

**Westchester Elementary School PTA
Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2018**

PTA Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/westchesterpta>
PTA Website: <http://westchesterpta.org/>

Attendance – Sign-in sheet available upon request.

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

Treasurer's Report – Balance at end of last month: \$31,901.72

Administration Report –
Nothing new to report
American Education week
Literacy night
Parent asked question about Passport Spanish program. Starting this year, all 4th graders are receiving Spanish instruction.

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

Spirit Wear (Diane White) – Orders are in, waiting for items to come.

Book Fair (Elizabeth Newton) – Will set it up tomorrow. Friday will be a preview and sale for parents and teachers. Will be open for Literacy night, and for Grandparents' breakfasts in addition to normal school day hours. Kids will come during their regular library times to purchase books.

Literacy Night—a local author reached out and asked if he could come and set up a table. *The Rose and the Butterfly* by John Kim. He will give \$5 back to the PTA for every sale he makes that night. Would he want to give us books to sell during the Book Fair? We can accept cash and check and keep it separate.

Kids Club (Melissa Manthorne) – Ms. Crabb reports that the Green Team started meeting; they will work in conjunction with Kids Club. They are doing necessary work to get green certification back. The Maguires and Berkowitz are contacts for that.

Membership (Melissa Schwartz) – at 250 members; 39 are faculty/staff. That is a little ahead of where we ended last year.

Yearbook (Ashley Mullen) – We need photos—it is difficult to get parents to send them in. There is a good push so far this year and we have had a good response, but it's always good to have more (in instances of bad photo quality for example). Last year that was a problem because we just didn't have enough photos. Teachers are getting weekly reminders to do it; there is a link for uploading as well as an e-mail address for submitting them. We have already requested more pages for this year, so we would love to expand it and welcome suggestions for additions. Teachers review all the pages before they are submitted for printing to make sure that all the featured students can be included. There is a yearbook club, there was a student one last year; the administration will see if that is also the plan this year.

Green Committee (John Bolton) – We are looking for volunteers to get together once a month as well as to make suggestions and recommendations for “green” activities. Marker recycling box is forthcoming.

Teacher Appreciation (Ashley Mullen) – We are going to have teachers fill out a questionnaire about the things they like to give parents and PTA ideas for teacher appreciation. We have a box to collect the questionnaires. We can link the final “book” on the website so parents can access it.

Box Tops (Bernadette Clark) – We sent in 2156 box tops. Next submission is in March. Thinking of doing competition for the spring by class or by grade rather than by individual students. We will also be replacing the box with something more sturdy and visible. There was discussion of some of the ways to encourage box top submission, but the chair is new and has been advised against doing a lot of those ideas due to complication.

Trivia Night was a success.

Grandparents Breakfast (Jen Smith) – Sign-ups have started. We need more volunteers. Unfortunately, we found out that we can't set up in the evenings before because there is basketball both nights. The administration will ask the custodians to get the set-up started if possible after basketball. Will likely need a volunteer to help pick up food that morning. We are not accepting food donations this year, so set-up should be more straightforward. We will have separate, certified allergy safe selections for peanut and gluten.

Boo Grams (Kelly Snapkoski) – Raised \$527.50. The timing of them being sent home was complicated by the three-day weekend, so

we may try to deliver them to classrooms instead of mailboxes. One piece of feedback from one parent: for the kids that did not get anything, it seems like a popularity contest and caused some anxiety for their child. Is there a way to include every student? Suggestions included the school buying grams for every child. For future campaigns, we will make the wording more explicit on the flyer that parents are encouraged to buy a boo gram for their child. Are we going to do "cupid grams," and if so are we doing pencils again or candy or erasers? We can also do carnations as a fundraiser—perhaps for teacher appreciation, though we have a lot going on for that, so perhaps end of the year or another time. Kids can fill out a message to their teacher and maybe it will cost a dollar to send a note with a carnation.

Old Business:

Jen Smith is doing the Marquee.

Food Night: We raised \$281 from Panera. We have another food night coming up in December at Peace A Pizza.

Craft Night at Maker Practice on December 6. We need people to RSVP for it; right now, we have 4 people. We will work on spreading the word about it to get folks signed up. It's been in the newsletter and there is an event page on Facebook. We should use a sign-up mechanism-- maybe use SignUp Genius--attendees have to specify a session, there need to be headcounts for each so that they can be sure to have enough materials. You don't have to pick your craft until you get there. The price range is \$40-\$70 depending on the craft. They have several selections and a few crafts that create multiple pieces (for gifts).

New Business:

At next month's PTA meeting, there will be a representative coming from the state to talk about the MD529 College Savings plan.

The PTA is looking into sponsoring a screening of "Screenagers," a documentary about kids' exposure to screens--limits, dangers, effects on the brain and habits, etc. It would cost \$600 to do a screening; it may not be age-appropriate for elementary kids, but it might be valuable for Elementary parents and older kids. We will approach the administrations at the middle and high schools to see if either of them are interested in co-sponsoring it; would most likely want to screen it at the high school.

A parent asked if the school has a leveled library of books that teachers can access. She only sees the A to Z books that get Xeroxed and sent home. A lot of teachers like using them because they can be highlighted and marked up for individual students. There is a leveled library for the classrooms, but those books don't get sent home with students.

The Virtues Program: Can we collect money at the book fair to purchase books for the Virtue program specifically? We already have a collection box that supports books for the library. These books are new selections that Ms. Adam chose. Only one of the books is available through Scholastic, so we can't use Scholastic dollars. The PTA had already committed to buying the books and, if not, the administration would probably do it.

Meeting Adjourned at 8pm.