

Westchester Elementary School PTA
Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2019 at 7:03

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: \$25,825.89.
Direct donations as of 10/31 was \$5,540.10.

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

Book Fair (Elizabeth Newton) – The Book Fair dates are now November 15-21; we were able to add Friday so that students can all visit during their regular library time. It is also open at 6:15PM on Math Literacy night and at 8am on both days of Grandparents Breakfast. There is a Sign-Up Genius for volunteers, which we are in need of, especially for the extra event hours. Book Fair information will go home with students in the next week. We get half of the total dollar amount that we sell for the Fair in Scholastic Dollars. With these, we have been able to buy books for the library as well as give teachers and special educators books for their classrooms.

Staff Appreciation (Debra Temple) – Teacher Appreciation soup bar on the 22nd during conference day. There are still spots open to provide soups and dessert to teachers who are here for conferences.

Grandparents Breakfast (Debra Temple) – We are using the website for RSVP and direct donations; we are requesting \$3/adult, but donations are flexible.

Spirit Night (Debra) – Panera Bread fundraiser is on November 18 and Get Air fundraiser is on the evening of November 21—you will need to present the flyers for both of these when you go to benefit the PTA.

Boo Grams (Kelly Snapkoski) – This year was the biggest year yet; we made \$492 and sold over 1100 Boo Grams. We discussed the possibility of a Gram for every child, but that defeats the fundraising aspect of it. Moving forward, we can just try to better communicate to parents that they have the option of sending them to their child's whole class. We can always use additional volunteers for the Cupid Grams in Spring. For next year, for families who may not celebrate Halloween, we can consider shifting the Boo Grams to Kindness Day (Grams) in November—that may be more inclusive and also makes finding pencils easier. As far as Spring—

perhaps we can do First Day of Spring (Grams) instead of Cupid Grams, or end-of-school-year Grams.

Bingo Committee (Debra Temple) – Onsite, February 20, 2020. We have volunteers interested in helping with that. Christine has offered to do the off-site fundraiser instead.

Adult Offsite Event Committee (Debra Temple) – Bar crawl in Catonsville or Ellicott City with a silent auction at either the starting or ending location. We plan to start small, but there is definitely an appetite for some kind of adult, off-site event.

Movie Night (Debra Temple) – We do have a few volunteers interested in helping with family movie night. To be determined.

Fundraiser Possibilities (Debra Temple)

I'm The Chef Too—we have a lot of technical questions until we can comment further. Cost? Location? What would the kids actually be doing?

Raise Craze—Families sign up through a dashboard that raises money for the school depending on how many acts are performed through e-mails sent to family and friends. Framed as “paying it forward,” but does feel awkward

We can certainly be more aggressive with a direct donation campaign,

A parent suggested participating in Giving Tuesday and creating a campaign to raise awareness about giving to the PTA on that day. “You’re going to donate to charities on Giving Tuesday, don’t forget about your PTA.” We would have to develop a campaign and become a “Giving Tuesday” organization.

Advent of Gratitude as a lead-up to a holiday, or even to Giving Tuesday. As an example: for 25 days in advance, there would be a prompt on each day such as “count how many light switches are in your house and put 5 cents in a jar for each light switch.” The idea is to think about how grateful you are for the basic things that you have. At the end of the advent, families would donate the contents of the jar to an organization such as the PTA. It would take some effort to develop and implement.

Staff Liaison Report (Laurie Sabatelli)—There will be a non-perishable food drive for Thanksgiving to help WES families in need November 11-15. Flyers will be going home tomorrow.

Additionally, EPIK Kids say “thank you!” for all the socks and would like to let families know they are collecting canned goods through the end of this week for Catonsville Emergency Assistance. The next campaigns will be Thanksgiving placemats for local nursing homes and Meals On Wheels and the blankets for the Linus Project in December.

Administration Report (Mr. Byers)—School Board members provide oversight; the daily running of the schools are admin and staff of BCPS. If there is a topic which we would like discussed more in depth, let the administration know and we are more

than happy to set up a speaker or presentation—we would love to have more opportunities to share with the community what is going on.

Kelly Snapkoski suggested a Middle School Panel Night for 5th graders for sharing thoughts and questions, with students and parents. They do this at the school at which she works and they get incredible feedback from it. This sounds like something we may want to begin doing.

Questions/New Business:

Kelly Snapkoski asked about getting multiple notices coming home with both her kids and the waste that is generated. She suggested we have a designated day each week to send home all flyers and school materials—Wednesdays are a good idea because materials are less likely to be lost. We need to achieve a balance between parents who are tired of getting multiple notices and parents that “never see anything.” It would mean that staff and PTA need to be organized about getting materials into mailboxes at a specific time so that it can go home in the special Wednesday folder. Mr. Byers added that teacher communication sounds like it is at least as important as communication from the administration. An e-mail from the teacher may be less likely to be overlooked; we need to make sure that they are sending home the same information, covering everything that we need parents to hear about. All teachers have a communication plan; some are weekly and some are monthly and we need to be sure that teachers are effectively communicating with parents.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05.