



General Meeting Proposed Agenda
March 6, 2024, 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Good evening, everyone.

Our meeting is called to order at 7:37pm with a quorum present. Attendance will be taken by sign in sheet. Please make sure you sign the sheet on the tables.

I. Approve minutes - February 2024

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? If not, the minutes stand as approved. Thank you.

II. Treasurer’s Report – Sunita Hansraj read by Karen Ostrick

Opening Balance, 1/23/24	\$ 74,779.87
Income/Deposits	\$ 13,781.69
Expense/Cash Disbursements	\$ 3,674.00
<u>Checking Balance</u>	<u>\$ 84,887.56</u>
<u>6mth CD Balance @ 4.430%</u>	<u>\$ 35,000.00</u>
 <u>TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 2/22/24</u>	 <u>\$119,887.56</u>

“All balances were reconciled to the bank statements. The books were reviewed and found to be in order by Theresa Seedorf. Thank you Theresa.”

III. Correspondence Secretary – read by Niki Gionis

Two thank you cards were received from WW staff as well as thank you MSK cards for the Scarlett Fund that the children participated in.

WW PTA,

*Thank you for the delicious treats! The charcuterie board was beautiful! Thank you for making our Valentine’s Day extra special and for always making us feel loved! Happy Valentine’s Day!
Heart, The WW Staff*

Dear PTA,

*Thank you so much for the beautiful Charcuterie Board for Valentines Day. Everyone loved it. It was very thoughtful of all of you!
Love the Staff at Walt Whitman Heart*

[MSK Cards](#) - please review thank you notes from the Scarlett Fund. It has been printed for your review as well [show them the copy] and pass it around.



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IV. Principals Report - Mr. Snyder

State assessments are coming up, schedules can be found on our website. A reminder as an agent of the state I am legally obligated to offer the test to all students even if you have “opted out”. This will be marked as a refusal. My personal recommendation is to have your child take the test. The statistical data provided by the tests are more relevant the more students take the test. The data is used to look for trends on weaknesses to bolster the curriculum. If a students scores lower than a 2 they are offered intervention with our learning center. All students who do not take a test sit together in the cafeteria or other venue to do quiet activities such as cross word puzzles or math enrichment. The stay until the majority of the class has finished. The test is not timed. Students who require more time will be relocated.

The science fair is on May 4th 6-7pm. Please see our website for details. Extra help will be available during recess and lunch periods.

Parent teacher conferences are coming up. Please reach out to Ms. Falck if you are having trouble scheduling through teacher reacher. Please use the time to discuss your childs academic achievements not their class placement for next year. Feedback on class placements is welcome however ultimately the decision will be made with the teachers’ input. They are your childs best advocates.

School is closed March 28th and 29th.

March is music month. There will be a march madness tournament based on sound clips. Every Friday will include name that tune. We will also be celebrating 100 days of kindness which is taking place across all elementary schools. Students, teachers, lunch monitors, aides, nurses all participate by recognizing students performing an act of kindness that will be announced.

There are currently 41 students registered for Kindergarten for the 2024/2025 school year (expecting 46). Planning is underway for classroom locations and assignments. We need to allot for a 3 hour lunch period as each class is too large to facilitate a double session. Reach out to board members with positive or negative feedback on our ongoing facilities evaluation.

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

Thank you Mr Snyder. Hope you enjoyed the Presidents Week break.

As some of you may know, unfortunately, we lost a member of our community in recent days. Our hearts ache for the family facing this tremendous loss. In times like this, it's heartening to witness our families coming together in solidarity. We extend our gratitude to Tracey Meyer, Parama Mukherjee, Jacqueline Baunstein, Rachel Levenson, and many others who contributed and rallied our community to show care and support to the family. Our thoughts remain with them and if you can offer different



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ideas how our community can continue to show care for the family, please let us know so we can share. Thank you everyone for your overwhelming generosity.

February was a short and Valentine's centered month. Thank you to Tara Bensol for taking the lead on the Cookie and Canvas Craft Kits for our kids. It came in handy the very next day when we finally got a snow day and also made a profit of \$389. A copy of our Budget is on the table, please feel free to take a look at it.

Thank you to the Someone Special Craft chairs Melanie Eisenberg, Livia Kogan, and VP Pam Bahiri. We showed our teachers and staff our love and appreciation this Valentines by way of a sweets and charcuterie display for them to enjoy throughout the day as mentioned before.

We had a lovely Walt Whitman Reflections ceremony earlier this evening. Thank you Erica Schulman for putting the event together and Mr Snyder who awarded them with signed certificates and made them feel recognized for their work. Congratulations to all our very talented students.

Thank you to the Nominating Committee, Cindy Ho, Danielle Sandjaby, Jenn Crecco, Jun Xuan, Sunita Hansraj, and Trupti Bahl for putting together our 2024-2025 Executive Board slate. We will be hearing from them later on and will take a vote on approving the slate as presented. We know it is a difficult and important committee and appreciate all the hard work that went into it.

We are in the process of forming our Awards Committee. Our PTA awards are given at our last meeting in June. It is a wonderful way to recognize both PTA volunteers and staff for their outstanding efforts this year. If you would like to be a part of the committee, please let us know as soon as possible.

This month, we will have Family Movie Nights and a Book Fair. More upcoming events are already in the works especially as we gear toward spring, like Fun Fair. You will hear all about them in the Committee Reports; please reach out to the committee chairs to get involved. Fourth grade parents - applications for next year's Fifth Grade Committee will be going out at the end of the month so please keep your eyes out.

VI. Standing Committee Reports

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

The k-2 kids had a wonderful presentation from Magic AI last week. Everyone had a great time and learned about accepting everyone for who they are. The 3-5 kids will not be left out and will have a visit from Rohan Murphy next week. This promises to be a moving and inspiring presentation. I can't wait for you to hear all about it.



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B. Carly Laffie or Tara Ginsburg, our **Board of Education reporters**, will update us now. Budgets Presentation was presented by Dr. Rufo. Attached is the link to go through the presentation- <https://www.syosetschools.org/domain/115>

Special Education Presentation Given: link is attached with more details- <https://www.syosetschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=697&dataid=27820&FileName=Special%20Education%20Programming.pdf>

Some topics of interests discussed:

- Expansion of the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) Model
- Supporting Transitions: Connecting the World of CPSE and CSE
- Supporting The Needs of the Whole Child: Increase in Mental Health Supports
- Supporting The Needs of the Whole Child: Northwell Health Partnership
- A new course "CEAL" was being required for incoming 9th graders. After careful consideration, Dr. Rogers has removed the requirement to allow the options to take the electives offered. The district will continue to find ways to incorporate this course throughout the school year and bring it to the middle school, such as pull outs in Gym for wellness. This now gives back the opportunity for 9th grade to get a 1/2 credit.
- A co-chair has resigned from the anti-task force and will need to fill the spot. BOE made suggestions to reach out to the community.

The Public Portion can be viewed in person but will no longer be live until it is fully reviewed and cleared to post.

- Student- spoke about creating a sustainability policy for the district
- Student- spoke about concern from President Carol Chang's email about future emails on school incidents.
- Parents - concerned with the email response to incidents as well, they would like to understand what will occur and the benefit of keeping it.
- Parent - Athletic department for wrestling- they are requesting better facilities for the wrestling team. They feel especially after going to many schools we should definitely look into updating and having a dedicated wrestling room to come up to par with the neighboring districts.

C. The **Book Fair Committee** will report now - Cindy Ho, Rachael Levenson, Jacqueline Baunstein and Samantha Lehenhart

DATE CHANGE! The spring book fair will be held on Thursday, March 21st and Friday, March 22nd. 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



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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.

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

We are at \$66.80 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
- Childrens summer clothing

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 committee has continued its mission of engaging more new and existing families through various channels, including the ongoing collection of donations to needy families, creation of extracurricular groups and organizing play dates for different grade levels, and offering space for collective support and solidarity through loss in our community. Our mission for the Spring will focus on empowering our members to utilize their creativity and ingenuity towards community building events outside of the school as well as increasing their accessibility to the remaining events in the school. We are planning a



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nature walk at Stillwell Woods Preserve and hope to have everyone join us in getting outdoors and active together. Date in early May to be confirmed.

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

Family fun night will be split into 2 movie nights - the first night is for grades K-2 and will be held on Monday, March 18th from 5:30-7:30. The 2nd night is for grades 3 & 4 on Tuesday, March 26th from 7-9. These are free events for all students but please rsvp. Kids can wear pjs and bring a blanket or towel to sit on. Water and snacks will be served. This is not a drop off event. The movies being played will be sent out soon. Please let us know if you would like to help out at either or both of these events, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you so much!!

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

Another Bingo event is on the way. Candy bouquets are back for the May Concert. 5th Grade Skating Event is out and 5th graders should get signed up soon!

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.

Friendly reminder: 5th grade parents - make sure your information is up to date in the directoryspot app so that when you move over to HBT the information is correct.

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

Our Flow Society fundraiser is back thanks to Sam Lehenhart! 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 and mixology. More info to come!

L. 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



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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! School store is canceled on the 21st due to the book fair.

M. 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. There will be a popcorn fundraiser from the 18th to the 21st.

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

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

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 Danielle Sandjaby

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 12th.



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3. Alban Jeune will discuss the **Cultural Unity** program.

The Cultural Unity Committee is accepting entries for the Celebration of Culture showcase which will be held on May 31st at 7:00 at the High school. The flyer about the Celebration of Culture showcase is in the weekly newsletter.

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

The Health, Nutrition & Safety committee hosted a virtual presentation from LICADD (Long Island Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence) on February 28th at 7:30pm, 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. On March 4th, both middle schools 7th classes had a presentation on Ryan's story. They are going to begin work on a Spring/Summer flyer.

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

Walt Whitman held its first (annual) ceremony for all reflections participants. The kids had a great time.

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

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. "Our Class of 2024 will graduate in just five months! Please help us recognize deserving seniors by making a donation to the Syosset Scholarship Fund. The Syosset Scholarship Fund gives predominantly need-based scholarships. Thank you!" Click here for the flyer. Playbill Advertising - This year's HS Theater Production will be **Chicago: The Musical** and will be held from March 14 to March 17. For Playbill ad options, click here. Tickets may be purchased here.

7. 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 7 from 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. If anyone has ideas for next year, see Allison.

8. 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.

VII. Special Committees

- A. **Nominations Committee** - Cindy Ho, Danielle Sandjaby, Jenn Crecco, Jun Xuan (alt), Sunita Hansraj, and Trupti Bahl



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Presidents: As many of you know, from time to time, we need to vote at our PTA meetings. In order to vote we 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 tie.

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

Notice of intent to run from the floor was not received at least two business days prior to today's election. So in accordance with our Bylaws, we will proceed with a vote on the slate as is.

Nomination Committee Rep: The nominating committee submits the following slate for approval by the membership. Thank you to everyone who volunteered and applied to our nominating committee. May I have a motion to vote to approve the proposed slate? Motion made and seconded.

Co-Presidents

Karen Ostrick
Cindy Ho

Vice Presidents

Education - Jacqueline Braunstein
Events - Tara Bensch
Fundraising - Trupti Bahl
Fundraising / School Store - Heather Egert

Treasurer

Allison Soren

Recording Secretary

Theresa Seedorf

Corresponding Secretary

Niki Gionis

Delegates

Sabina Chaikin, Jenn Crecco, Lauren Grams, Carly Laffie, Sunita Hansraj, Danielle Sandjaby

Presidents: Since it is coming out of the committee it does not need a second. Is there any discussion? We are ready to vote. All those in favor of the Proposed Slate raise your hands. All those opposed. No objections. Motion passes.

The motion passes, you have elected your new Executive Committee for 2024-25. Congratulations! Walt Whitman is blessed to have these caring, capable parents to volunteer, serving our children. We are in great hands next year. Thank you everyone.



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VIII. New Business -

Suggestion to involve kids in choosing charities and empowering them to raise funds on their own like a group garage sale or lemonade stand?

The student council led by Lisa Steinberg participates in voting on fundraisers. The student council consists of the officer and one representative from each class.

We will not lose a vacation day due to the snow day.

IX. Old Business

A. Whitman Facilities - We recommend that you all watch Board of Education meetings as they are discussing Whitman facilities and the budget. 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.

B. The portable structure from 30 years ago is falling apart and needs to be replaced. Music does have its own room now. OT is in a room as well but PT is usually in the hallways to accommodate for gross motor skills.

C. Please attend these meetings and provide feedback. Participation from the community is crucial. All emails and feedback is heard and should be provided with no fear of retaliation.

X. 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, April 4, at 10am.**

March

7- PTA Council Evening Program - Celebrate Calm, 7:30pm Virtual

7 - School Store

8 - Syosset Voter Registration, HBT 4-8pm

8-9 - HBT Musical Performance (Little Mermaid Jr)

10 - Daylight Savings Begins

11 - Budget & Board of Education Meeting, SW 8pm

13 - Parent Teacher Conferences, 5-8pm

15-16 - SHS Musical Performance (Chicago)

18 - Family Fun Movie Night Grades K-2

19 - Parent Teacher Conferences, 3:15-4:15 pm

21-22 - Spring Book Fair - *Please Note the Change of Date!*

21 - Parent Teacher Conferences, 5-8pm

21 - SEPTA Meeting, AP Willits 7:45pm

26 - Parent Teacher Conferences, 3:15-4:15 pm

26 - Family Fun Movie Night Grades 3-4, 7pm



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28-29 - No School

April

- 4 - PTA Meeting, 10am
- 4 - School Store
- 4 - Science Fair

Thank you everyone once again. If there is no further business, the meeting will stand adjourned.
The meeting is adjourned at 8:57pm.

Recording Secretary
Theresa Seedorf

Attached
Sign in Sheet