

**Westchester Elementary School PTA**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 2, 2018, 7pm**

**PTA Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/westchesterpta>

**PTA Website:** <http://westchesterpta.org/>

Attendance – Sign-in sheet available upon request.

2018-2019 PTA Officer introductions.

PTA Minutes – Motion to approve minutes from the last meeting, May 2018:  
Approved

Treasurer's Report – Motion to approve the budget for the current school year:  
Approved. Balance as of the end of September: \$23,338.80. Treasurer's report attached.

Administration Report --  
Discussion of new programs for 2018-2019:

Passport Spanish Instruction Program: The program was brought up last year at a PTA meeting. It's currently being offered to the 4th grade. Each class receives 30 minutes per week of direct instruction and 40 minutes of an independent interactive practice program. Next year, the program will expand to 5th grade so students can get the benefit of two years.

Innovative Therapy counseling: started last year as one-day-a-week and grew to three days, expanding this year to 5 days. They do accept a variety of insurance plans. Ms. Jones is the contact person. Inclusion in the program depends on the child, the aim is for it to be non-disruptive and built into the school day. Parents can contact Ms. Jones if interested.

Officer B, our school resource officer was introduced. He comes by the school 2-3 times a week; he is assigned to 11 elementary schools in the area.

Financial Literacy Program: We are one of two schools in the county to be offering it this year to 5th grade students; the County is looking to expand it further. It's a wonderful opportunity for kids to learn the basics of financial life, such as balancing checkbooks, basic economic theory, and practical economics. The program includes a field trip to Towson University and a presentation from Economics professors there.

Mentoring Program: Student/student mentoring started out last year as a transition program for students with specific needs going into middle school. This year, we will expand it and will include 4th and 5th graders paired with middle school

students. The second program is teacher/student; this is the first year. Mentors will not necessarily be the child's current classroom teacher, but someone with whom the student has a connection. Staff is still trying to figure out the target student body for the teacher/student program; the ultimate goal is to try to develop a sense of belonging and oneness for ALL students. Once students are identified, permission slips will come home for both mentoring programs.

Laurie Sabatelli introduced herself as PTA and Staff Liaison; she has reached out to the teachers for them to share questions/comments/information to share; parents are encouraged to reach out to her to communicate with staff as well.

Soaring to New Heights with Virtues is a new school-wide program, part of the behavior plan, that introduces, focuses on, and promotes the importance of a different virtues each quarter. So far, we have done kindness and respect. Kids are thinking about, reading about, talking about, and working on what it looks like, sounds like, and how they recognize it, and how they can do or be it. It's off to a strong start; parents are encouraged to connect with kids at home about it. Teachers and classrooms will be supported by a lending library assembled by Ms. Adam.

5th Grade Student Council: We will accept any and all students that would like to participate. Still sorting out what the activities of the Council will entail, though the focus will be on community service, much in the spirit of the EPIK Kids Club. Perhaps they can work with the Green Team.

Green School Designation / Green Team: We have a Green Team this year in an effort to get back our green school dedication.

Returning favorites for 2018-2019:

- Destination Imagination – starting now

- Black Saga – will begin in November

- Math 24 Challenge – will begin in November

- EPIK Kids Club – starting at the end of October

- Battle of the Books—4th and 5th grade, meets once a month between now until late winter, then meeting frequency will increase in advance of the competition.

Music at Westchester:

We have a new music/instrumental music teacher who has come to us with a lot of energy and fresh ideas to expand what the school is offering.

- American Education Week concerts for 1st and 2nd grades

- Holiday sing-a-long before Winter Break

- Winter Concert January 15th

- Spring Concert May 21st

- Recorder Concert for 3rd grade on May 31st

Committee Reports (only those with updates and/or representatives present are listed below):

**Kids Club** (Melissa Schwartz) Melissa Manthorne is handling that this year. Information has gone home, clubs are started and underway.

**Bingo Night** (Melissa Schwartz) Kara Goldheim will start in December

**Trivia Night** (Erica Russo) Tuesday, October 9 at WES. We had a good turnout last year. We request that people pre-register for it so we have an idea of participation in advance. It is free and we encourage donations through direct donation program. We offer prizes for the winning team, and others such as best team name and most spirited team. New this year: a lot of questions—80-85%--submitted by faculty and staff members. We need 2-or 3 parent volunteers to sell concessions, we also need an emcee. Please contact Erica Russo by e-mail or through Facebook if you would like to volunteer.

**Green School** (John Bolton) Will be doing ColorCycle; EPIK Kids has placed a box in the hallway in the meantime. John is looking for more people who would like to participate on the committee. There will be a Facebook page to try to encourage regular action as far as weeding and maintenance of gardens, marquee, and front door planters. A parent suggested also starting battery collection for the Maryland Zoo. Heritage Community Association will continue their support through outdoor classroom and walker path maintenance. Concern raised about duplicate school notices sent home to parents with multiple kids enrolled; Mr. Byers stated that they are working on a “carrier list” to minimize duplicates and parents should look for less coming home moving forward.

**Membership** (Melissa Schwartz) Currently at 200 members. 34 staff members have joined the PTA. The on-line membership payment is new and working--thanks to Brian for that.

**Spirit Wear** (Melissa Schwartz) – Diane White is looking for someone to replace her for next year. Order forms will come home in October.

**Book Fair** (Elizabeth Newton) – Nov 9 will be first day for sales—parents and kids can come in (it’s a half day). Kids can come in with regular classes November 12-16. Were able to give books to the library, extra books for teachers with new classrooms, books gifted to students in need, and we were able to continue getting the Scholastic Magazines that come home with the kids. We get 50% of whatever is purchased at the school in Scholastic dollars. We have to see if the books for the Virtue Program are available through Scholastic.

**New Student Welcome Committee** (Lauren Rollhauser)– Play date went great. Boo-hoo breakfast went well.

**Grandparent Breakfast** (Jen Smith) We are planning to make a change this year to suggested monetary donation instead of food and drink donation. This will alleviate some of the issues that arose last year and provide more oversight for food allergies and prevention of cross-contamination. Students are encouraged to bring another older adult (a neighbor or aunt or uncle) if there is no Grandparent present so that no one is left out. The event is two days, split alphabetically according to last name, and provides breakfast for children and grandparents. Will need volunteers the night before for set-up and again in the mornings with set-up and possibly food pick-up.

**Box Tops** – We have a volunteer—Bernadette Clark.

**Health & Wellness** (Shannon Bateman) Last year's SuperStar Sprint, a 1 mile fun run or walk, was a success; very successful fundraiser for the school through sponsorships and solicited prizes. This year's race will be May 5, 2019, rain or shine. We also have walk to school day October 10. When kids walk (or bike) to school, they get a sticker at the front door. Always looking for new ideas. Girls on the Run? It's a sizable time commitment, twice a week after school until the final race, which is a 5k at the Maryland Zoo. Will look into that further.

**Boo Grams** (Jackie Seiple) recruited Kelly Snapkoski to handle it this year. The week before Halloween a sheet of Boo Grams gets sent home so that kids can cut and fill out messages and return them to the school with \$.25 for each Boo Gram. Halloween themed pencils are then attached and the Boo Grams are delivered to classrooms. May do Cupid Grams in February. Parent suggested \$1 "carnations for teachers" fundraiser—Valentine's Day? Teacher Appreciation Week? Can we integrate the 5th graders into some of these activities to exercise what they're learning in financial literacy program? BCPS policy that we cannot do fundraisers during school hours; Mr. Byers will look into this.

**Photos & Yearbook** (Ashley Mullen) – Ms Hopkins and Ms Finkelstein are Staff volunteers on the committee. This year, we are expanding the yearbook content by 10 pages, trying to incorporate more candid shots of the kids and their activities. They need parents to submit photos! With teacher's permission, please take photos while you're volunteering or at events and send them in either through the drop box they set up or by e-mail. Be mindful of photo size and quality, many photos submitted last year were un-usable.

**Marquee** (Brian Dial) Jen Smith is taking it over. \$10 to have your kids name up for the week of their birthday; can pay through the PTA website.

**Staff Appreciation** (Brian Dial) Ganine Markowitz is looking for someone to replace her for next year. She handles Teacher Appreciation Week, Pi Day, does an amazing amount of things throughout the year coordinating donations and deliveries. Staff Appreciation is PTA funded as well. If you are interested, let Brian know and he can get you in touch with Ganine.

**Spirit Night** (Erica Russo) – Sept. 17 at Panera, we earned \$281.46. We get 10% of all sales from them for that night. We will have another one at Panera in January. Next food night is December 5 at Peace a Pizza—Sally Grace has always been a great sponsor for us.

**4th of July Float** (Jen Smith) WES Float won best school. Tony Purrazzello, owner of Purrazzello & Son LLC concrete company, provides the trailer for the float and last year he bought canopies to shade the kids. We hope this can be an ongoing partnership with him—his support has meant a lot. A “thank you” card was passed around for signatures.

Old Business:

If you need something posted, need volunteers for anything, please e-mail Jacqui Seiple, [westchester21228@gmail.com](mailto:westchester21228@gmail.com), and she will make sure that it gets on Facebook, in the newsletter, and/or on the website.

**Direct Donations** (Brian Dial) We rely on direct donations for most activities. Anyone interested can go on our website and make donations directly through there. We are at \$300 so far this year, we had \$1000 total for last year, so seemingly off to a good start.

New Business:

There is a poll on Facebook right now about a Maker Practice (in Catonsville) craft night fundraiser. They'll give 15% back to the PTA. We'll move forward with planning that for Dec 6 from 5-9pm.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:45pm.