



General Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2024, 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Our meeting was called to order at 10:05 am with a quorum present. Attendance was taken by sign in sheet.

- I. **Approve minutes - January 2024** We sent out the minutes from our last PTA meeting for review via email and had some copies on the tables today. The minutes were approved.

II. **Treasurer’s Report – Sunita Hansraj**

Opening Balance, 12/23/23	\$104,280.79
Income/Deposits	\$ 12,159.13
Expense/Cash Disbursements	\$ 41,660.05
<u>Checking Balance</u>	<u>\$ 74,779.87</u>
<u>6mth CD Balance @ 4.430%</u>	<u>\$ 35,000.00</u>
 <u>TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 1/22/24</u>	 <u>\$ 109,779.87</u>

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

Budget Committee Report: On Monday, January 8, 2024, the budget committee visited Roslyn Savings Bank to initiate the opening of an interest-bearing CD account for our PTA funds. For those unfamiliar, this provides a simple means for the PTA to accumulate funds with a substantial interest rate and of course with minimal effort. The CD will mature in 6 months, at which point we will reassess the situation and decide whether to renew.

III. **Correspondence Secretary – read by Niki Gionis**

None

IV. **Principals Report - Mr. Snyder**

- ★ The Multicultural expo was incredible. Lots of great food. Awesome event - thank you for the effort. Looking forward to a bigger and better event next year.
- ★ Report cards are out as of this morning. If you have a child receiving MTSS support, there will be a progress report as well.
- ★ Chronic Absentee Report - fairly new - federal govt requires district to report “chronic” absence - If your child is out 10% of school year or more - a letter will be automatically generated and sent to you. Unless you get a phone call directly from Mr. Snyder, it just means this has to be reported.
- ★ NWEA results come out tomorrow. There should be a letter from Dr. Loverso - NWEA benchmark is used to place students in MTSS and the learning center.
- ★ We had a community member inquiry - what do we do for black history month? This is not a required curriculum by the state but we make sure students are educated about trailblazers in multiple genres such as writing, music, arts etc. Lots of things go on throughout the month on this subject. Teachers have incredible slideshows and information.



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- ★ “PS I Love you” day - peer mediators - group of students that develop kindness related initiatives; Students wear purple on Friday. 100 days of kindness bulletin board. More information about the PS i love you programs - [click here](#).
- ★ Stanley water bottles - very large and spill - give your kid a regular water bottle
- ★ Watch devices - can’t use it as a phone and shouldn’t be texting; no policy that governs this - acceptable use policy - governs things on network - so only if connected to district network; can’t take the watch away unless it is disrupting the educational process - if it is distracting
- ★ Happy Lunar New Year to those celebrating!

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

Thank you Mr. Snyder!

Thank you for coming out to our second daytime PTA meeting this school year! We hope it is helpful for those families who have a harder time making the evening meetings. Also it feels nice to be in the building while our kids are here, even if we can’t be with them.

We had a lot of events this past month - among them our Multicultural Expo, Virtual Bingo, Family Engagement Meet and Greet, and Parents Night Out at Kashi. We will leave the updates for the chairs to give but want to say a big thank you to all the chairs of the respective committees, Principal Synder for his involved help throughout, and our wonderful superstar teachers and staff who support our students and PTA programs, always.

As Dr Rogers’ Community Update weekly email informed, the Anti-Bias Task Force will host a Community Forum this Thursday, Feb 8th at 8pm at South Woods MS. The purpose of the forum is to hear from the community and gather ideas that the Task Force may consider incorporating into its recommendations to the Board of Education. You must register to attend the forum and sign up to speak; please refer to the email for the link to the registration form.

VI. Standing Committee Reports

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

The students enjoyed a story telling session with Native American storyteller James Bruchac last month. With the February school calendar and holidays, our next programs will be in March - an anti-bullying magic show for our younger grades and an inspirational assembly with Rohan Murphy for our 3-5 graders.

- B. Carly Laffie or Tara Ginsburg, our **Board of Education reporters**, will update us now.

January 8, 2024 BOE Meeting & Superintendent’s Report - High School Updates
CTE (Career and Technical Education) Program Presentation – by David Steinberg, SHS AP
2024-25 Pathway to Success – Syo+. Implementing heuristic skills

Syosset creating 3 pathways:

1. Accounting and Finance



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2. Business, Management, and Administration
3. Pre- Engineering

Upon Pathway Completion:

1. NYSED Technical Endorsement (a seal affixed to diploma upon completion of each pathway) and
2. Micro Credentials (skills attained, needed for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, and advancement; informed by Syosset Business Advisory Board and local industry leaders). E.g.: a badge for Excel on resume instead of merely stating, "proficient in Excel," that every resume states

New Graduation Requirements from NYSED – Dr Raymond Loverso

Commission recommendation to Board of Regents:

Currently 3 diploma types a student can earn. I.e.: Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation, Regents Diploma, and Local Diploma à Consolidate into one diploma type with an emphasis on different pathways. I.e.: Required 4 English, Math, Science, Social Studies + 1 (New Pathways: STEM, Humanities, Arts, LOTE, CTE, COOS, Civic Readiness.

January 23, 2024 BOE Meeting - Special Meeting - [Facilities](#)

1. There is NOT going to be a bond vote on the facility package in March; it is delayed until the BOE gets more feedback. Building people feedback and other outreach to the community members feedback- requested
2. Discussion about adding more gym space and community space to either WW and Berry hill or to more buildings. Wasn't an agreement about this. More discussions to be had. What is the need of the school versus the want.
3. In terms of construction- How much delaying would potentially cost or a way to make it work not just during the summer but during the school year. Construction may be while kids are in the building.
4. Suggestion was to waive PE requirement if on a team sport and effect the Gym HS space.
5. Roger's went over the community feedback

C. The Book fair committee will report now - Cindy Ho, Rachael Levenson, Jacqueline Baunstein and Samantha Lehenhart

Book Fair - Spring: The spring book fair will be held on Thursday, March 14th and Friday, March 15th. 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 a reminder, the books in the flyer are not guaranteed to be sold at the fair. The preferred way of payment will be eWallet. Please check your email for information on how to use any remaining balances from the fall book fair. We will also be accepting cash and checks payable to Walt Whitman PTA. A volunteer signup will be sent out soon. We are looking forward to an amazing sale. Please reach out if you have any questions.



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

We are at \$36.10 for the year. As a reminder this is super quick and easy to do whether you shop in store or online you can simply scan your receipts or forward them to the box top email located on the app. Or send to me carlyorlansky@gmail.com (914) 980-8112. This is the easiest way for our kids to get money! Covered products include Lysol!! For the month of February for every 5 products they will also be donating funds to other schools in need in addition to Walt Whitman. If you have questions or need any help feel free to reach out.

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

Thank you all for your generous clothing donations. Last week we brought over 20 bags to the LI Coalition for the Homeless all from donations from our school. I posted some photos on the PTA Facebook page so you all can see what the boutique looks like. None of the items are sold and clients come in to shop for free with dignity. Please keep the donations coming. They are currently accepting:

- Children and teens winter clothing meaning long sleeves and pants
- Women's sweatshirts and sweatpants
- Men's casual long sleeve tshirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants

All items must be clean and free from rips and stains. There is a donation box in the vestibule. Thank you again for your support and generosity! For any questions please contact Joanne Fang or Tracy Brown.

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

Friendly Reminder: The WW discount card can now be purchased at a reduced rate of \$10 each. You can order by going to our PTA website. Please contact Cindy Ho if you have not received a card you ordered. You don't have to be a resident to purchase. Thanks!

G. Family Engagement will be reported by Jacqueline Braunstein, Gabby Platz, Trupti Bahl or Parisa Osmanovic

The family engagement committee had our first meet and greet on January 31st. We got to know each other over coffee and chai and will be meeting again soon to break into subcommittees and begin working on our initiatives.



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H. Heather Egert or Niki Gionis will report for the **Family Fun Night committee** now.

We are also in the early stages of planning our upcoming Family Fun Nights which will be held in March. We are having indoor movie nights - one for K-2 and one for 3-4. If you would like to help with this please let us know.

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

Bingo Night was a huge success -- thank you to everyone who played and supported our 5th graders. Big thank you to Mr Snyder and our teacher celebrity callers. **Tomorrow, February 7th Chipotle in Syosset** will be giving our 5th grade a portion of all proceeds when mentioning Whitman while ordering. There is also a code for online orders -- please see the newsletter for more information. Chipotle will be sponsoring a 5th grade fundraiser next month -- 10% of all purchases will go to the 5th grade when mentioning walt whitman at payment. take the night off from cooking and support our 5th grade. The 5th grade will be having a **movie night Wednesday, Feb. 28th** in the gym for all 5th grade students. Both the 5th grade trip and 5th grade dance have been booked -- our 5th graders will be going to **Medieval Times** for lunch and a show on **May 15th**. The 5th grade dance has been booked at **Muttontown Country Club** on **June 20th** -- this is the evening of graduation. More details will be available soon and will go out to all 5th grade families.

J. The **Fun Fair Committee** report by Tara Bensol, Cara Kaplan or Niki Gionis

Spring Fun Fair - We are in the early stages of planning our spring fun fair - a free kids event we host in early May. If you would like to join the committee, please let Cara Kaplan or Tara Bensol know - everyone is welcome.

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

Valentine's Day - cookies and canvas. Pickup is on **February 12th from 2:45pm - 3:15pm** by the walker door. I have the flyers here and you can purchase right now just come over to me! You can see pictures of the cookie kits and canvases and place orders!

Our Flow Society fundraiser is coming back thanks to Heather Egert! Get ready for our new school spirit shorts designs as well as other new products! More info to follow! And finally, we are setting up a shopping event at Gold Coast Kids featuring Asher Shay Designs. More info to come!

L. The **Multicultural Committee** report will be given by Jacqueline Braunstein, Melissa Forman, and Gabby Platz Mohammadi.

Our Unity in Diversity program kicked off with an International Day of Play, where Whitman students engaged in games popular throughout the world. Thank you to Mr Snyder and our teachers for facilitating this fun program/ Thank you to Ms. Beach, for helping our students decorate our halls, making it an international art gallery of culture. Our big event, the second annual Multicultural Expo was once again a huge success. Thank you to Gabby and Trupti for organizing and MCing our first ever



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fashion show featuring traditional clothing worn by different cultures across the globe. The biggest thank you to all our parent and family volunteers who set up booths and brought cuisine reflective of cultures across the world. It was truly an incredible event and could not have been successful without everyone's participation. Our Unity in Diversity programming is still ongoing -- we are looking for families who want to share their culture with our student population in accordance with the district's Culture of Care guidelines. If you are interested, please reach out directly to Mr. Snyder.

M. Now here is a report of the Parents Night Out committee given by Tara Bensol and Niki Gionis

Parents' night out was a success. Thank you to everyone who donated and attended our biggest fundraiser.

N. Heather Egert will speak on behalf of the School Store Committee

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 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 explain what SEPTA is below in the summary you can read.

Next Meeting: **February 29, 2024 at 7:45pm** Virtual Meeting Preparing for your CSE Meeting - PPS Admin Team – What is your role and how can you prepare?

P. An update from our Someone Special Craft committee - Melanie Eisenberg and Livia Kogan.

The craft will take place on **Monday, February 12, 2024 during recess**. We have two crafts-one for lower grades and another for the upper grades. Please sign up to volunteer for your child's grade-there are still slots open.



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On another note, I want to thank everyone for participating in the valentine card making for patients and staff at Memorial Sloan Kettering cancer center. The cards came out beautifully! Each year the students make such wonderful valentines! They are en route to brighten someone's day!

Q. Now we will hear Syosset Council of PTAs Committee reports.

1. Carly Laffie will provide information on the **Annual Election and Budget vote committee.**

The first Budget Information Session will take place on **Monday, February 12th, 8 pm** at South Woods Middle School. The meeting is in-person but will also be livestreamed. After the first session has been presented, you will be able to find the presentation on the District website under the Board of Education/Budget Information tabs.

Some future dates to be aware of:

Monday, March 11 – Budget Information Session #2 - 8 pm – South Woods Middle School

Tuesday, April 16 – Budget Information Session #3 – 8 pm – South Woods Middle School

Monday, May 13 – Budget Hearing – 8 pm – South Woods Middle School

Tuesday, May 21 – Annual District Election & Budget Vote – 6:00 am -9 pm

Scheduled Voter Registration Dates:

Friday, March 8, 2024 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. H.B. Thompson Middle School

Friday, May 3, 2024 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Syosset High School

Monday, May 13, 2024 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. South Woods Middle School

The voter registration form can be found on the district website. The Syosset Council of PTAs will no longer be coordinating or hosting the Know Your Candidate event. In addition, all School Board candidates will distribute their own biographical information to the community.

2. Danielle Sandjaby will speak on behalf of the **communications conference committee.** Read by Pam Bahiri

The Syosset Council of PTAs' Communication Conference Committee presents and discusses issues with Syosset administrators during each school year. The committee is composed of Council Delegates from every school in the district. If you have questions for the administration that are general in nature (i.e., not something specific to your child or your specific school) to be discussed at our spring meeting, please email your unit rep, Danielle Sandjaby, no later than March 1st.

3. Lauren Grams from our **Health Nutrition and Safety Committee** will provide a report now.

The Health, Nutrition & Safety committee will host a virtual presentation from LICADD (Long Island Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence) on **February 28th at 7:30pm** which will be focused on new trends in substance abuse among youth. This is an opportunity for all parents, even those of young children, to learn about drug trends. The only way for people to participate is to RSVP by 2/26 to get the Zoom link.



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4. Erica Schulman will discuss the **PTA Reflections** program.

There is a **Feb 12 celebration** for anyone who went to Nassau level and additionally there will be a small celebration on **March 6** before the pta meeting to celebrate all who participated this year.

5. Now we will hear a report about the **PTA/STA Scholarship** program shared by Lauren Cremer.
6. The **Parent Resource committee** report will be given by Allison Soren.

The Parent Resource Group is hosting **Celebrate Calm**, a virtual parenting workshop, on **March 7th 7:30-9:30pm**. This presentation will highlight strategies to get your kids to listen the first time; stop defiance with toddlers and teens; stop whining, tantrums and sibling fights; and stop daily fights over homework, screens, and morning routine. Register online and a link will be sent to you. The registration link is in the flyer in our monday newsletter.

7. The **School and Community** report will be given by Jacqueline Braunstein.

The school & community committee will be running a drive to restock the St Edward's food pantry from **February 15 - March 15**. You can drop off donations at the school or send supplies via our Amazon wishlist. Flyer will be sent out soon!

VII. Old Business

- Nominations Committee** - The Nominating Committee will finalize the slate for the 2024 - 2025 school year very soon. Thank you to everyone who submitted an application. We will present the slate for membership approval in advance of the March 2024 PTA meeting. Thank you.
- PTA Events and Vendors** - a new 1500 policy was approved by the board on January 8, 2024. We are submitting vendors and will see what is approved.
- Whitman Facilities** - We recommend that you all watch Board of Education meetings as they are discussing Whitman facilities. As you heard from the annual budget and election committee, there are going to be public hearings about the bond that the district is putting forth. Please review carefully and attend so that when it comes time to vote in May you are informed and understand the impact of bond on your own personal taxes and the updates to our building.

VIII. 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 **Wednesday, March 6, at 7:30pm**.



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February

- 12 - Someone Special Recess Craft - lunchtime
- 12 - Reflections Ceremony, SW 7pm
- 12 - Budget & Board of Education Meeting, SW 8pm
- 12 - Pick up Valentines Kits
- 13 - PTA Council General Meeting, HBT 7:45pm
[Delegates]

13 - No School (elementary)

15 - School Store

19-23 - No School

28 - PTA Council Evening Program - Trends in Substance Abuse - LICADD, 7:30pm Virtual

28 - 5th Grade Movie Night 7:30pm

29 - SEPTA Mtg, Virtual, 7:45pm

March

1 - Communication Conference Deadline

4- SEPTA Evening Event

6 - PTA Meeting (Annual Business Meeting & Elections), 7:30p

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55am.

Recording Secretary
Theresa Seedorf

Attached

Sign in Sheet

The following attendees did not sign in.

1. Ms. Weist
2. Ms. Bookspan
3. Karen Ostrick
4. Inna Choi
5. Mr. Snyder

Meeting Date: 2/6/24

WALT WHITMAN PTA MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Email
Tara Ginsburg	TaraNginsburg@gmail.com
Courtney Schlow	Courtyschlow@gmail.com
Pam Bahiri	PamBahiri@gmail.com
Jessica Lischin	Jessicalischin@gmail.com
Ashley Cohen	AshleyEngelson@gmail.com
Kari Kurta	Kari.Benjamin81@gmail.com
Jackie Avellino	Jaclynbenom@gmail.com
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