



To: Weston Public School Committee  
From: Allison Abrams, WEEFC Chair  
Date: June 17, 2019  
Re: WEEFC Year-End Report 2018-2019

We shifted our focus for the 2018-19 school year to targeted marketing of WEEFC funded programs and continued to build community engagement. The Board feels that when our school community understands how WEEFC dollars benefit our students and our schools, the level of participation and dollars will increase. We worked with the building principals to encourage them and their staff to think about new grants and how WEEFC dollars could enrich their classrooms, their lives and their students' experiences.

Despite the fact that our multiple appeals did not manifest themselves in dollars raised as we fell a little short of 2017-18 revenues, we saw increased participation in WEEFC sponsored events, as well as, an increased number of new donors. We are hopeful that our continued outreach will help us return to historical levels. WEEFC remains committed to fundraising while increasing participation, volunteerism and knowledge about the programs funded through WEEFC dollars.

### **WEEFC's Year-End Results 2018-2019**

Because our Fall 2017 Appeal Campaign did not raise the funds that we had hoped, WEEFC decided to wait until the winter to launch its annual appeal and work on targeted marketing to families in specific schools and grades in an effort to further educate our community how WEEFC dollars are spent. As reported in December, we mailed almost 1400 end of year letters to our school community where we rolled out our new logo and included WEEFC car magnets. We also spent our time planning an early spring district-wide fundraiser complete with a silent auction, mini live auction and giving trees. We closed the year with a June Appeal, which we have not done in the past. Our level of participation from the December Appeal was low and we felt that with some strategic marketing in the spring, we would be in a good position to roll out an end of the year appeal. During this appeal, 84 donations were made and the average gift was \$220. Given its success, we are considering a repeat of this mailing in June 2020.

### **Funds to Date:**

Although overall donations ended lower than we had hoped for, WEEFC was still able to make a substantial contribution to every school and every grade in Weston. Through all fundraising efforts WEEFC collected a total of \$179,246.46. This is compared with \$204,144 in FY2018. Nonetheless, WEEFC has continued to fund not only the core programming funded every year, but also a substantial number of new and creative programs within the schools. WEEFC continues to bolster

efforts to communicate about WEEFC's role in the schools, its mission, and more specific information about grants approved for each school. We are thrilled with the number of new donors and supporters at our Weston Wingding. We are confident that as our younger and/or newer families become more engaged and understand how WEEFC dollars are spent, they will increase their donations and become long term supporters of WEEFC.

December Appeal:	\$81,636.46
STAR Program:	\$4,810.00
Weston Wingding	\$70,000.00*
Principal for a Day:	\$3,250.00
June Appeal	\$18,490.00
Artome:	\$1060.00
<b>Total (through 6/10):</b>	<b>\$179,246.46</b>

\*approximate number, waiting on one more expense

### **Fundraisers:**

Weston Wingding: After trying the Elementary School Art Fundraiser and a Middle and High School November Night Out, the Board wanted to bring the school community together as a whole to celebrate and support WEEFC. On April 6, 2019, WEEFC held the Weston Wingding at The Weston Golf Club. We had over 225 people in attendance for an evening of food, spirits and dancing. In addition to the giving trees, we held a small silent auction, and a mini live auction with seven wonderful auction items. We had some sign up parties with our elementary school principals which were quite popular. We were lucky to have some support in the way of sponsorships before the event which helped defray the cost of the event. We also reached out to the community after the event to give potential donors an opportunity to contribute if they were unable to attend. We are thrilled to report that we raised about \$70,000 at this event and the response was very positive following the event.

STAR Program: Response to this initiative continues to be positive, and families have embraced this opportunity to give special praise not only to classroom teachers but also to administrators, office staff, custodial staff and bus drivers. WEEFC is currently highlighting the STAR program to all families as an opportunity to give a year-end gift for their teachers. Thus far, \$4810 from 37 donors has been received in STAR awards. We expect additional awards to be purchased in the coming weeks.

Artome: This spring, Field School Art Teacher, Jake Ginga, partnered with WEEFC and offered families an opportunity to buy their child's artwork framed at the Field School Art Show. A portion of the proceeds from the purchased framed pieces went to WEEFC. There was an overwhelming response to this offering. Parents loved being able to walk away with a finished piece and had hoped the other schools might follow suit next year.

**Grants:**

As of June 11, 2019, WEEFC awarded 57 grants which is nine more than last year. These grants totaled about \$155,683. This total awarded is less than last year's total of \$182,605. A third of these were new grants which is very exciting. A few examples of the new grants are 3D Printers, Coding Programs and Technology, a world renowned A Capella Group, Ball in the House, Woodworking and Digital Art at Country and Woodland and motivational and educational speakers at the High School and Middle School. WEEFC dollars continue to support recurring programs including author visits, grants supporting the drama program, Creative Arts programming, Land's Sake programs, and June Academy. A complete list of grants benefitting students this year is attached.

**Ben Sandalls Author:** WEEFC is privileged to be the beneficiary of funds from the Ben Sandalls Memorial Fund. Over many years, the Ben Sandalls Memorial Fund has made it possible to host special authors and illustrators impacting students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The generous gift given by the Sandalls family to honor the memory of their son, Ben, has allowed WEEFC, through the Creative Arts Visiting Author Program, to bring many memorable guests including Lois Lowry, Tracy Kidder, Kate Klise, Steven Kellogg, Kwame Alexander and many more.

This year, Country and Woodland Schools welcomed Matt de la Pena, an author of young adult and children's books which engage children to think about diversity, hope the power that resides in small moments.

**Goals and Looking Forward:**

**Enhance Communication:** Communication is the key, and we are constantly searching for new ways to help parents understand WEEFC and its role in the schools. Messaging from WEEFC helps and we were delighted by the number of new grants and more importantly, by the amount of new donors. The response to our targeted emails, that is specific grants awarded to specific grades or schools, has been positive. We have also talked about creating an electronic bi-yearly WEEFC newsletter.

**Weston Wingding:** We will once again hold the Weston Wingding next spring on March 28, 2020. We will begin planning in the Fall.

**Roles within the Board:** The WEEFC Board has always had a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary but next year, we will look to add more roles to better engage our board with our teachers and schools and to help the Treasurer delve deeper into the donor database and work to merge our auction database with our donor database. We are also looking to bring back Elementary School Ambassadors. Typically, these are volunteers who have shown interest in getting more involved with WEEFC in their schools. These volunteers would be another point of contact in their schools and help with our events.

**New Board Members:** This spring WEEFC announced board openings for the 2019-20 school year. We posted in Westword, through a district wide blast and social media. We got a handful of inquiries and submissions. Our Nominating Sub Committee selected three amazing potential

members with skill sets that will match our outgoing members in June 2020. We have asked School Committee to expand the WEEFC Board one more seat in anticipation of two to three long term board members stepping down in June 2020. We hope that by bringing on these three candidates now, the transition next June will be smoother.

Finally, I would like to also extend special thanks to our School Committee Liaison – John Henry and also to Kimo Carter, Janet Bohlin, Patty Ferguson, Anne Keyes, Diane Kaskon and Donna Garlisi for all of their help throughout the year.

Lastly, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Board for their incredible energy and commitment to WEEFC.

Respectfully Submitted:

Allison Abrams, Chair

Greg Augustine

Kate Dickie

Emily Golin

Kelly Gordon

John Henry

Allyson Jaffe

Cara McGrath

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