



Weston Education Enrichment
Fund Committee

To: Weston Public School Committee
From: Joan Heilbronner, WEEFC Chair
Date: June 4, 2012
Re: WEEFC Year-End Report 2011-2012

This year was one of transition, as I stepped in as the new WEEFC Chair, and the organization continued to face challenges posed by the economic climate. Notwithstanding the current economic downturn, WEEFC successfully continues to raise funds to bring enrichment programs to the public schools with the support of administration, faculty, and the parent community.

WEEFC's Year-End Results 2011-2012

Participation:

WEEFC continues to tout its message of 100% of parents supporting 100% of Weston School children. In September, over 1500 letters were mailed to the parent community as part of our annual fall appeal. WEEFC Board members and volunteers followed up this appeal with personal phone calls to parents as part of our annual Phone-a-thon. Nearly 600 calls to Weston parents were made during the Phone-a-thon. Finally, our December appeal letter was sent to all families from whom WEEFC had not yet received a donation. Although the overall level of funding decreased this year, we received a record number of 514 donations this year. So while the average donation amount decreased, we are confident that parents are hearing our message and that our base of support remains strong. A major contributing factor to the increased number of donations was the new WEEFC STAR program that enabled families to honor a teacher by making a donation to WEEFC. This program's broad appeal attracted many donors who had not previously supported WEEFC and incited many to contribute to WEEFC more than once during the year.

Number of Donors

2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
485	438	475

Funds to Date:

Although overall funding was down, WEEFC was still able to make a substantial contribution to the Weston Schools. While the average donation amount per family decreased from \$547 in FY 2011 to \$440 in FY 2012, the number of donors increased by 8.5%. Through all fundraising efforts WEEFC collected a total \$303,745 in FY2012 compared with \$345,313 raised in FY2011, reflecting an overall decrease of 12% in funds raised. Notwithstanding the decline in funds, WEEFC was able to fund not only

the core programming funded every year, but also a substantial number of new and creative programs within the schools. We attribute the decline in funding to the economic downturn and are confident that numbers will rise as the economy recovers based on the overall increase in the number of families donating to WEEFC.

Annual Solicitation:	\$216,200
Family Photo Day:	630
Autumn Auction:	71,211
STAR Program:	9,170
Kids Kreations:	3,412
Graduation Raffle:	2,040
Interest:	532
Total (through 5/22):	\$303,745

Donations by Month

September	\$750
October	\$93,945
November	\$55,035
December	\$41,765
January	\$24,250
February	\$0
March	\$8,300
April	\$825
May	\$700

Grants:

As of May 22, WEEFC had awarded 112 grants totaling \$235,833 during this school year (another 5 grants requesting \$16,700 will be reviewed and voted upon on June 5). This number of approved grants is up by more than 10% from last year’s total of 100. Some of these approved grants were for recurring programs such as Wordfest, various grants to the music program, Land’s Sake and Career Day, but others funded brand new enrichment opportunities such as the Amazon Rainforest Project and DeCordova Musuem trip at Country School, the creation of a new robotics club at Field School, an intergenerational history project at the Middle School, the purchase of cameras for the new digital photography lab the High School, as well as many other new and innovative programs introduced by faculty, administration and the enthusiastic and diligent volunteers on the Creative Arts and Science and Math Councils.

Grants By School and Discipline - see attached tables.

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 Wordfest program, to bring many memorable guests including Lois Lowry, Tracy Kidder, Kate Klise, Steven Kellogg and many more.

This year, Country and Woodland Schools welcomed Janet Wong to speak to students about her work as a writer. Ms. Wong's presentations and workshops reflect the rich diversity of contemporary American culture, and her books appeal to a wide range of readers from preschoolers to adults. Her engaging presentation included many wonderful stories and captivated and entertained the students. Janet Wong has written 20 books and 7 poetry collections and has received numerous literary awards and honors for her work. Her stories and poems have been featured in many textbooks, anthologies, as well as on radio and television shows.

New Initiatives:

STAR Program: In December, WEEFC launched a new fundraising initiative, the Staff and Teacher Achievement Recognition ("STAR") Award Program. This program provides an opportunity for families to celebrate the extraordinary dedication and excellence of any Weston school employee by honoring them with a WEEFC STAR award by making a donation to WEEFC. Response to this initiative has been extremely 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. In the coming weeks, WEEFC will highlight the STAR program again as an opportunity for families to give a year-end gift for their teachers and also to honor retiring faculty members. In addition to marketing to current Weston School families, an announcement about retiring faculty and faculty receiving special recognition for years of service was posted on the Alumni website as well as the alumni Facebook page. Thus far, \$9,170 from 72 donors has been received in STAR awards. We expect additional awards to be purchased as year-end gifts. Award recipients receive a special certificate from the Superintendent and also are entered into a year-end drawing where they will be eligible to win additional valuable prizes. All funds collected through the STAR program will be used to fund professional development grants.

Alumni Initiative: Last spring WEEFC launched its Alumni Initiative. Three interns from the senior class of 2011 reached out to Weston High School alumni from all classes to collect information to populate an alumni database. Currently, 680 alumni have registered on this database. In addition to the creation of this database, WEEFC launched an alumni website. Two faculty advisor positions were created and funded by WEEFC to maintain and grow the database and provide content to the website which would be of interest to alumni. A few of the posted articles include pieces on the new Science wing, sports teams, Career Day and even the WEEFC STAR program. In addition, WEEFC is facilitating the creation of an Alumni Council, currently consisting of four members, to continue to reach out to alumni through a variety of social media tools including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Although fundraising is currently taking a back seat in this initiative, our hope is that reconnecting these alumni with the Weston High School will present fundraising opportunities in the future.

Family Photo Day: This fall, WEEFC partnered with Coffee Pond Photography to host three Family Photo Days in neighboring communities during the month of October. Coffee Pond shared half of the proceeds earned in sitting fees with WEEFC. For our first year with this new initiative, we were pleased with the results, having raised \$630, and anticipate even more participation next year when we hope to have a session in Weston.

Graduation Seat and Reserved Parking Space Raffle: Because of the large number of younger families attending our Autumn Auction this year, WEEFC elected not to use the four front-row seats received from the Administration as a live auction item. In addition, the Weston Police agreed to allow us to offer one reserved parking space on Town Hall Road. We offered both the seats and the parking space as a raffle prize, giving all senior families the opportunity to participate, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. The drawing was held at the Awards Assembly on May 31. Funds generated from the raffle totaled \$2,040 with 43 families participating.

Establishment of a New Grant Closing Procedure: This spring, WEEFC worked collaboratively with Amber Bock and Cindy Mahr to establish an effective procedure for closing old grants. The new guidelines set an automatic closing date of one calendar year from the date of School Committee approval. Extensions can be obtained on a case by case basis. We are in the process of closing grants from prior years that are still open. As of June 30 this year, approximately 73 grants will be closed, and \$53,952 of unused funds will be returned to WEEFC's account.

Annual Fundraisers:

Autumn Auction: WEEFC was thrilled with the response to this year's fall fundraiser. Time in New England was the theme of the auction. The Rivers School, the location of the auction, proved to be truly neighborly, granting us the use of their facilities at no charge and catering the event at cost. We saw many new, younger families attending, and the action committee worked tirelessly toward making this event a real success. Although attendance was fairly level with the 2010 auction, funds generated were down, reflecting the economic climate. Once again, the sign-up party, a Traditional New England Clambake, generated a lot of enthusiasm and attracted some new families into the fold and helped recoup some of the revenue shortfall from the auction. In total, the auction and sign-up party generated \$71,211 in net revenue, down 16.3% from last year. Because attendance numbers are still high, we are confident that the auction remains a valuable fundraising tool for WEEFC. We have already begun to plan for next year's auction and are working to come up with some new and creative offerings that might entice families to raise their paddles with renewed enthusiasm.

Kids Kreations: This spring, WEEFC once again offered parents the opportunity to turn their child's artwork into wonderful keepsakes such as mugs, aprons, hot plates, t-shirts and many more. Finished products were delivered in time for Mother's Day. Partnering with Kids Kreations, WEEFC earned 35% of the total of all orders for a total of \$3,413. We were pleased with the response to this fundraiser, and plan to offer it again next year.

Communications:

New this fall, WEEFC began a new targeted communications strategy. Utilizing Constant Contact, we created newsletter communications, specific to each school, highlighting WEEFC-funded programs. These communications include pictures and a brief description of selected WEEFC programs. Each school received a newsletter in the fall, winter and spring, and response from parents has been very positive. It is our hope that this focused communication strategy will give parents a better understanding of what WEEFC means to the schools and help WEEFC generate additional revenue.

Goals:

Improve Marketing Strategy: This spring as part of our fall planning meetings, WEEFC has been focusing on ways to improve our marketing in the community. WEEFC will continue to tout its message of 100% participation. However, we are strategizing about ways to tweak our message so that all parents can relate to it. We are also discussing what would be the most effective means to communicate that message including but not limited to, having a more visible presence at parent meetings and a postcard campaign in addition to our annual solicitations and Phone-a-thon.

New Initiatives: In addition to maintaining our current fundraising initiatives, we are considering the addition of a fundraiser in the late winter or early spring. Our fundraising expectations for this event would not match auction, but rather, we look at this as an opportunity to offer a different type of event and a community builder that might be of interest to those families either not able to, or disinterested in attending the auction. This focus on varied opportunities to be involved, we hope, will bring us closer to our goal of 100% participation.

Volunteer Recruitment: As always, WEEFC will continue to strive to increase volunteer participation. We were thrilled with the expanding number of young parents willing to serve on our auction committee and other fundraisers this year. We made great strides, but will continue to seek new, active volunteers, particularly in the younger parent community.

Finally, I would like to thank the volunteers whose dedication and time enables us to continue our support of the Weston Schools. Chairs of our fundraising events this year include: Auction Co-Chairs - Allyson Jaffe and Debbie McNamara, Kids Kreations Co-Chairs - Annie Shapiro, Mary-Beth Henry, Kristen Shulman, Carrie Winchman and Debbie McNamara, Family Photo Day Coordinator - Ellen Livingston, Phone-a-thon Co-Chairs - Jennifer Lemley and Charlie Pohl, Clambake Coordinator - Jennifer Lemley and hosts Patty and Jack Sins. Key PTO members contributing to WEEFC's success include President, Liz Hochberger and incoming President, Leslye Fligor, as well as Wordfest Coordinator - Jennie Lucas, Creative Arts Council Co-Chairs - Maris Feinstein and Rebecca Parkhill, Science and Math Council Co-Chairs - Lilly Yun and Tanya Spranca. I would like to also extend special thanks to Career Day Coordinators – Marilyn Hirsch and Michelle Avery, WEEFriends Treasurer – Laura Miller and our database manager – Colleen Kettle and also to Janet Bohlin, Patty Ferguson, and Donna Garlisi for all of their help throughout the year.

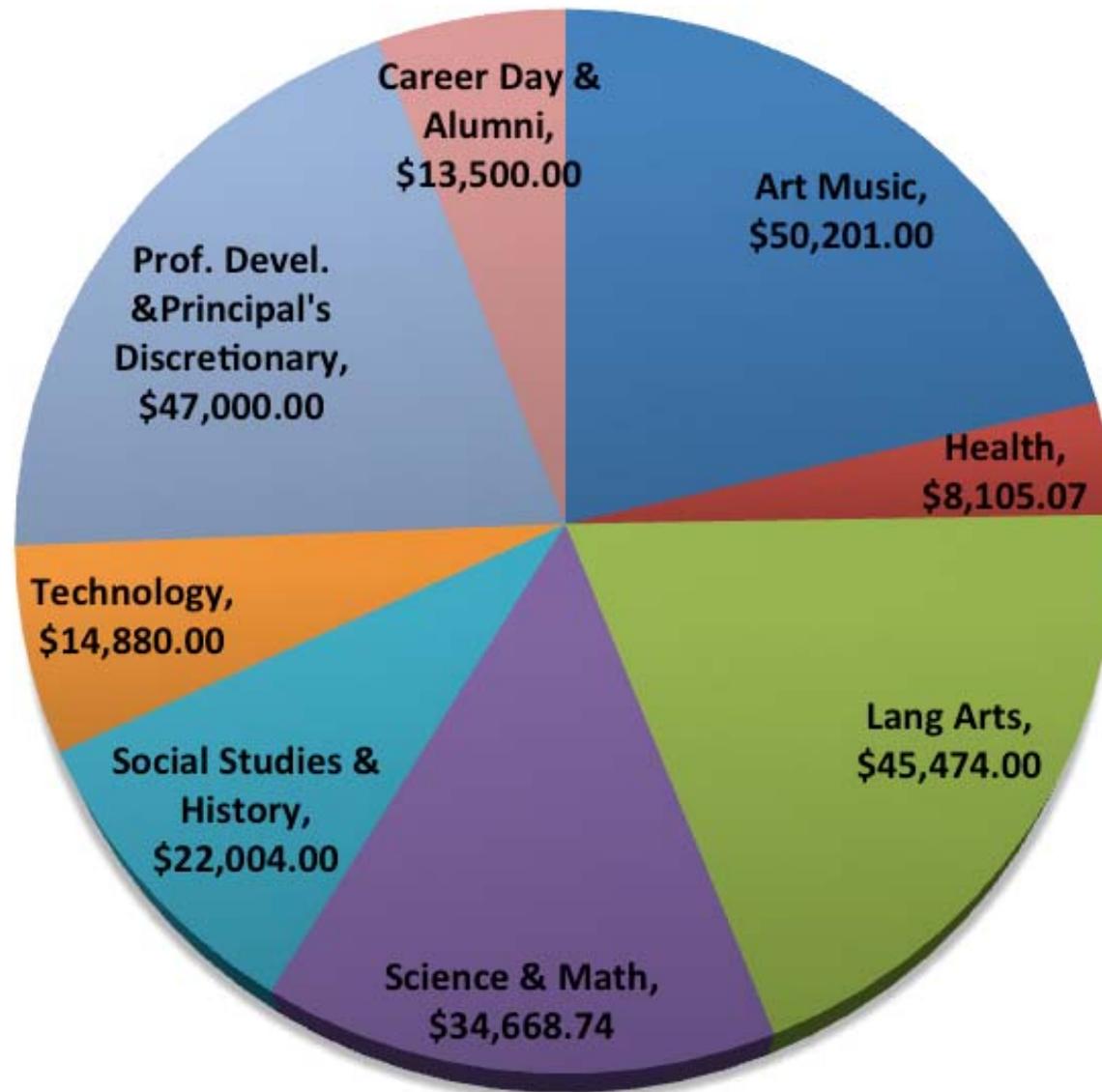
Finally, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Board for their incredible energy and commitment to WEEFC. We will miss our departing Board members, Kelly Renner, Jennifer Lemley, and Charlie Pohl not only for their depth of knowledge but also their positive energy and long-standing dedication to WEEFC.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joan Heilbronner, Chair
Greg Augustine
Jennifer Lemley (retiring)
Ellen Livingston
Debra McNamara
Joanne Melikian-Cate (incoming)
Laura Miller (incoming)
Steve Peacher
Charlie Pohl (retiring)
Todd Rassiger (incoming)

Kelly Renner (retiring)
Ginia Ziobro
Danielle Black, School Committee Liason

2011-2012 WEEFC Grants by Discipline



2011-2012 WEEFC Grants by School

