



General Meeting Agenda

January 15, 2025, at 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

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

**I. Approve minutes - December 2024**

We sent out the minutes from our last PTA meeting for review via email and have some copies on the tables today. The minutes stand as approved. Thank you.

**II. Treasurer’s Report – Allison Soren**

Opening Balance, 11/23/24	\$ 72,332.75
Income/Deposits	\$ 19,567.40
Expense/Cash Disbursements	\$ 12,861.69
<u>Checking Balance 12/22/24</u>	<u>\$ 79,038.46</u>
<u>CD Balance as of 12/22/24</u>	<u>\$ 35,000.00</u>
<u>TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 12/22/24</u>	<u>\$114,038.46</u>

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

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

- [WW Custodian Thank You](#)
- [Graceffa Family Thank You](#)
- [WW Staff Book Fair Thank You](#)

**IV. Principal’s Report – Mr. Snyder**

Hello and good evening. We have been enjoying spirit week here at Walt Whitman. The staff has been wearing themed outfits, for example Plaid Day and Favorite Holiday Day. We have also been actively adding to our kindness chain. The student council is responsible for adding slips of paper submitted when an act of kindness has been identified. One thing in particular that stood out were the 5th graders working together to create a presentation for a classmate who missed a bit of school. Winter NWEAs will be administered through the month.

On January 21, 2025 Dr. Wojcik will reach out regarding a Computer Based Testing (CBT) simulation to ensure students’ chromebooks are in good condition and especially with a working stylus. There will be a fee replacing a stylus. Parents will be notified by the librarian if there are any repairs to be addressed. The simulation will not be graded. Today’s presentation will be a summary on the district’s Acceptable Use Policy. All district policies are on the website. Many students bring cell phones or iWatch’s. All devices should stay in backpacks. If a student is using a device and it is causing a disruption to the educational process, the device will be taken away and will need to be picked up by the end of the day. Some highlights of the policy are as follows:

- If an event takes place over the weekend but is brought into the school on these devices, it becomes my responsibility and will be addressed.
- Anyone in the building using technology, whether using personal devices or district property, whether using district internet or not, falls under this policy. Devices can be confiscated.



## General Meeting Agenda

January 15, 2025, at 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Social media usage is covered over a 6 week program during library/media classes. Discussions on cybersecurity, cell phones, iWatches and social media are included. The program is mainly geared towards 3/4/5th graders but may shift to the lower grades.

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

Thank you Mr. Snyder. Good Morning Everyone, We hope you all had a wonderful and relaxing break and a great and healthy start to 2025. Let's kick off today's meeting with a few well-deserved thank you's. First, a huge shout-out to our class parents for organizing such fun and inclusive holiday parties for our students. Planning these events while considering allergies and dietary restrictions is no small feat and you all did a fantastic job making the celebrations joyful for everyone. A special thank you goes to Lauren Grams, Neha Sharma, and Erica Sutter for running our annual Holiday Boutique. The kids had such a great time shopping for their loved ones—it's always heartwarming to see their thoughtfulness and excitement. We also owe a big thank you to Erica Schulman for organizing Circus Week. It was a huge hit! Our Whitman students had so much fun with the circus activities, and our 5th graders' show was absolutely spectacular and not to mention hilarious. Thank you to Tracy Brown and Joanne Fang for leading our winter toy drive. Because of their efforts and your generosity, we were able to donate a significant number of toys to the US Marine Corps Reserve. Lastly, a heartfelt thank you to our Whitman families for contributing to the collective holiday gift for our office and custodial staff. They do so much to keep our school running smoothly, and it's wonderful that we could show our appreciation in such a meaningful way. There are lots of events coming up before our next meeting - International Day is tomorrow and the Multicultural Expo is next week. Lots of Maker Space Recess dates and we can't forget the incredible Parents Night Out event that keeps our budget afloat! It's time to start thinking about the ways to celebrate the outstanding Whitman parents, teachers, and staff at our final meeting of the year. If you'd like to help with the organization, nominations, or please reach out today. The deadline for submissions to National and NYS PTA is coming up, so we're hoping to get this process started soon. More information to follow.

### VI. Standing Committee Reports

- A. We will hear the report of the **Arts in Education / Curriculum Enrichment** committee given by Erica Schulman or Heather Egert.

Last month our students enjoyed the Circus residency by learning circus acts and performance skills. A job well done to all of our courageous 5th graders who showed off these skills in both their school performance as well as a performance for the parents. Next month our students will experience "Supermarket Science," which is an assembly that takes everyday items and shows students how to do fun and exciting experiments with them!

- B. Now we will hear the report of the **Board of Education Reporter** given by Daneille Sandjaby or Heather Egert. -

A residence committee was established. One of the committee's areas of focus is ensuring single-family homes are in fact single-family homes. Registration and residency depts work together to make sure the students that are meant to attend the school actually attend the school. School districts



## General Meeting Agenda

January 15, 2025, at 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

cannot deny a student an education. The town of Oyster Bay enforces zoning and can be contacted to deal with residential violations. A new energy program called Propel NY will start in 2026. 2 new energy lines will be installed. Foundation aid report- method to allocate funding for school districts. Lots of questions/comments on the regionalization issue. There will be transition meetings/presentations this month for students entering High School in the fall and in August for students entering Middle School in the fall.

C. We will now hear the report of the **BoxTops** given by Erika Auerbach.

Thanks for all your support - we are at \$98.40 with the goal of \$100. Let's keep pushing. It's basically free money for the PTA. Questions? Contact Erika Auerbach.

D. Now we will hear the report of the **Discount Card Fundraiser Committee** given by Michelle Bochner

The Sale is still on!!! for 40% off - get yours today. Use the code BLKFRI. Don't miss out on great savings at Miko and Victoria's Market and Frantoni's.

E. Now we will hear the report of the **Fifth Grade Committee** given by Pam Bahiri and Inna Choi

The 5th grade circus performance was awesome. Thanks to Erica Schulman for arranging the circus and helping with the kids that night as well as Tara Bensol. Greatly appreciated! Thank you to everyone that came to the 5th grade ice skating event on Monday, we hope the kids all had a great time! If you ordered Syosset spiritwear, it is ready. Please contact me to pick it up if you have not done so already. Thank you to Sydnie and Ashley for all of your help! The 5th grade group picture day is January 21st - please make sure your child wears his or her 5th grade T-shirt to school that day! The yearbook booster information is going out today. Please note that it is due by January 30th and please note the new rules!

*Please mark your calendars for the following dates:*

Mar 26 - Movie Night at WW

Jun 10 - Dance

Jun 13 - Picnic

Jun 17 - Picnic Rain Date

Jun 23 - Breakfast & Yearbook Signing at WW

Jun 24 - Moving Up Ceremony

Please make sure you check your emails, sign up for 5th grade REMIND texts and always feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

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*Also, HBT is asking for Middle School PTSA nominations to be submitted as well. Please check emails from your 5th Grade committee chairs.*



## General Meeting Agenda

January 15, 2025, at 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

- F. We will now hear the **Maker Space Recess committee report** which will be given by Sunita Hansraj, Valerie Kesten and Stella Wei

We are thrilled to have the Maker Space program up and running for these colder months. Students have enjoyed completing various projects during indoor recess sessions. Our goal is to continue to provide additional activities for students to engage in during recess periods throughout each month. Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered! We are always looking for volunteers to help out, as well as ideas for future Maker Space sessions. Please feel free to reach out via email or through the Google form in the weekly newsletter.

- G. **Movie Night** will be presented by Heather Egert and Jenn Crecco

The movie nights will begin soon in March - we will have 3 sessions. k-2 , 3-4 and 5.

- H. Trupti Bahl, Jenn Crecco, Booke Kneller and Gabby Platz, from the **Multicultural Committee** will report now

First, this week is the Traditional International Day where our students will travel from country to country learning interesting facts along the way. Participating parents will construct a trifold poster board about the country they are presenting; this presentation should be geared towards a kindergarten age audience. There will be an opportunity for parents who can only come for an hour or so to be flight attendants; ushering the students from country to country. Second: Next week is our second portion which is an international food exposé. Volunteers will supply food from their country of choice - please note this food should be hors d'oeuvre style and/or easy to eat while standing. There will also be a fashion portion for this night, where our students will participate in a fashion show or perform an act of their choice. Tickets for non-Whitman attendees will be \$5 in advance and \$10 at the door. This is completely optional. Both events are going to be great. Questions, please contact the committee chairs. This is my 13th and last year chairing multicultural day. It has been a great experience and I look forward to seeing everyone - Gabby.

- I. The **Parents Night out Committee** will report now - Jackie Avelino, Ioana Calka or Niki Gionis

We're excited to get the ball rolling with Parents' Night Out—mark your calendars and help spread the word! 📅 **Date: February 6th**, 🕒 **Time: 7:45 PM - 9:45 PM**, 📍 **Location: The Granola Bar - LOCATION CHANGE to KASH!** We've got a fun-filled evening planned, featuring raffles and a performance by the amazing TJ Tana, Illusionist! We need your help! We're looking for raffle donations—sports tickets, spa packages, experiences, or anything else you can think of. Please ask your friends, family, and local businesses if they'd like to contribute! If you'd like to get involved in planning, soliciting donations, or helping with the event, let us know—we'd love to have you on board! Thanks so much for your support!

- J. Now we will hear the report of the **School Store committee** given by Heather Egert and Carlie Laffie



## General Meeting Agenda

January 15, 2025, at 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Next School Store will be Thursday, February 6th. Parents are able to sign up more than 1x for their students. Please visit the sign up form to see what is available.

K. Another important report from **SEPTA** given by Danielle Sandjaby or Erica Schulman

Our next meeting will be VIRTUAL and is scheduled for tomorrow, January 16th at 7:45pm. The Syosset School District's PPS team will be presenting on the topic on how to prepare for your upcoming CSE meeting. Zoom info will be distributed in our newsletter so please join us for this informative session. Take the night off from cooking and save the date for our upcoming fundraiser on Tuesday, February 4th at Mario's Pizzeria of Syosset. You can order lunch and/or dinner from 11am to 10pm - just be sure to tell them you are ordering for SEPTA, as Mario's will be donating 15% of the proceeds back to SEPTA. The Syosset Public Library and the Sunrise Theatre Company will be presenting: Seussical the Musical - a Sensory Friendly Production on March 2nd. Reach out to the library for registration information. There is a parent text group called talk and share that has received positive feedback from parents as a great resource for sharing ideas and experiences. Reach out to Tara Benson for contact information.

L. **Someone Special Craft** given by Melanie Eisenberg or Livia Kogan

The Someone Special Craft will be on February 12th during recess. Signups will go out soon!

M. **Someone Special Dance** given by Neha Sharma or Ashley Cohen or Niki Gionis

The Someone Special Dance will be postponed until Tuesday, March 18th (in lieu of Whitman's Got Talent).

N. We will now hear from our **Sunshine Committee** - Katerina Fradelakis and Gabby Mohammadi

We have begun our monthly birthday celebration in the lunchroom, celebrating our students with January birthdays! Thank you to all the parents who submitted forms and if you haven't, please do ASAP. Students loved seeing their names on the white board and they will also get a birthday sticker & pencil! As a reminder: The children are able to see that their names are not included on the board. Please make sure you sign up so that your children can participate in the fun. We are only asking for their Month of birth—no other details are shared. Thank you for helping us make their birthday month extra special and memorable!

O. **Nominating Committee** given by Inna Choi

The Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the 2025-26 Executive Committee. We are taking applications for Delegate, Secretary, VP, and Co-President roles. If you are interested or know someone that would be great, please fill out the form online. Contact a member of our current Executive Committee with any questions on their positions. For questions on the nominating process, ask Inna Choi. The deadline to submit is Friday, Jan 24.



General Meeting Agenda  
January 15, 2025, at 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

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

1. We will hear the report by the **Annual District Election and Budget Vote** given by Carly Laffie -

Budget information sessions start next month:

1. District Budget Information Session #1  
Monday, February 10, 8:00pm at South Woods Middle School
2. District Budget Information Session #2  
Monday, March 10, 8:00pm at South Woods Middle School
3. Budget Information Session #3  
Wednesday, April 23, 8:00pm at South Woods Middle School
4. Budget Hearing  
Monday, May 12, 8:00pm at South Woods Middle School
5. Annual District Election & Budget Vote  
Tuesday, May 20, 6:00am – 9:00pm

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

Please SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, February 12th at 6:30pm in the Walt Whitman Elementary School library. All participants' work will be on display for others to admire (I have most pieces in safe keeping but if I do not have your piece I will reach out shortly). Mr. Snyder will then give each student a certificate for participating in this year's Reflections program. Students will then have an opportunity to take photos with Mr. Snyder and their submission piece. Some light nibbles will be provided. Thank you again for supporting your child in the Reflections Program this year. We look forward to celebrating your child's work on February 12th at 6:30pm in the library at our school! (Please note that the monthly PTA meeting will be held immediately following this ceremony, children are welcome to stay during the meeting).

3. The **Parent Resource committee** report will be given by Jenn Crecco. -

The next virtual presentation will be on January 23, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Dr. Stephen Dewey will present Understanding the Effects of Addictive Substances and Behaviors on the Adolescent Brain. Please [register](#) for the Zoom link by 1/21.

## VII. New Business

### Vote: Changes to Membership Dues

We need to address the increase in National PTA dues and plan accordingly for the 2025-26 year. Here's what we are proposing:

- **Elimination of Discounted "Family" Memberships:** Instead of offering discounted family memberships, we will provide the option to purchase two full-price memberships at once for convenience. This change will help offset the National PTA dues increase.
- **Future Adjustments if NYS PTA Increases Dues:**  
If NYS PTA raises their dues, we propose increasing our dues as follows:
  - \$18 per individual membership
  - \$12 per teacher/staff membership
  - A double family membership option at a reduced total of \$35



## General Meeting Agenda

January 15, 2025, at 10am | Walt Whitman Elementary School

These adjustments aim to ensure we can meet financial obligations while maintaining accessibility for all members. Motion was made and seconded. Motion passed.

### VIII. Old Business - NONE

#### 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!**

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

#### January

1/16 - SEPTA Meeting, 7:45pm, Virtual

1/16 - International Day (daytime)

#### 1/20 - No School

1/23 - Multicultural Expo, 6:30pm

1/23 - PRG: Dr. Stephen L. Dewey, 7:30pm

1/24 - Nominations Deadline

1/27 - Club Picture Day

#### 1/29 - No School

1/31 - Maker Space Recess

#### February

2/4 - Art in Education Assembly

2/6 - School Store

2/6 - Parents Night Out 7:45pm, Granola Bar

2/10 - PTA Reflections Ceremony, SW 7pm

2/10 - Budget and BOE Meeting, SW 8pm

2/12 - *Exec PTA mtg - 6:30pm tentative*

2/12 - WW Reflections - 6:30pm

2/12 - Someone Special - Craft

**2/12 - PTA Meeting, 7:30pm**

Thank you everyone once again. We would like to wish you all a very happy holiday season and a wonderful new year!

The meeting was adjourned at 11.00am.

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Recording Secretary / Theresa Seedorf

Attached

Sign in Sheet

[January 2025 Sign-In](#)