

## **Walt Whitman PTA Meeting Minutes**

**March 2, 2023**

Meeting called to order. February meeting minutes were approved.

### **Treasurer's Report – Sunita Hansraj**

We have \$123,000 in the bank account.

### **Correspondence – Courtney Schlow**

We have a letter from the staff thanking us for the valentine's treats.

We have a thank you letter from the custodians for the holiday gifts.

We have a thank you letter from the staff and children for the field trip to the Bellmore Playhouse to see She Persisted. Everyone loved the trip.

### **Presidents Report – Melissa Foreman & Inna Choi**

Thank you to Tara Bensol and Niki Gionis for a great parents night out. We raised \$8,000.

Grades 3-5 went to the Bellmore Playhouse for a field trip to see the play She Persisted.

Thank you Melanie Eisenberg for organizing the Valentine's cards for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. The kids loved making them.

We had the Milk and Sugar truck come to school and provide treats to the staff.

The Flow Society shorts fundraiser has ended. We sold over 200 pairs of shorts and raised \$2,460.

The Display my Art fundraiser ran by Mrs. Beech netted over \$1,000.

The PTA has ordered a rubber gaga pit floor and some other playground equipment.

Thank you to the nominating committee for putting together the board slate for 2023/2024.

We are in the process of forming our awards committee for the last PTA meeting of the year. We normally give awards to PTA members at the last meeting for extraordinary service. If you would like to be part of the committee let us know.

Spring book fair is March 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Please sign up to volunteer.

Save the date, April 26<sup>th</sup> is Fun Fair.

Planting day will be in early May.

Fifth grade committee sign up for next year will come out soon.

### **Mr. Snyder's Report**

Thank you for the Milk and Sugar truck. The staff loved it and it was a warm day.

Please do not double park in the parking lot and please be safe in the parking lot.

There have been a number of emails from parents to the staff that should be better discussed over the phone or in person or over gohogle meet. Please be kind in your email communication to the

teachers.

Class placement takes months to work through. Please trust the process. I cannot accommodate requests. I receive over 100 requests each year. We do the best we can to place your kids with the right teacher.

### **Book Fair – Dana Kuropatkin**

The spring book fair will be held on Thursday, March 16th and Friday, March 17th. A flyer will be sent home the week of the book fair with a letter explaining all of the important information. Please attach a post-it note if there is a specific book or series you would like your child to purchase. As always, the books in the flyer are not guaranteed to be sold at the fair. We will be using E-wallet again this year. The link will be in the letter and will be emailed out. Of course we will be accepting cash and checks payable to Walt Whitman PTA. A volunteer signup is being passed around and will be emailed out. We are looking forward to an amazing sale. Please reach out if you have any questions.

### **Curriculum Enrichment – Karen Ostrick**

We had the wacky science show. The kids loved it. March 6<sup>th</sup> we have the magic of reading with Brian Richards. March 16th Brent Daniels virtual event called Music Technologies. Bash the Trash is coming in to talk about recycling and they will come in with musical instruments.

### **Cultural Unity Committee – Erica Schulman**

Syosset Council of PTAs Cultural Unity Committee will be holding a Celebration of Culture program. We invite all students in the district to help us celebrate the many cultures in our community by submitting a piece of literature, art, digital art, photography or dance/music composition that shares what culture means to them. Feel free to share a special holiday, occasion, tradition, toy, food, or anything that is special to you. Each entry will earn a ticket into a raffle where there will be a number of random winners for a gift card prize. There will be an in-person showcase at the end of the year to see all the wonderful entries. Please look out for the flyer for the event this month.

### **Fifth Grade Committee - Dana Kuropatkin, Courtney Schlow, Leslie Won**

The fifth grade committee is still working to reschedule the fifth grade social. We will let you know all the details once it is finalized. Fifth grade parents we will be emailing out the important dates for the month of June. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Fun Fair – Tara Bensol, Cara Kaplan, Niki Gionis, Michelle Landauer**

Please join us for our annual Fun Fair on Wednesday, April 26th (rain date Friday, April 28th). This year we have combined our Fun Fair and Family Fun Night into one amazing event. Get excited for Walt Whitman Candyland - fun for the whole family! If you have any questions or would like to join the committee, please let Cara Kaplan, Tara Bensol, Niki Gionis or Michelle Landauer know.

### **Nominating Committee – Jacqueline Braunstein**

The nominating committee submits the following slate for approval by the membership. Samantha Lebenhart withdrew her delegate nomination and Carly Laffie was nominated in her place. Thank you to everyone who volunteered and applied and to our nominating committee. Can I have a motion to vote to approve the proposed slate? Motion was made, seconded and approved.

### **Co- Presidents**

Inna Choi  
Karen Ostrick

### **VP of Events**

Pam Bahiri

**VP of Fundraising**

Tara Bensol

**VP of Arts and Education**

Jacqueline Braunstein

**VP of School Store**

Heather Egert

**Treasurer**

Sunita Hansraj

**Recording Secretary**

Theresa Seedorf

**Corresponding Secretary**

Niki Gionis

**Delegates**

Lauren Grams

Lauren Cremer

Tracey Meyer

Carly Laffie

Allison Soren

Danielle Sanjaby

**SEPTA – Danielle Sandjaby**

Parent Group- our next Parents meeting is on 3/7 at 8:00pm via zoom. Please join us for a friendly chat.

Council - School & Community Committee has organized a Food Drive for St. Edwards Food Pantry from 2/1-3/1.

Our last Adult Yoga session of the year is on 3/28 via zoom. This is our annual SEPTA fundraiser for \$10 for an hour. It is a wonderful opportunity to unwind and support a good cause.

Please signup on Memberhub.

Important Dates to remember

March

23 – SEPTA Meeting at South Grove at 7:45 pm - Next presentation is Preparing for Transitions to Middle and High School by Dr. Thomas Kelly

28 - Adult Yoga virtual at 8pm

**School Board Reporter - Tara Ginsburg & Carly Laffie**

-K-12 Coding & Robotics Presentation- Reference on the district's website for more detail.

-Presentation on Building Algorithmic literacy

Presentation on Transitional Bilingual Education-

Brief overview:

-Syosset is a diverse community

-State requirement- when you reach a certain number of students who are English language learners and share the same family of languages the district has to offer classes in State regulation, parents are not required to take advantage of this, we are required to offer it.

- ENL program already offered but we are now required based on numbers to offer a transitional Bilingual Education program
- Part of the presentation they discuss what is currently being done in the ENL instruction
- Our district had reached the threshold number (20) of Mandarin speaking students which requires us to offer a transitional Bilingual Program at each of the two grade levels that it has met.
- The threshold is determined by the NYS Education Dept.
- Based on regulations and Syosset's trends we will offer a transitional bilingual program for students entering Grade 1 and Grade 2 this fall.
- As discussed,- Transitional Bilingual Program is optional so families will have to choose whether they want to participate in it or continue with the ENL Program
- The program is to receive content instruction in their home language while they learn to read, speak, understand and write in English.

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Research on this learning is mixed. More details on the presentation are presented on the district's website.

Staffing needs- 3 teachers

AP Willits and Village where the class can be held based on space- extra bus route based \$413K (teachers, books, bus)

-Meeting to inform families and how it will work, then access their interest

Citizens Finance Committee- Gave their meeting update

-how to generate revenue- ideas

-we are considered an affluent community so we are not applicable for certain grants

BOE Update-

-Toured facilities of Hicksville HS

-Cafeteria & Aquatics center-get ideas

-BOE did their first workshop- they will summarize all the ideas, feedback from community members about not streaming, they did not feel it did lend itself to live streaming

-BOE Asking Dr. Rogers if we can get Parents back into the schools more like pre-pandemic- response was he felt we are back to where we were pre-pandemic.

Audience to the Public-

Resident- Read minutes from meeting, in district for 35 years, discussing the name "Braves", and whether it is viewed offensive or not.

**PTA discussion** - During the BOE discussion, the school budget was brought up and how the music teacher needs a music cart and how the librarian is using broken crayons gathered from classrooms as supplies. The PTA discussed how our school budget is used and why some of our teachers don't have basic needs. Karen Ostrick and Tara Ginsburg spoke about the Finance Committee for the BOE. Anyone can ask the Finance Committee about the budget and how the money is spent.

### **School Store – Pam Bahiri**

Thanks to all of the amazing volunteers for school store. It has been going great and is a huge fundraiser! These kids know how to shop! If you have already volunteered for 3 school stores for each child, feel free to check availability the week of and if there are slots open, please sign up! We are just trying to make it fair so everyone gets an opportunity to volunteer if they want to but feel free to reach out to me directly, I tend to get last minute volunteer cancellations as well.

### **Upcoming Dates:**

#### **March**

3/2 - SCHOOL STORE

3/2 - PTA Meeting 7:30pm

3/13 - Board of Education Meeting 8:00pm @ Southwoods

3/16 - 3/17 - Book Fair

3/23 - SCHOOL STORE

3/23 - SEPTA Meeting 7:45pm @ South Grove

**Spirit Dates:**

Every Friday