unsatisfied
  - Adequacy of instructions - 94% satisfied and 6% unsatisfied
  - Feeling of appreciation - 92% satisfied and 6% unsatisfied
  - Overall level of involvement - 92% satisfied and 6% unsatisfied

Our volunteers make everything possible, and we are pleased with the improvements this year with Adequacy of Instructions and Feeling of Appreciation compared to the year prior. We will continue to work with all event & program coordinators to provide clear guidelines/checklists to help ensure our volunteers feel well-prepared, organized and recognized for their involvement.

- Regarding fundraising preferences, little support was shown for selling products, a parents night out, or writing grants, and the PTO will continue to focus on other options in partnership with the school leadership. Respondents favored large community based fundraisers (e.g. Fun Run), smaller fundraisers (e.g. Bingo Night) and write one check and be done. As shown in the open comments, families appreciate that students are not asked to sell stuff but would be interested in other spirit options than apparel.
- Regarding spending, respondents overwhelmingly prioritized enrichment and teacher/staff support over community programs and helping families in need. We will continue to structure the PTO's budget to reflect the these priorities.

## ***Supporting the School***

An important aspect of the PTO's work is to support Wellington staff and their excellent teaching. With that in mind, the PTO provides funding for numerous supplies and programs not covered by the Belmont Public Schools budget.

This past year, the PTO worked closely with Interim Principal Stephen Lambert to respond to staff needs and support progress toward school & district goals. The PTO provided: \$12,775 in funding for classroom equipment & materials; \$3,000 for staff professional development; \$3,000 toward the district-wide writing institute; \$1,966 to support the school library; \$2,027 for the Principal's discretionary fund; \$1,995 for an all-staff summer read focusing on anti-racism and inclusion; \$1,099 for RAZ Kids literacy program; and \$4700 for Jump Start & Jump Start Lite.

We also organized and funded \$1,168 for a staff appreciation luncheon for all Wellington teachers and staff and had expenses of \$580 to provide healthy snacks for all 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders taking the MCAS test.

PTO volunteers staffed 25 shifts in the school library each week! Many thanks to the 100+ parents and caregivers who helped re-shelve books, tidy the shelves, and process check-outs. Your contribution of your time made the library a wonderful place for children to develop and continue their love of reading!

Thank you for making it possible for the PTO to go above and beyond to support the entire Wellington community!

### ***Financials***

The PTO is funded through the generosity of our donors – primarily Wellington families. In addition to our annual Membership Drive, we also coordinate a handful of community-oriented fundraisers each year.

