



General Meeting Agenda

November 1st, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Our meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm with a quorum present. Attendance was taken by sign in sheet.

I. Approve minutes - October 2023

We sent out the minutes from our last PTA meeting for review via email and have some copies on the tables today. Does anyone have comments, changes, or questions? None - the minutes stand as approved. Thank you.

II. Treasurer's Report – Sunita Hansraj

Opening Balance, 9/23/23	\$100,223.41
Income/Deposits	\$ 12,550.52
Expense/Cash Disbursements	\$ 13,248.62
<u>Checking Balance</u>	<u>\$ 99,525.31</u>
<u>TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 10/20/23</u>	<u>\$ 99,525.31</u>

All balances were reconciled to the bank statements. The books were reviewed and found to be in order by Danielle Sandjaby. Thank you Danielle.

III. Correspondence Secretary – read by Niki Gionis

Wrote a card of well wishes on behalf of the Walt Whitman PTA for student alumni Jax Leiberz in response to his recent injury and recovery.

We held our second executive meeting prior to this meeting tonight. We nominated 3 executive committee members to the Nomination Committee. They are Danielle Sandjaby, Cindy Ho, and Sunita Hansraj. If any non-committee members are interested in joining the nominating committee please volunteer now. Thank you Jen Crecco, Jun Xuan and Trupti Bahl for volunteering.

IV. Principal's Report – Mr. Snyder

- Please, please, please retrieve your belongings from the lost and found. Unclaimed items will be donated during our coat drive for the holidays.
- Thank you to the PARP committee for a great job. It is important to make reading a priority especially early in the year.
- Thank you to the Fall festival committee. This year's event went really well. DJ Cara did a great job with getting the kids up and dancing.
- Thanks goes to the Athletic Director Scott Stueber for getting new soccer nets for the school.
- NWEA and Cogat results will be available soon. Possibly this Friday. Be on the lookout for an email from Ray Loverson, assistant superintendent for curriculum.
- Parking
 - Please park your car in the AM if you need to assist your children in exiting the car.
 - Parents have requested a third security guard for the bottom of the hill at dismissal. Dr. Curry is working with our security director Scott Hamilton on this.



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- There are typically 100 walkers on any given day; 120 on Fridays.
- Buses - We usually get a heads up when buses are running late. If there is an issue please contact transportation and include me so I can advocate.
 - transportation @syossetschools.org
- Happy Thanksgiving to everyone
- Please use teacher reacher to schedule parent teacher conferences if you have not done so already. Reach out to Ms. Falck with any technical issues. Please note the school is closed but is being used as an election site so if you bring your children there will be other community members in the hallways where they will be sitting.
- Walt Whitman maintains a viewpoint of neutrality. Every culture is valued and gets the same recognition. Other schools may do other celebrations. We have an announcement the day before any holiday or day off explaining the occasion even if it falls on a weekend. "The students do not have a day off. They are not attending school because...."

V. President's Report - read by Inna Choi and Karen Ostrick

Thank you Mr. Snyder.

We cannot believe we are already starting November. What an amazing month we have had. We started with PARP right after our last PTA meeting and finished up the program on Friday this past week. Thank you to our chairs - Mollie Newman, Rachel Levenson, Heather Egart and VP Jacqueline Braunstein. Our Pajama Night, dress up days and mystery readers were amazing. The kids absolutely love it all and we hope you or someone important to your child, all participated by reading with them in the spirit of "pick a reading partner" programs. Our arts in education event called the Earth Dome was a wonder to be seen and perfectly tied into our PARP theme of Adventures in Reading. We have plenty of photos posted on our instagram page and you can see some video clips of the inside of that amazing globe - warning though if you have vertigo I would skip that part. Thank you Jacqueline for this great program.

We finished off the month with our Fall Festival which was an enormous success. Thank you to Tara Bensol, Cara Kaplan our magically MC, Ashley Cohen, Marina Meyerowitz and VP Pam Bahiri for this wonderful event. The months of planning surely paid off. The kids had a fantastic time with all the toilet paper mummies and pumpkins and our amazing dancing zombies!

One important item for tonight, is that we will be voting on our Nominations committee. *We have already taken a vote and selected our members from our Executive committee but we will be asking for those of you here tonight to nominate yourselves to be representatives from our general membership.* Our by-laws state that we need to have 3 executive committee members and 2 from our general membership and 1 alternate. Please let us know if you are interested in becoming a member of our nomination committee - please raise your hand now. Thank you for helping us out, as your support is greatly appreciated.



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Moving on..., November is just as busy as October was with amazing events and activities. You should have seen a flyer for the Race Hub by now. We hope that you know we are sponsoring it for the students again during recess. Speaking of recess, to add on to Mr. Snyder's program of bringing some excitement to indoor recess, we will be asking for a vote to add money to the budget line of student activities and enrichment. We will go over it in more detail later on during the vote.

Additionally this month, we will be hosting a few fundraisers with local retailers like White Post Farms - with our Pie Sale, Mixology and with Sugar Crazy. These fundraisers along with others throughout the year will help support our events like the Race Hub, recess activities, games and kids crafts like the one coming up for the Thanksgiving luncheon.

What a beautiful way for us all to give back to our local senior community. We are not only teaching the kids about being thankful but also how good it feels to give to others. To see those Seniors eyes light up when they see what the children have done and are doing for them, it truly makes our PTA beyond special. If you aren't able to participate this year in the day-long event, we recommend that you try and make yourself available one time during your tenure at Walt Whitman.

When it comes to giving back we know Whitman always outdoes itself. So we hope you help with our Coat Drive this year. Which actually starts today! You'll hear more from our community kindness committee.

Lets not forget how we will end our month - but with a Family Fun night! Lots to go over this month, so let's get started!

VI. Standing Committee Reports

- A. We will hear the report of the **Arts in Education / Curriculum Enrichment** committee given by Jacqueline Braunstein

The kids had a great time at the earth dome on Oct 26. Our next arts and Ed program will be a circus in December.

- B. Now we will hear the report of the **Bookfair Committee** given by Jacqueline Braunstein, Cindy Ho, Rachel Levenson or Samantha Lehenhart.

Thank you for helping to make our Book Fair a great success! Despite the short shopping times, the kids had a great time making their purchases. Your eWallets made a huge difference, thank you. Any unused funds will remain in your account and can be used at our Spring Book Fair. By now all the book fair purchases have been received by the students. The pre-ordered Diary of a Wimpy Kid, No Brainer books will be delivered as soon as we receive them from Scholastic.



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- C. Now we will hear the report of the **Board of Education Reporter** given by Carly Laffie/Tara Ginsburg.

Facilities Discussion - Questions they are focusing on:

1. The Board is deciding on a 7 or 10 year cycle for facilities.
2. Focus on WW and BH
 - WW discussion items:
 - § Demo the 3 portables
 - § Add 4 new classrooms
 - § Build a new gym
 - § Convert the existing gym into a cafeteria and music room
 - § Convert the existing cafeteria to classrooms
 - § Estimated cost is \$15M
 - BH portable replacement is estimated to be \$14M to build 7 additional classrooms
 - There are other portable replacement discussions for Village and Baylis
 - They discussed building on site traditional construction vs pre manufactured off site construction as mentioned in the previous board meeting
3. How do we want to proceed with the Woodbury School?
 - Cost range up to \$15M depending on the usage and unknowns (aiming for \$12M)
 - The basement cannot accommodate ceiling heights greater than 7-10 feet
 - § Per NYSED regulations all classroom spaces require a minimum 9 foot ceiling height
 - At most, the building could house 2 UPK sized classroom spaces based off of building limitations
 - Options:
 - § Hybrid: house 2 UPK classrooms and 20 business office staff for \$15M
 - § Office only: house 31 business office staff for \$12.9M
 - § Maintain community room in either scenario
4. How much additional do we want to do? To be determined
5. Focus on HBT track or the HS gym space?
 - They had a presentation to discuss athletic facilities at the High School. Please reference the presentation for more details.

There will be more discussions to follow and answers to questions will be addressed at the next board meeting which is **November 6th**.



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D. We will now hear the report of the **BoxTops** given by Carly Orlansky.

It is the easiest way to raise money for the school! Simply download the app, scan your receipts or forward them if you buy online to the email address provided! We have raised \$16.70 so far this year! So many products you buy are included, it is easy!

E. Now we will hear the report of the **Community Kindness committee** given by Tracy Brown and/or Joanne Fang

The Walt Whitman PTA will be hosting a coat drive from **November 1-17th**. We will be accepting new and gently used coats for those in need. We will also accept NEW hats, scarves and gloves. There will be a donation box in the vestibule. For any questions please contact Tracy Brown at tracyjill923@aol.com or Joanne Fang at Juan81_2000@yahoo.com.

F. Now we will hear the report of the **Directory Spot and Membership** given by Michelle Kim read by Karen Ostrick or Inna Choi

The directory spot is updated with the most up to date student info and paid members as of 10/4. Please DO NOT fill out a directory spot form if nothing has changed with your contact info.

Last but not least, please join the PTA and go to the givebacks website at <https://waltwhitmanpta.memberhub.com> and become a paid PTA member to enjoy access to the Directory Spot and volunteer for school events. Feel free to send any questions or requests to her email (michki21@gmail.com).

G. Now we will hear the report of the **Discount Card Fundraiser Committee** given by Cindy Ho.

We still have some cards left to sell. You can order by going to our PTA website. Please contact Cindy Ho if you have not received a card you ordered. Thanks!

H. Now we will hear the report of the **Fifth Grade Committee** given by Melissa Forman and Jacqueline Braunstein.

The fifth grade committee is hosting a dodgeball tournament for fifth grade students on November 9th after school hours at Walt Whitman. The cost to participate is \$25 and all proceeds will go towards fifth grade events. Further information will be provided over the next few weeks. We are looking for parent volunteers to act as referees, so if you have any interest, please let us know.

I. Our **Family Fun Night Committee** report given by Tara Bensol, Niki Gionis, Pam Bahiril and Heather Egert

Due to insurance requirements in having outside vendors on campus, this year's family fun night will be at BOUNCE on November 29th. Flyer to follow.



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J. Our **Fundraising Committee** report given by Tara Bensol and Michelle Bochner

Get ready for Walt Whitman's fundraising week! The week of November 13th!

We start on Wednesday, **November 15th** with our Mixology fundraiser! Come shop while raising money! 10% of all sales all day will be donated! All Fall is in and ready to be shopped! The gifting co will also be there for all your personalized holiday gifting needs! Join us at Sugar Crazy on **November 16th** from 10am - 6pm for a Walt Whitman shopping event. Everyone who mentions "Walt Whitman" will get a 10% discount PLUS 10% of the purchase is donated back to us. This includes Kidcessories AND gift cards as well! You HAVE to mention Walt Whitman for the discount. Get those camp and holiday shopping lists ready! You may also make purchases by phone and mention Walt Whitman - including gift cards.

K. Our **Holiday Boutique** report given by Cindy Ho, Erica Sutter and Lauren Grams

We are excited for our Holiday Boutique this year on Thursday, December 7th for all classes and Friday December 8th for any students that forgot to bring money or who were absent. The set up will be similar to the Book Fair. We will be selling items for the children to purchase for the holidays for family members/friends ranging in price from \$0.75 to \$20 from our traditional vendor, Little Shoppers. Please send your children in with cash or check that day. In the past, we have also provided for students who may not have the economic means to shop at Holiday Boutique with the help of Mr. Snyder. If you would like to contribute, please let us know and we will provide the money to Mr. Snyder so he can provide it to the students in advance of the sale. If you are a family in need of any assistance, please let Mr. Snyder know. We would love for all of the children to be able to buy gifts for their loved ones. We will need parents to volunteer for our committee to help with set up, help the children shop and pack everything up at the end. A sign up genius will go out soon. Please contact Lauren Grams or Cindy Ho or Erica Sutter with any questions.

L. Here is a report of the Pie Sale Committee given by Carly Goodman and/or Allison Mayer

Please support the Walt Whitman PTA and buy delicious award winning baked goods from White Post Farms by participating in our Thanksgiving Pie Sale Fundraiser this holiday season. It is one less thing to have to make yourself on Thanksgiving day. Pick up will be on November 21st at Allison Mayer's home. Orders must be placed by Friday, November 3rd. We will be sending out a flyer with a direct link to the Member Hub where you can place your orders. Be sure to keep an eye out. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Allison Mayer or Carly Goodman. Thanks!



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M. Rachel Levenson, Tara Bensol, Teresa Seedorf or Ashley Cohen from the **Thanksgiving Luncheon Committee** will now give their report.

Our Thanksgiving Luncheon is the most special event of the year! Taking place on Monday, November 20th - Senior citizens attend from local facilities to enjoy a thanksgiving feast along with performances by our students, staff and even a parent! It is truly a special event. Everything used for the event including decor and food is prepared and donated by local businesses and hopefully all of you! Please keep an eye out for the volunteer form to donate cooked and uncooked food items and other necessities we need for the day! The kids will be participating in crafts during recess to contribute. They will be making placemats, necklaces and picture frames! Please keep an eye out for the volunteer form to assist with the crafts.

N. Heather will speak on behalf of the **School Store committee**

School Store has been off to a great start! The kids have really been enjoying coming! Thank you to all of those who had volunteered and I'm looking forward to meeting those who are signed up for the upcoming school store. Please be mindful to just walk to and from the stage when volunteering for School Store and to not wander the halls. Also, please make sure you are not signed up for more than 3 per child and that you are a paid pta member. If you are unable to attend a School Store that you have signed up for, please let me know ASAP. Also, if you need to switch with somebody, please let me know so that we can make the appropriate changes with Security. You can always check back the day before to see if there are any openings and I'm going to try and do my best to post on Facebook if there are as well. Also, even though it's so cute to see your kids shopping, photos are not allowed. We have a dedicated photographer who will be taking some for the yearbook. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions. And if you see any fun school supplies send them my way!

O. Another important report from **SEPTA** given by Erica Shulman & Danielle Sandjaby

SEPTA: SEPTA is a district wide PTA whose primary role is to promote acceptance and inclusion of all by providing resources and support to parents, teachers and children who receive special education services through an IEP, 504 Plan, related support services such as resource room, counseling, speech, occupational or physical therapy and students who are twice exceptional or gifted. SEPTA number one fundraiser is our membership anyone can join (please print out the attached flyers and bring them to your meeting - thank you). Please explain what SEPTA is below in the summary you can read. Any questions please reach out to our Membership Chair Jennifer Poitrimol jenpo3012@gmail.com.

SEPTA has a very special event coming up:

- First Annual Resource Fair November 21st - 7:45-9:15 pm at Robbins Lane Elementary School. More information coming soon please SAVE the DATE for this special event! Any question please reach out to Committee Chairs Danielle Sandjaby daniellesandjaby@gmail.com & Daisy Wong kdwongfung@gmail.com
- SEPTA meetings are informative and cover all areas of child development not just areas within special education.



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P. Now we will hear **Syosset Council of PTAs Committee reports.**

1. Now we will hear a report by the **Cultural Unity Committee** given by Alban Jeune.

We are working on the May 30th celebration of culture as a priority, we will have a better idea at our next meeting on January 9th. The main idea is to include restaurants in the district to participate in some form.

A few members are working to put together a google worksheet with various sets of helpful info like a FAQ list of parents resources, elementary resources for suggested activities for celebrations. It is a work in progress for now.

2. We will now hear a report from the **Reflections** given by Erica Shulman.

Whitman had a record amount of submissions this year. We had 19 amazing children submit their works of art. They are being given to judges for the next round.

3. Now we will hear a report about the **PTA/STA Scholarship** program shared by Lauren Creamer.

The Syosset Scholarship Fund will have a Mario's fundraiser on Election Day (Tuesday, November 7). The flyer is attached. Valid on dine-in, take-out or delivery! The Syosset Scholarship Fund is kicking off their annual fundraising drive. Each year, scholarships are awarded to qualifying graduating seniors to help defray the costs of higher education. Recipients are chosen primarily on the basis of financial need, in addition to academics and community service. To continue providing these scholarships, we are asking for your support. Please see the weekly newsletter for the flyer.

4. The **Parent Resource committee** report will be given by Allison Soren.

The Parent Resource Group will host three presentations by SCSD administrators. They will be virtual presentations and will take place at 7:30 p.m. The dates and topics are as follows:

- Monday, November 27: DASA and Code of Conduct (including the procedure a parent should use if there is an incident)
- Monday, January 29: How to Navigate the District Website

5. And our final report will be from the **School and Community committee** given by Jacqueline Braunstein.

We will be holding a district wide drive for the center for developmental disabilities from Dec 1-15. We will be collecting new and gently used:

1. Noise canceling headphones
2. Yoga balls
3. Busy Books
4. Interactive Books



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5. Interactive Games
6. Weighted blankets
7. Musical Toys

We will also be using an Amazon wishlist. More details and flyer to follow.

Thanks!

VII. New Business

A. Budget Modification:

As many of you know, from time to time, we need to vote at our PTA meetings. In order to vote we will need a quorum of **15** members. Please remember that you may only vote if you have a PTA membership this year. As Co-Presidents, we can only vote together as one vote. Traditionally presidents do not vote unless there is a need to break a vote that is tied.

When we conduct a vote, a motion will be made. If the motion is coming out of committee it will not need a second.

Thanksgiving Luncheon

The chair is recognized. *Tara Bensol - "I move to increase the budget for the thanksgiving luncheon to \$500 from \$300. Due to increased costs of goods."*

Since the motion is coming out of the committee there is no need for a second. Is there any discussion? No. We will proceed to a vote. All those in favor please raise your hands. Those opposed - none.

Thank you all. The new budget has been adopted.

Student Activities - Recess Activities / Games

After conversations with Mr. Snyder, we are addressing some of the indoor recess issues, like games. We have been given a list based on the children's requests about which type of game "rooms" they would like. We have priced out the list and are asking for a motion to increase our budget for this to \$5000. This would also include outdoor recess items that were previously discussed. We purchased \$2,200 of outside sports equipment to supplement the school's retired equipment so that there is more availability for more children to participate. With all that said, we would like to make a motion for an increase in the budget for the student activities - games, line 55, from \$150 to \$5000. Can we get a second? Thank you Tara Bensol. Is there any discussion? No. We will now adopt the Student Activity Budget modification of \$4850, making it a new total of \$5000. All those in favor please raise your hands. Those opposed - none

Thank you all. The new budget has been adopted.

B. PTA Events and Vendors

Virtual Meetings - sign ups - a question has been raised about virtual meeting options and sign ups.



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Syosset PTA units follow Council's position that meetings should be held in person and that zoom should only be used in case of emergency. NYS PTA has also gone back to pre-Covid practices, including meetings.

Second, a big issue is whether our Syosset schools have the capability of live-streaming and WW does not. Third, if a unit does have live-streaming capabilities, people from home would not be able to talk. Eg: at BOE meetings, no one at home can participate in Audience to the Public. If people are home and unable to participate, can they really be counted towards our quorum?

Finally, a hybrid option will ultimately have a discouraging effect on PTAs where active participation is crucial to its health. It is different from BOE meetings because we need constant engagement for our ever upcoming events. While attendance for meetings were high during our virtual Covid years, actual volunteers were short and difficult to recruit. In terms of news and announcements, our Newsletter goes more into detail and importantly, the Minutes of each meeting are posted on our website so you can read all that was relayed albeit, a few days later. These are some of the big issues, in our opinion, why a hybrid system would not work.

The issue of sign ups for parent participation at events that take place at our PTA meetings has come up as well and we do feel that in order to encourage attendance and participation at the meetings, we ask that you are present at the meeting to get priority in signing up. This does not exclude you from signing up, only delays it.

Vendors-The district uses NYSER for our insurance provided who has very strict requirements. They are essentially a risk management group and their goal is to keep any risk very low. All of the PTA presidents are working together to lower requirements to avoid spending unnecessary funds such as paying for riders to existing vendor policies to get such vendors approved. The process is lengthy as we contact the district who then contacts NYSER. We are also contacting other districts to determine how we can improve the process. Please be patient and supportive. Go to the next board meeting.

- Vendors the schools have been able to use have been insured by BOCES but that is only effective until 4:00 pm.
- Parents volunteering do not need insurance. Even if using rented equipment.
- As we are unable to bring vendors on campus at this time, this year's family fun night will be held off site at BOUNCE.

C. Is there any new business from the floor?

None

VIII. Old Business

We recommend that you all watch Board of Education meetings as they are discussing Whitman facilities. If there is interest in bringing back Walt Whitman's facilities committee we will send around a sign-up. The committee will meet regularly and speak at council meetings on behalf of the PTA. The next council meeting is 11/6 so please volunteer now to have time to meet beforehand.



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Request was made to add additional security during pick up since we are having parking issues with pick up.

IX. Dates to Remember

Finally, we are up to our dates to remember. Please keep an eye on our dates to remember in our weekly updates and our website. **Also, every Friday is our “Show your School Spirit” Day!** Our next meeting will be Tuesday, December 5th at 10am.

November

2 - School Store

3 - Pie Sale Deadline

3 - Picture Retake Day

5 - Daylight Savings

6 - Board of Education Mtg, SW 8pm

7 - No School

7 - Parents Teacher Conferences (all day)

7 - Syosset Scholarship Fundraiser @Marios Pizza

9 - 5th Grade Dodgeball Night Fundraiser

9 - End of First Marking Period

10 - No School

13-14 K-2 Recess - Thanksgiving placemats and frame decorating

14 - Parent Teacher Conferences 3:45 - 4:15p

15 - Mixology Fundraiser

15 - PTA Council Executive Meeting at Whitman 7:45pm

16 - Sugar Crazy/Kidcessories Fundraiser 11a - 6p

16 - Parent teacher conferences 3:15 - 4:15p

16 - School Store

17 - Coat Drive Deadline

20 - Thanksgiving luncheon (9a - 2p)

20 - Board of Education Mtg, SW 8pm

21- Pie Sale pick up

21 - SEPTA Mtg & Resource Fair, Robbins Lane, 7:45pm

23-24 - No School

27 - PTA Council Evening Program Virtual: DASA and Code of Conduct

30 - Family Fun Night

30 - School Store

December

4 - Board of Education Mtg, SW 8pm

5 - PTA Meeting, 10:00am

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Recording Secretary
Theresa Seedorf

Attached
Sign in Sheet