



General Meeting Agenda

September 5, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Our meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm with a quorum present. Attendance was taken by sign in sheet.

I. Board of Education - Central Administration - 7:30pm

Thank you to the Board of Education and Administration for joining us tonight. We sincerely appreciate your support in ensuring that Walt Whitman receives the attention it needs to serve our students & families effectively. Board President Carol Cheng and Trustees Jack Ostrick and Lisa Coscia, along with Dr. Rogers from Central Administration.

Carol Cheng - Welcome back, looking forward to a new school year.

Lisa Coscia - Welcome back, we had a busy summer. Please attend the September meeting. Meetings are once a month and you can attend in person or watch our live-stream. The agenda can be found on the Syosset website before each meeting. As an FYI, the school calendars mailed home contain a lot of useful information regarding policies on contact information.

Jack Ostrick - The district facilities proposition will be on the ballot for the October 1st budget vote. We have been meeting for over a year to address expanding enrollment. The proposition includes a 2 part bond. Part one: \$110 million Part two: \$33 million. This is a district wide vote and impacts all of the schools as they all benefit. The highlights of the proposition that impact WW are as follows: Part one includes the removal of the portables, security enhancements and air conditioning for the gym. Part two includes building a new gym and expanding the kitchen. Part one can pass on its own but part two cannot pass unless part one is adopted. The Board is here for you to answer any questions and provide information but cannot advocate for or against the proposition.

Dr. Rogers - Part one is based on recommendations submitted by an architect's review of the schools which is required every 5 years. The district does get money back from the state for school enhancements. 10 years ago it was \$0.16/dollar and has now increased to \$0.38/dollar. The new gym will address the safety concerns during elections as the structure will be open to the public but closed to the rest of the school which is not the current situation. This will be a HS sized gym. The new structure will not affect parking.

To answer a parent question on what the security enhancements were as included in part one: Some of the security enhancements included in part one are confidential for safety reasons but do include addressing exposure to the cafeteria and enhancements to the vestibule at HBT.

To answer a parent question on what the district is doing to prevent weapons in the school, all security personnel are former law enforcement. There is a kiosk at the high school all students must pass through. Only a few entrances are open to let students in and are closely monitored by staff and security personnel. The district works closely with them and Nassau county to make sure property safety procedures are in place.

II. Approve minutes - June 2024



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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.

III. Treasurer’s Report – Allison Soren

Opening Balance, 7/23/24	\$ 52,234.74
Income/Deposits	\$ 207.44
Expense/Cash Disbursements	\$ 1,645.05
<u>Checking Balance 8/22/24</u>	<u>\$ 50,887.13</u>
<u>CD Balance as of 8/22/24</u>	<u>\$ 35,771.99</u>
<u>TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 8/22/24</u>	<u>\$ 86,659.12</u>

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

IV. Correspondence Secretary – read by Theresa Seedorf (for Niki Gionis)

[\(3 letters need to be attached\)](#) We passed around the copies of the notes that were read to the membership.

📎 September Thank You.pdf

V. Principal’s Report – Mr. Snyder

Welcome back! If you have transportation concerns/issues/questions please contact transportation@syossetschools.org directly and keep me informed. Please be patient as new drivers learn routes during the 1st few days. If problems persist, please be persistent.

Cogats will be administered starting next week to 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. This is the only marker used to evaluate participation in project beyond. Participation is based on scores. There is no flexibility on this marker. NWEAs will also be administered starting at the end of the month. These are given to all grades three times a year, fall, winter and spring. We use the data to develop programs for the classrooms. Additional information can be found on the Wolverine website. Please remind your children to go slow.

The WW open house is on September 17th.

We anticipate opening access to the larger playground and the fields to 2nd graders by the end of the month.



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VI. President's Report - read by Karen Ostrick & Cindy Ho

Welcome to our first PTA meeting of the 24-25 school year! A special shoutout to all our new Whitman families! I am Karen Ostrick and I am Cindy Ho, and we are your co-presidents. We would like to introduce our new Executive Committee -*please wave when we say your name*- Theresa Seedorf - Recording Secretary, Niki Gionis - Corresponding Secretary, Allison Soren - our Treasurer, and our VP's Tara Bensol, Trupti Bahl, Heather Egert and Erica Schulman. And of course our amazing Principal, Mr. Snyder.

Before we dive into any new business, a big thank you to last year's Fifth Grade Committee for their incredible events and giving our 5th graders a memorable send-off. And, Mr. Snyder and the Walt Whitman staff, your hard work, optimism, and dedication have made the first few days of school fantastic. We can't thank you enough for always going above and beyond! And finally, I just wanted to give a quick shout out to Inna Choi (our past president) for helping us transition to this year so seamlessly.

With so many parents here, we encourage you to attend PTA meetings regularly. Agendas and Minutes will be posted on our website each month. If you haven't already, please join the PTA—it's easy to sign up on our website. Membership is essential for accessing Directory Spot, volunteering, and joining committees. For new families, don't miss out on our weekly newsletter, packed with all the info you need. Sign up for the PTA Remind App too!

Over the summer, the PTA introduced several new committees and brought back a few favorites. During our meeting, we'll share updates from each committee to keep you informed. This year, we've added exciting new committees like the Brown Bag Lunch and reinstated popular ones such as the Someone Special Dance, Talent Show, and the Someone Special Craft in June.

We're still in need of a chair for the Talent Show, so if you're interested, please let us know right after the meeting. Additionally, we're looking for a Webmaster and a Graphic Designer to help support our PTA.

Tonight, we'll be voting on the budget for the new school year under new business. Copies are available on the tables and have also been emailed to you. As we review the budget, I'd like to gently remind everyone that the true strength of our PTA comes from the dedication of our parent volunteers. While funds are important, our greatest impact is made through the time and energy parents give to support our mission. By coming together and investing in meaningful programs, we can achieve incredible results for our children and community, even with limited financial resources.

On that note, we're excited to introduce the Brown Bag Lunch program! This committee will create simple STEAM activities for the children to enjoy during recess. There will be many opportunities for parents to get involved and support the students throughout the year. If you have ideas for programs you'd like to help run, please feel free to share them with the chairs Sunita Hansraj, Sonya Raisinghani, Stella Wei or us. With these additional volunteering opportunities and scheduling for the Brown Bag



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Lunch program, we would like to highlight that the School Store will now be about once a month so please only sign up for School Store once per child this year, thank you!

Class Parent applications are now live on our website and in the newsletter. The deadline to submit your interest is Wednesday, September 11th. If you have any questions about the roles, feel free to let us know. There are three class parents per class who are chosen by the PTA co-presidents. There are many opportunities to volunteer and see your kids in school. Remember, if issues arise, please follow the chain of command outlined in the District calendar, and for PTA concerns, reach out to Cindy or myself. We're here to enrich our children's lives and build a wonderful school community.

Let's make this school year amazing! We look forward to working with all of you. Thank you!



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VII. Standing Committee Reports

- A. Now we will hear the report of the **Bookfair Committee** given by Samantha Lebenhart, Erika Schulman and Patrice Gooden. - This one is coming up in just a few weeks on October 10–11. We'll start promoting this soon. Sign ups to volunteer will also be going out to families within the next week or so.

- B. Now we will hear the report of the **Board of Education Reporter** given by Daneille Sandjaby or Heather Egert. - Summer school had over 800 students. There is an important vote to improve facilities that will take place on Oct 1. The polls will be open from 6 am-9 pm. Our community has been very vocal that Whitman needs updates so it's very important that we get out and vote. Danielle or I will try and post the link to watch the live stream of board of Ed meetings the day of as important topics are covered.

- C. We will now hear the report of the **BoxTops** given by Erika Auerbach. - The Box Tops Fundraiser is the easiest way to raise money for the school! Simply download the app, scan your receipts or if you buy online, forward them to the email address provided! We have raised \$12.10 as of Sept 1st! Our goal for the year is \$100. So many products you buy are included, it is easy!

- D. Now we will hear the report of the **Directory Spot and Membership** given by Michelle Kim - Our free online directory is only available to paid PTA members so please sign up for this year! We will be updating the directory this weekend and this is a friendly reminder that if you are volunteering for any PTA events this year, you will need to be a paid PTA member. We are in the process of turning over the Directory Spot with this year's information. Please become a PTA member to avoid being locked out. Look for an email from the Directory Spot when your directory account has been reactivated for this year. Your same login info will work from past years once you receive that email. Once you join the PTA, please understand it takes us several days to update the directory. If it has been over 3 days since you signed up, feel free to email to check in. All of the info we have received thus far has been updated in the directory, but we do not have class information yet for many students. It will be updated as soon as we receive info from class parents. Please fill out the online form if you are a new family or have changes that need to be made to your existing info. Please remember that if nothing has changed, DO NOT fill out another form. This year, Sam Lebenhart will be Co-Chairing the Directory Spot Committee with me. Please feel free to send questions to both of us. Thanks and looking forward to a great year! 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).



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- E. Now we will hear the report of the **Discount Card Fundraiser Committee** given by Michelle Bochner - The 2024 discount card is back with some new additions like Miko and old favorites too. Don't miss out on the best fundraiser to save at places you shop. \$25 per card and if you buy 2 or more, the back to school special is 10% off through the end of September.

- F. Now we will hear the report of the **Family Engagement** given by Trupti Bahl, Brooke Kneller, Parisa Osmanovic and Jacky Stadler. - The Parent Engagement Committee got a head start this school year, meeting over the summer and preparing for our incoming Kindergarten parents by tending to our Kindergarten Facebook page and attending the Kindergarten Social last week. We are listening to our parents' needs, such as the request for a Kindergarten FAQ, and will continue to meet and greet families at our Welcome Back Picnic, tomorrow. We ask anyone with insights or input on how to best accommodate families that may have barriers to engaging with school related activities to please share with us so we can work on more suggestions and solutions for increasing family engagement at Walt Whitman.

- G. Now we will hear the report of the **Fifth Grade Committee** given by Pam Bahiri and Inna Choi. - We are so excited for our 5th graders this year - it will be a super fun and memorable last year of elementary school for them! If you are a 5th grade parent, please make sure your info is listed in the directory spot and please sign up for our 5th grade Remind texts so you don't miss out on any information! Please be on the lookout for emails for info for the yearbook soon!! We are currently selling chrome book decals for all students so please place an order - the kids love them! Info is available on the PTA website. Please save the date for our car wash which will be held on Saturday, September 28th at 10am with a rain date of Sunday, September 29th. Come out and support the 5th graders while getting your car "washed" - no guarantee that it will actually be cleaner than before!!

- H. Our **Fundraising Committee** report given by Michelle Bochner & Trupti Bahl - Discount Card – Kicking off right away even prior to the start of the school year (at the Kindergarten Playdate in late August), this is one of our key fundraisers. We'll be promoting the school discount card, which provides great deals to local restaurants, shops, salons and more. This is one of top fundraising initiatives, so we'll need everyone's help spreading the word! Fall Book Fair – This one is coming up in just a few weeks from October 10–11, this event is always a favorite among students and families. We'll want to start promoting this soon. Sign ups to volunteer will also be going out to families. We're also exploring some exciting joint partnerships with local businesses and food-related fundraisers. We'll share more details about those throughout the school year.



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- I. Now we will hear the report of the **Newcomer's Social** given by Miriam Zemsky - On Saturday September 14 at 7-9pm we will be hosting the Newcomer's Social for all NEW and incoming kindergarten parents. It will be a very nice event to come out and meet the new families. Light bites will be served. Sponsored by WW PTA and Miriam and Jason Zemsky. Please note this is an adults-only event.
- J. Now we will hear the report of the **PARP Committee** given by Mollie Newman, Heather Egert, Rachel Levenson PARP is a National PTA program that stands for Pick a Reading Partner. This program is designed to foster the love of reading in children by asking adults to set aside at least 20 minutes a day to read with children. This year, PARP is starting on October 15, which will kick off our 2 reading adventure. Get ready for "Royal Reading in the Wolverine Kingdom". We will have TWO exciting evening events this year. One being a milk and cookies event which is always a hit and another with a guest author, who many children are familiar with. We will have much more to share at the next PTA meeting. Any questions or want to get involved, please reach out to us.
- K. Now we will hear the report of the **School Store committee** given by Heather Egert and Carlie Laffie - School store is back and better than ever! It will look a little different than it has in years past. School stores will take place about once a month therefore there will not be as many opportunities to volunteer. That being said, we added an extra slot for each grade and we are limiting it to one volunteer opportunity a year per child to make sure that everybody gets a turn. If you have more than one child in the building, you will be able to volunteer once per child. Please make sure to arrive at your designated time and walk directly to the stage and not linger in the halls. Please do not take any pictures. We have lots of new material and are excited to get going. Any questions, please reach out.
- L. Which leads us to the report from the **Spirit Wear Committee** given by Sydnie Monchik and Ashley Feig - Thank you so much to everyone who has already purchased Spiritwear. As most of you know, we encourage students to show their school spirit on Fridays. Tomorrow at the welcome back picnic we will be selling jibbitz, car magnets and a few other items and we are sending the spirit wear fliers home in all of the kids backpacks. Feel free to screenshot the flier and send out to any class chats. The last day to order will be Friday, 9/20 and we hope to have the orders in roughly 3 weeks later. Please let me or Ashley know if you have any questions or need help with the form!



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- M. Another important report from **SEPTA** given by Erica Shulman - What is SEPTA? SEPTA: SEPTA (which stands for Special Education Parent Teacher Association) 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. Please join! SEPTA's number one fundraiser is our membership - anyone can join! Membership is \$12. Our first meeting of the school year will be Tuesday, sept 24 at 7:45pm at Village elementary school. Come see what it's all about. You don't need an IEP or 504 plan to join or attend. We hope to see you there!
- N. And now we will now hear a report from our **Social Media Committee** given by Anna Karotkin - We have a new process for Social Media request submissions to promote your PTA Events and Fundraisers. (<https://tinyurl.com/PTAWWSocial>) There will be an intake form to promote events and photo albums will be created ahead of the event. Friendly reminder that the Walt Whitman PTA instagram account [@waltwhitmanwolverines](https://www.instagram.com/waltwhitmanwolverines) is a private account. Once you send a request to follow, you will need to DM your child's name and teacher.
- O. For our final report we will hear from the **Welcome Back Picnic Committee** given by Michelle Bochner, Pam Bahiri, Amanda Fickler, and Sunita Hansraj - The Welcome Back Picnic will be held this Friday, September 6th from 5:30-7:30 PM and will be a really fun event to kick off the school year. We have a DJ, lots of crafts and some great activities for the kids. We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the picnic. Admission is free but you must be a Walt Whitman family to attend. Pizza was available for pre order from frantoni's so if you placed an order you can pick it up at the picnic. There will also be a food truck and an ice cream truck with lots of options for purchase at the event. Please note this is not a drop off event. Please supervise your children and help us to keep all the children safe and away from the parking lot. Children who need to go inside to use the bathroom must be attended by an adult. Please bring a blanket or towel to sit on - Walt Whitman towels were available for pre order so please pick up at the picnic if you placed an order. We will still have some for sale at the event but quantities are limited. We still need parent volunteers so please contact us if you would like to help out! We can't wait to see everyone there!!
- P. Now we will hear **Syosset Council of PTAs Committee reports**.
- We will hear the report by the **Annual District Election and Budget Vote** given by Carly Laffie - Facilities Budget Vote is 10/1 - Facilities Vote - 10/1 - 6am - 9pm at SHS. The Board of Education has scheduled a vote on a facilities improvement bond for Tuesday, October 1st. The proposal includes classroom expansions and gym additions to address the substantial growth our district has experienced over the past decade. It also includes funds for necessary infrastructure repairs district-wide, upgrades to our outdoor spaces, and enhanced building security measures. Complete details about the proposal are available at bond.syossetschools.org. To learn more, you can also attend the September 16th Board of Education meeting.



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- We will now hear a report from the **Reflections** given by Erica Shulman. - Reflections is a national contest that provides opportunities for recognition and access to the arts which boost student confidence and success in the arts and in life. Each year, over 300,000 students in Pre-K through Grade 12 create original works of art in response to a student-created theme. This year's theme is: Accepting Imperfection Last year our school alone had 19 submissions! This year our goal is to surpass that number. Syosset alone had 3 national winners! There are several categories in which a student can submit a piece of work to the Reflections contest: Visual Arts, Film Production, Dance Choreography, Literature, Music Composition, Photography. There will be more dates and details to come. Usually the deadline to submit pieces of work to the Reflections program is late October or early November. Please keep an eye out for information coming home.
- And our final report will be from the **School and Community committee** given by Sabina Chaikin. - The Syosset Council of PTA's will be co-hosting a **Newcomer's Get Together** with Administration on Tuesday, October 1st at 7:30pm at the SHS for parents and guardians of students new to the district. New families will meet members from Central Administration as well as PTA Presidents and of course other new families in the district. There will be presentations featuring the incredible programming Syosset offers and attendees had a unique opportunity to pose questions and get some answers directly from Dr. Rogers and other representatives from the district.

VIII. New Business

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.

A. Approval of Budget for 2024-25

Treasurer:

"The Budget Committee would like to make a motion to adopt our 2024-2025 Budget as presented."

President:

The budget committee Treasurer moves to put it to vote on the "2024-25 Proposed Budget." Since it is coming out of the committee it does not need a second. The motion passed, the Proposed 2024-25 Budget was adopted. Thank you everyone.

B. Audit Committee Report:



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Audit Committee: *(Theresa Seedorf) The audit committee has examined the records of the Walt Whitman PTA for the period of July 2023 through June 2024 and found them to be correct.*

Co-Presidents: *Thank you to our audit committee members, Heather Egert, Joanne Fang, and Theresa Seedorf for their important work. Thank you all. The Audit has been adopted.*

IX. Old Business

This [link](#) will bring you to a page on the district website that will explain Proposition 1 & Proposition 2. All of the information you may need can be found here.

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!** Friendly reminder: you can download our google calendar to your device from our emails or from our website.

September

- 6 - Welcome Back Picnic, 5:30-7:30pm
- 11 - Class Parent Sign Up Deadline
- 14 - Newcomer’s Social 7pm
- 17 - WW Open House
- 19 - First School Store (No Kindergarten Parents)
- 20 - Spirit Wear order deadline
- 24 - WW Picture Day
- 24 - SEPTA Meeting, 7:45pm

28 - WW 5th Grade Car Wash 10am

October

- 1 - Facilities Improvement Bond Vote (6am – 9pm SHS)
- 1- PTA Council Newcomers Reception, SHS (7:30–8:30pm)
- 3 - District Closed - Rosh Hashanah (Day 1/2)
- 4 - District Closed - Rosh Hashanah (Day 2/2)
- 8 - Executive Board PTA Meeting 9:30am**
- 8 - PTA Meeting 10am**

Thank you everyone once again. If there is no further business (*pause*), the meeting will stand adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Recording Secretary
Theresa Seedorf

Attached
Sign in Sheet
[9.5.24 Sign In](#)