

**Walt Whitman PTA Meeting Minutes**  
**November 4, 2020**

**Meeting called to order and minutes from October meeting approved.**

**President's Report:**

If you have not yet become a PTA member, please do so. There is also an option for family membership so sign everyone up! We would also like to remind our new families to send your contact information to Dana Kralstein so she can add it to directory spot. Once you are a paid pta member you can access the directory spot app to set up play dates, see class lists or contact other parents. There is a form to submit your information on our website. You can also join the PTA by visiting our website, <http://WaltWhitmanpta.org>.

While we couldn't have our traditional Halloween festivities this year, we would like to thank Cindy Ho and Courtney Schlow for their planning and efforts to make the day as fun as possible for our children, notwithstanding the less than ideal weather! Also, a big thank you to Mr. Snyder and the teachers and staff for making it fun for our kids since parents couldn't be there to help out.

Many thanks to Melissa Forman for taking on Reflections this year! We are so proud of all of the children who entered. Thank you to the parents & children that are representing our school.

We are very excited to announce that our discount cards will be back by popular demand. A huge thank you to Dana Kuropatkin for making it happen and adding some awesome new stores which she will talk about later in the meeting.

Today was our author/illustrator visit from the sisters team, Kate and Sarah Klise. The kids were all able to watch it live streaming and it was an interactive event. Big thanks to Lucille Polidoro and Robin Greenstein for arranging this fun virtual visit. Lucille will discuss book ordering later in the meeting.

Also, we would like to give a very big thank you to Karen Ostrick who is our current webmaster with help from Tracy Brown, a thank you to her as well. Karen also makes all of our fliers, prepares our ordering forms and sends out our periodic newsletter. It is a very big job and we would love to hear from anyone who would be interested in helping her out and joining the team. It is a great opportunity for someone with some web experience or tech background to get involved in the PTA.

We are starting to think about some fun virtual events to keep our kids busy and entertained once the weather gets colder and we are all stuck inside. Look out for details soon! We are also always open to suggestions and new ideas so feel free to share!

If anyone ever has any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to us!

**Mr. Snyder's Report:**

- Hopes to have info about NWEA results soon
- Should hear about parent teacher conferences soon, look for an email
- Recess – will start adding balls to gym, eventually to recess but not yet
- author visit coming up – Klise sisters will be virtual
- holiday travel – remember to follow the state's protocols
  - if you are out of town during school, it is voluntary and you will not be able to access remote learning
  - but if you travel out of state and have to quarantine, you CAN join remote learning when you get back
- if your child is home sick or needs to quarantine, they can access virtual learning, but not sure of the details yet
- we will be voting on our new school mascot on Monday – there are 22 choices to represent 1 from each class and one out of the virtual learners
- general reminder to be thankful, especially during this year

**Board of Ed Report:**

BOE Meetings 10/08 and 10/19

- Facilities update
  - Multi phase building project-
    - Track & Field completed
    - Refurbished and built two more tennis courts- matches can now be completed sooner with the additional courts
    - New Facility weight room completed
    - Added new bathrooms outside so people do not have to enter the school
    - Finished enclosing outside walkways in the HS
    - Renovated the Science Labs
    - South Grove Annex walkway is now fully enclosed
    - In the process of improving the A/C units
    - 1.2 million in savings on energy costs – replacing furnaces, installing solar power
  - COVID-19 Related Facilities update
    - Making sure rooms are vented out
    - Touchless bathroom options
    - Hand washing stations
    - Two way temperature checks
      - Hand held & walk thru
      - Outdoor Instructional space at multiple schools (not sure this is being done at Whitman)
  - Re-Opening Information update

- District continues to follow the positivity rate data for Nassau County and the Syosset/Woodbury area
  - Everyone receives an email if there is a positivity case
  - If more urgent you will receive a robo call and text message
  - District states that things are going more smoothly with their robust procedures
- Ventilation Special Meeting 10/08
  - Performed room by room review of each school
  - Identified a number of rooms in the secondary schools with no means of ventilation- they are the first to be addressed
  - Air filters shortage of merv 13 filters nationwide- but Syosset was able to procure
  - Emergency first round-
    - Supplementing by opening windows
    - Present BOE options to consider
  - Update and Recommendations on heating and cooling system
    - A/C projects in elementary schools to be completed 2020
    - Furnace replacements in elementary schools -2021
    - Mandatory requirements
      - Merv 13 Filters, Fans, Circulation, improving ventilation
- Ventilation Follow up at BOE 10/19 Meeting
  - Currently working with H2M (Architect) and Engineer
  - Cost is of concern
  - Is the labor costs factored into the estimate
  - Hoping to have ventilation system finished before the winter
- BOE discussed setting a second meeting monthly on the Calendar
- Audience to the public
  - Resident asks the BOE and Dr. Rogers why they have not responded to his email inquiring about the Cerro Wire testing site. It is the policy of the District to respond. He informs them that trucks are digging for soil and where they were digging for soil was not a covered and protected area. He is concerned about the chemicals emitting while they were digging and further adds he does not believe the report the district has been given about the quality of the soil is true.

### **Arts In Ed:**

Author Kate Klise and her illustrator sister Sarah Klise virtually visited Walt Whitman Elementary School. The Klise sisters are the award-winning creators of more than 30 children's books. While virtually visiting our school, Kate and Sarah Klise shared their best tips and tricks. They also are offering books for sale. If you would like to purchase

a book for your child, please fill out the order form on the Walt Whitman home page. All orders must be received by November 15. Kate will personally inscribe all books and mail them back to Walt Whitman Elementary.

**Cultural Unity:**

The Syosset PTA Cultural Unity Committee's Buddy Program will be rolling out soon. Its goal is to help new families in our district build a sense of community and learn of the available PTA resources. The Buddy Program pairs newcomers with long term residents, especially those who know our schools. If you would like to be set up with a Buddy or are interested in volunteering as a Buddy, please look out for it in your email and contact me if you have any questions.

**Communication Committee:**

The fall Communication Conference is set to meet with the administration on Thursday, November 19 via zoom. The committee will have an in depth conversation with the admin on the following topics:

1. Social Emotional Health of our children
2. Grading / Testing / Assessment

At this time if you have any questions regarding these topics please e-mail them to me at [susansuriel@gmail.com](mailto:susansuriel@gmail.com).

**Display My Art:**

Display my art is a great fundraiser. Ms Beach helped our children make great artwork and we appreciate all of her hard work. The link for display my art was emailed out to you. Once you get a brochure showing you your child's artwork you can decide what you want to order such as mugs, magnets, etc. We did this a few years ago before Mother's Day and everyone loved their products. We decided this year to do it for the holidays because the products will make great holiday gifts! For virtual students or family members there is a link to upload your own art work. Please reach out if you have any questions.

**Fall Book Fair:**

The fall scholastic book fair will be held virtually. The dates will be November 9th- November 20th. The goal of the book fair is to earn scholastic dollars to gift the teachers for their classroom libraries. More information will follow shortly! The flyer will be emailed to you as well as all the links to order. Thanks!

**Directory:** Access to the directory is for paid PTA members for 2020-21 school year only. Contact Dana Kralstein at [dana.kralstein@gmail.com](mailto:dana.kralstein@gmail.com) if you joined the PTA and are unable to access the directory. Also contact Dana if you have changes or additions or siblings to update.

**Discount Card:**

The discount card is back by popular demand! Support our PTA and save money locally with our wallet sized discount card. This program features 20 local vendors offering discounts to any cardholder! Cards are \$20 each and valid for one year. You do not need to be a Whitman family to purchase a card so feel free to share with local family and friends! Buy one for each of your family members! New vendors this year include: Gold Coast Kids, Rags clothing, Lester's and Sobol. Many vendors from last year returning such as Sugar Crazy, Organic Krush, Victoria's Market, Dugans, Q'doba and Andrew Howard dry cleaners. We will let you know as soon as the cards are available to sell!

**Health, Nutrition, Safety:**

Mark your calendars..on November 17<sup>th</sup>, The Health Nutrition and Safety committee along with Joshua Lafazan's office will be presenting their second seminar in a 3 part series titled **Let's Talk About Drugs**. The Live Seminar will begin at 7:30pm and will be broadcasted on The Syosset Council of PTA's youtube page. This important and educational seminar will cover many topics relating to Drug and Alcohol prevention and awareness. We encourage parents with children of all ages to join us. It's never too early to be educated. Some topics will include:

- How to talk to your children about drugs and alcohol.
- The warning signs and age your child is likely to be introduced for the first time.
- Facts, statistics, and true stories including one from a parent who lost her son at 18 to addiction.

We encourage parents of students in a transitional year (5th and 8th grade) to attend this seminar. Moving up to a new school is exciting, but with it comes new challenges and pressures. The district will send out an email with more details and an opportunity to submit questions in advance. We hope you join us for this important and informative event.

The three part series will conclude on December 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30pm, with a virtual seminar by Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds on Mental Health and Awareness, focusing on students and families. Dr. Reynolds is the President and CEO of the Family and Children's Association in Mineola. Among the topics that will be discussed is the impact of COVID on children, anxiety and depression, increased drug and alcohol usage, strategies for productive conversation, what is "normal" and what requires some intervention, coping strategies for different ages, and resources for help.

More information, including a flyer about this important seminar will be sent out shortly.

**International Day:**

The Walt Whitman PTA is proud to announce International Day 2021. As we all know, only too well, Covid-19 has altered many of our PTA events including the way in which International Day will be run. The good news is, International Day will not be cancelled. The even better news is, this year the presenters have the opportunity to make the chosen countries really stand out in our children's minds with a great movie!

7 countries in total will be presented to the WW students. The pre-recorded presentations will be 5-7 minutes long. Reach out to Inna Choi or Gabby Platz with any questions.

### **Legislation:**

There were two votes on new motions emailed out to the PTA. Both motions passed.

### **MJ Beanz:**

Once again MJ Beanz is supporting our PTA! The fundraiser will be held on Thursday, November 5th but will not be held in the store. We will send out an online form to be filled out to purchase gift cards only. Each Walt Whitman family is able to purchase up to 200 dollars in gift cards which will be saved in their computer system to be used for your future purchases of holiday gifts and birthday gifts. You will receive 10 percent off of each gift card.. so if you buy a 200 dollar gift card you will pay 180 dollars. This is a great way to support both our PTA and a local small business. Please reach out if you have any questions.

### **Pie Sale:**

This year we will be partnering again with White Post Farms. Support the PTA by purchasing delicious pies and breads at discounted prices for your Thanksgiving Dinner. Orders must be placed by Monday, November 9th. Pick up will be on November 24 from 1-4pm at 93 Cypress Drive. Please contact [courtneyschlow@gmail.com](mailto:courtneyschlow@gmail.com) or [erica.roseman@gmail.com](mailto:erica.roseman@gmail.com) if alternate arrangements are needed.

### **Reflections:**

- Interest forms due 10/9
- Once received, I'll send enrollment packet with more information
- Projects due Friday, 10/30

### **SEPTA:**

#### **MEMBERSHIP:**

SEPTA is the Special Education PTA and is proud to serve and represent EVERY school in Syosset Central School District. Our membership is open to everyone. We focus our efforts on students who receive services from the District. These services can include: speech, OT, PT, resource room, instructional support, gifted programs, counseling, nursing services, self-contained/inclusion classes, audiological/visi9on assistance and early intervention.

We encourage you to JOIN SEPTA! Membership is \$12 per person. You can join online at <https://syossetsepta.memberhub.store> or if you prefer you can mail a membership form and check to Christine Daniel, SEPTA Membership, 431 Split Rock Road, Syosset, NY 11791. Please print a copy from this link: [SEPTA Membership Form](#).

### **FUNDRAISER:**

Next month, SEPTA will be announcing the details of its holiday raffle baskets fundraiser. As many of you may know, SEPTA's annual Comedy Night was cancelled last March due to the pandemic. Comedy Night proceeds help fund the SEPTA scholarships that are awarded to Syosset High School graduating seniors. The grand prize raffle baskets will include amazing merchandise and gift cards that members and all the District PTAs so generously donated such as airpod pros, gift cards, watches, Vera Bradley bags. The raffle will be conducted online tickets will be purchased online as drawing will occur online as well. Keep an eye out for the details to come.

### **"SPECIAL EDUCATION DOES NOT DEFINE ME":**

SEPTA has invited several Special Education Alumni from different generations to talk about their academic struggles at our November 30th meeting, what they did to overcome them to become successful and most importantly will offer advice/insight to both parents and students. Bring your children to this portion of the meeting as we think that both parents and students (middle and high school) will benefit.

Our next meeting is on **Monday, November 30th at 7:45pm**. Please join SEPTA to make sure you receive the RSVP form in mid November to for the link to the meeting.

### **Ways & Means:**

Syosset council for PTAs will be hosting the first virtual chefs night on November 11.

Chef Tony from Chris and Tony's will be live-streaming a cooking lesson featuring everyone's favorite dishes. Ingredient lists will be sent in advance. Tickets can be purchased on member hub. There will be a raffle in conjunction with the event and raffle tickets may be purchased even if you choose not to participate in the cooking lesson.

We are also sponsoring another fundraiser for the holidays through Art Beats. Art boxes can be purchased for delivery in time for the holidays. More information is to follow but keep your eyes out.

### **Upcoming Dates:**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 11/6     | Spirit Day  |
| 11/11    | NO SCHOOL, Veteran's Day                                  |
| 11/16    | BOE Mtg, 8pm  |
| 11/16    | Picture retake day for in-person, picture day for virtual |
| 11/17    | PTA Council – Drug Abuse, 7:30pm                          |
| 11/25-27 | No School   |
| 11/30    | SEPTA General Mtg @ 7:45pm                                |
| 11/30    | Holiday Food Drive begins                                 |
| 12/1     | PTA Council – Mental Health @ 7:30pm                      |
| 12/1-6   | Virtual Holiday Boutique                                  |
| 12/2     | PTA Mtg on zoom, 7:30pm                                   |
| 12/4     | International Day interest deadline                       |
| 12/8     | Bingo Night, 7pm  |
| 12/8     | Arts in Ed: Virtual Music Technology                      |
| 12/11    | Holiday Food Drive deadline                               |

12/14  
12/24-31

BOE Mtg, 8pm  
No School

**PTA Meeting Times:**

Wednesday, December 2nd at **7:30pm**, Tuesday, January 5th at **7:30pm**, Wednesday, February 3rd at **7:30 pm**, Thursday, March 4th at **7:30pm**, Thursday, April 8th at **7:30pm**, Monday, May 3rd at **7:30pm** & Wednesday, June 9th at **7:30 pm**

**Spirit Dates:**

Friday, November 6th- Friday, November 20th- Friday, December 4th- Friday, December 18th- Friday, January 15th- Friday, January 29th- Thursday, February 11th-

Friday, February 26th- Friday, March 12th- Friday, March 26th- Friday, April 9th-

Friday, April 23rd- Friday, May 7th- Friday, May 21st- Friday, June 4th- Friday, June 18<sup>th</sup> – Friday, June 25th