

Wallingford Elementary School

Parent-Teacher Organization

September 12, 2023

AGENDA

Dr. Savage	Julie Pandey
Christine Greco	Jen Schwartzengraber
Candice Rogers	Dian Clarke-Graham
Kim Roguszewski	Kristina Dechter
Liz Pecora	Allie Collings
Meg Pierangeli	Amanda O'Brien
Coco Kaminski	Suzanna Seltzer
Marisa Ciarrocki	Jill Briggs
Samantha Wilson	Kaja Giloley
Allison Buccola	Jenn Epstein
Kim Nguyen	Maura Roche
Gelareh Atefi	Amanda Weinberg
Erin Mormile	Katie Pinder
Shannon Swierczek	Samantha Hall
Christena Cleland	Breanna Whiteside

Ted Benzing	Abbi Reid
David Ferry	Stacey Peki
Ashley Drane	Danielle Nicholson
Maive Conrad	Daria Schuman
Laura Cerge	Heidi Ballas
Janine Bernstein	Suzanna Goodstein

Call to Order: 6:04 pm

Approval of minutes from 6/6/2023 meeting - Minutes approved unanimously.

Chairperson's Report: Candice began by thanking all the people that that have been working through the summer to support the PTO such as those working on the Directory, WES Mail, new parent representatives, the website, publicity, Spirit Wear sales, hospitality, foreign language, movie night, library, Schoolkidz kits and the fifth grade representatives.

Candice then commented on the purchase of the Rusty costume which has been a great addition to the school and was already introduced to the students who loved it. She is now working through ensuring it is properly cared for and a schedule is set up for wearing it at different events. A request was made for anyone who has experience with caring for costumes like this to please let her know.

The Hospitality Committee provided a Back-to-School lunch for teachers and staff which included Chick-fil-a sandwiches, fruit and chips. The sandwiches are donated, and the PTO pays for the fruit and chips. The Hospitality Committee is planning many more events throughout the year. The committee will be trying to hold 1 special event for the staff every month.

Candice reported that there are many avenues to promote the various events held through the PTO. Jenn Zwitch sends eblasts out on Mondays and therefore she needs the information no later than Monday morning but preferably earlier to ensure it goes out timely. Candice also requested that for events using the Sign-Up Genius, a "Pictures at Event" volunteer position be added so that more pictures can be available and not fall on the same individual at every event.

The Book Fair Committee learned that Scholastic dollars left over from prior Fairs will not roll over which means approximately \$1,515 worth of funds will expire before the next fair. Therefore, teachers were emailed and asked to put together a wish list of books. The leftover funds will be used to fulfill these wish lists rather than letting the funds expire.

The Teacher Reimbursement Program was moved to the beginning of the year to help teachers get supplies before the start of school. Twenty-two teachers submitted receipts and received up to \$100 for expenses. This reimbursement program is not in place of the mini grants that will be done later in the year.

Treasurer’s Report: Submitted by Allison Collings

This report spans: 7/1/2023-9/11/23

	\$35,244.8
We started the period with a cash balance of	2
Deposits of	\$2,549.58
	\$(2,227.79)
Withdrawals of)
Net:	\$321.79
	\$35,566.6
Leaving us with a balance of	1

Highlights

- Deposits:

Membership Directory	\$1,260.00
Prior Year Expenses	\$1,257.88
PTO Admin	\$31.70
Total	\$2,549.58

- **Withdrawals**

Prior year expenses	\$147.86
PTO Administration	\$1,005.55
Staff Hospitality	\$524.38
Membership Directory	\$550.00
Total	\$2,227.79

Paypal*

**pending transfer to PNC, not reflected in totals above*

2023-24 WES Student Directory	\$1,818.50
Sponsor a Student Directory	\$579.43
Mum Sale	\$4,597.69
Total	\$6,995.62

Committee Reports (Committees at work can report, share good news/feedback, ask for help/advice/input

Schoolkidz Supply Kits : *Report given by Sarah Ponzio*

Well over 200 kids received kits this year, which is higher than last year's participation. The kindergarten classes were added this year which helped to increase participation. The committee did identify several issues with the kits that were delivered such as damaged kits or items missing. New companies are being considered for next year's sale. In addition, NPE & SRS do not have this sale. The committee members are discussing whether WES PTO could offer these kits at those schools, help run the program and then share in the profits.

New Parent Representatives: *Report given by Janine Berstein*

The committee delivered 75 Welcome Signs which will be collected in October this year to reuse them in upcoming years. This will help save funds for the PTO. It was also noted that there would be a kindergarten playdate on Thursday, September 14, 2023.

Fifth Grade Representatives: *Report given by Sarah Ponzio*

The deadline to order Mums for this year's sale is Wednesday, September 13, 2023. The Committee is hoping for strong participation as this is a large fundraiser for the 5th grade events. As of September 11, 2023, there was a total of 515 Mums ordered. The pickup for the Mums is Thursday, September 21, 2023. It was asked if the students help promote this. Sarah commented that they did not this year but that can be done next year. The students do help with this fundraiser on the day their Mums are picked up. A question had come up outside of the meeting about the cost of the Mums being high. It was noted that it is expensive for the PTO to purchase the Mums, and this is a fundraiser so additional costs need to be added in order for funds to be raised. It was noted by one of the parents that their Mums come back each year.

The Halloween Fair is on October 28, 2023, from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Sign-up Genius is coming out soon. There will be food, drinks and games. The "Cake Walk" will be back and was described as being similar to musical chairs but you win baked goods.

Student Directory: *Report given by Christine Greco*

Directories are scheduled to be printed the end of the week (9/11/2023) or possibly Monday (9/18/2023). Students who order the directories will have them sent home in their backpacks but if you prefer to pick them up, Christine can arrange that. When you purchase the directory, you get a hard copy and access to the digital directory. 250 directories are printed and sold until they run out; there is no ordering deadline. This year Sponsored Hearts were included which raised almost \$600. Final funds raised will be shared at October's meeting. The ads that appear in the directory cover the costs associated with producing them so any funds from purchases go directly to the PTO.

Movie Night: *Report given by Candice Rogers*

Movie Night was originally scheduled for Friday, September 22, 2023, on the front field with a rain date of Thursday, October 5, 2023. This year's movie is "SING" and is being shown through FunFlix which is a change from last year's company. Bathroom facilities will be available. A parent reached out to offer the use of their snow cone machine for this event and future PTO events. The machine can produce 150-200 snow cones in a 45-minute period. The license that allows us to show movies is due for renewal next year.

Apple Crunch Day: *Report given by Stacey Peki*

Apple Crunch Day will be held Friday, October 13, 2023. Volunteers are needed to help slice the apples and make the day run smoothly. Apples are provided by Wolf Farms. Kids will be able to sample 3 types of apples. Last year this event was in the morning and was tied closely to daily snack times. The same will occur this year.

Spirit Wear: *Report given by Kristina Dechter*

The Spirit Wear store will open on September 25, 2023. There will be new items and items carried over from last year. The committee is trying to support small businesses when purchasing products for sale in the store. Items were sold at Back-to-School night raising \$183.

Foreign Language Club: *Report given by Amanda Weinberg*

Foreign language classes run for 10 weeks. Registration information will be going out in WES mail this week. Classes will be available in the afternoons at WES on Monday and Wednesday. Spanish, German and Mandarin will most likely be offered at WES. However, French will only be offered on Saturdays at the Helen Furness Library. Class size should be a maximum of 12 students. The library charges \$10/day for classes to be held so the cost of the classes is slightly higher to cover this. Teachers are guaranteed a minimum of \$85/class with a cap of \$150. Any surplus can be refunded to parents or given to the PTO. These classes are available to students in 1st through 5th grade. A question was asked if grown-ups need to

stay at the library on Saturdays for the classes. It was discussed that children 7 years and older could stay at the class alone, but parents need to be there for drop-off and pick up.

Homeroom Parent Coordinators: *Report given by Janine Berstein*

Seventy-six volunteers signed up to be homeroom parents last May. However, there are only 27 classes in need of homeroom parents. The committee keeps an Excel spreadsheet with the date and time an email is received so that each homeroom parent position is filled fairly. There is discussion of putting those that signed up to volunteer but could not fill a homeroom parent position, at the top of the volunteer list for the following year. Class parties were announced noting Halloween parties will be on 10/31, Holiday parties will be on 12/22 which is a ½ day for students and the Valentine's Day party is on 2/14.

Grounds & Greens: *Report given by Marissa Ciarrocki*

An event for fall clean up and Mum planting is scheduled for September 22, 2023, before the start of the movie being shown for Movie Night. If anyone is interested in assisting, please feel free.

Car Line: *Report given by Ted Benzing*

Candice thanked Ted for stepping up at the last minute to fill in for the original chair of this committee who was unable to serve. Ted stated a Sign-Up Genius would be going out asking for volunteers. This is a fun job, welcoming students to school in the morning. Mr. Lechette is there every day to assist, and they are asking that one parent volunteer join him. A volunteer does not need to commit to everyday or even a consistent schedule. They can fill in wherever there is an opening.

Library: *Report given by Jen Schwartzengraber*

Assisting in the Library began Monday. Fifty volunteers have signed up to help, which will allow 2-8 volunteers to be available per class. Due to the volume of current volunteers, the committee is not accepting any more at this time.

Caring Committee: *Report given by Christina Cleland*

This committee works to help families within the WES community who may be struggling or going through a hard time. The committee can do anything that might help ease their worries or simply make them smile. Requests for volunteering or families in need of assistance can be shared with the committee. The committee will use WES mail and other email for parents to sign up to assist when needed.

Publicity: *Report given by Christine Greco*

The committee is trying to have calendars sent out every month as reminders for upcoming activities. Any events that are coming up can go into the WES Mail by sending the information to Erin Mormile, but if Christine is also copied, she will ensure the event is put on the WES PTO Website and various Facebook pages. Having photos is important and increased effort is being made for more photos to be taken. If you are in need of photos for an ad, Christine may be able to assist so please reach out to her. A parent suggested setting up a photo sharing site and having committees send out an email requesting photos after an event.

WES Mail: *Report given by Erin Mormile*

Everyone was encouraged to make sure they had signed up to get the WES Mail, which can be done by going to the PTO website. Erin requested to receive information by Friday to be included in the WES mail that goes out on Monday. Any emails being sent to Erin should go to Candice and Christina for extra eyes, so nothing is missed. Please make sure any links needed are included in your email. PDF files are the most helpful for Erin to receive so, if possible, please send attachments in that format. Make sure a blurb is included for any event you want advertised. Event notices should run for approximately 2 weeks prior to the date of the event.

PTO Business: Candice asked Jenny Conahan and Jeanette Kaplan to discuss the school-wide shirt initiative.

Ms. Conahan is a 5th grade teacher. She thanks everyone for all that is done through the PTO and specifically for the 5th grade class.

This year Ms. Kaplan & Ms. Conahan ran the t-shirt initiative that would help branding for the WES community. Last year, the students voted on a logo for the t-shirts. Ms. Scolis did prices on 3 different types of shirts. It was determined that a blue T-shirt with a yellow or white logo would be utilized. Every student will receive 1 shirt for the year, which will be passed down to other students in upcoming years. The T-shirts are also expected to be available for sale in the spring if new or extra are needed. These shirts will be worn by all students on special days to help signify the unity of WES and the family atmosphere.

Candice noted that every child and employee of WES would receive a t-shirt. The cost of this is approximately \$3,495. This would allow for extra T-shirts as new students and/or teachers arrive throughout the year. She requested an official vote to include the PBIS Committee's requests for a school wide t-shirt from the WES PTO budget. The PTO members unanimously voted to approve this purchase.

Principal's Report : Dr. Gabe Savage

Dr. Savage noted this is a special year as it is his first knowing the 5th grade students since they were in kindergarten. He has enjoyed watching them grow and get ready for middle school.

He thanked everyone for their patience during dismissals in the first week of school. That can be a hectic time as everyone is getting back into routines and ironing out any issues related to the process.

The theme of the school year for 2023/2024 is "Time to Shine" with a refocus on going back to the basics. He noted that it is important for students to feel comfortable and self-confident because when they do, they learn better. This year the key is to be Safe, Respectful AND HELPFUL. Helpful was added to the phrase this year as that also helps teach about community and what students can bring to the table. This is heavily focused on in the first two weeks of school when procedures related to behavior are taught or re-taught. The third week of school is when academic procedures really start.

Relating to safety, the first fire drill of the year was already held. It took a total of 6 minutes to get all students out of the school and accounted for. The Fire Marshall looks for this to be done within 8 minutes. These drills can be announced or unannounced. At times the Fire Marshall will pull a child to ensure the system is working and staff is correctly accounting for every student.

An intruder drill will be done next week. This will teach students what they need to do during a lockdown situation. Dr. Savage and the staff use the premise that an animal has entered the building and must be removed before students can be out of their classrooms. They also discuss that this could occur if a person without a visitors' badge is in the building. The drills are approached this way to teach the children what to do but not cause unnecessary fear in them.

Dr. Savage noted that he does a lot of walk-throughs. His favorite part of his job is to have connections with parents, kids and the staff. That is easier to do when he is out of the office and in the classrooms. However, if he is ever needed, he has a radio and cell phone with him.

Finally, he noted the Halloween Parade will be held in the afternoon this year, as it was done the previous year as well.

The meeting was open to questions/discussion points from the members. It was noted that the Social Committee has not yet had their first meeting but that would be happening soon. They will be bringing back more social events that are mainly for parents to get to know each other better.

The Cultural Arts Committee noted that there is excitement because WES will be hosting the International Night this year. That is scheduled for February 22, 2024.

A parent asked if there were any thoughts on WES providing an After-school Care program as there are not many programs available in the area. A parent noted there were only 3 in the area for 1st to 5th graders. It was also noted that most do not offer pre-care before 8 am. Dr. Savage stated he will discuss this with the Administration.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Roguszewski