

Westchester Elementary School PTA
Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2020

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: \$29,181.48

Administration Report –

We will be planning to do a Westchester to Catonsville Middle School transition program for fifth graders, perhaps tying it into an evening program already scheduled for fifth graders to better accommodate families.

WES will do a presentation to provide an overview of the behavioral policies at the March PTA meeting, scheduled for Monday, March 2; the presentation should run about 20 minutes.

Calendar changes: at this time, all end-of-year ceremonies will move forward as scheduled. We will re-evaluate this at the beginning of March. The current last calendar day of school is based on the system using all allotted snow days; if we do not use all of those days, then the last day of school will be moved up accordingly.

Open Door is planning to operate on February 4th while school is closed for the special election since WES is not a polling location.

WES once again won an award for our float in the 2019 Catonsville 4th of July parade. Huge thanks to Jen Smith for her work putting together the float!

Based on parent feedback from one of our past newsletters, we will start sending home all school and PTA information on Wednesdays only and will create a 'carrier' list, which will be the youngest sibling for families with multiple children at WES, to cut down on duplicates and paper waste. Materials will need to be in teachers' mailboxes by start-of-day on Tuesday in order to go home on Wednesday.

Teacher/Staff Liaison Report (Laurie Sabatelli):

Staff are reporting from the lunchroom that many of the kids are throwing away uneaten but packaged food. Please encourage parents to talk to their kids about bringing home uneaten food to cut down on waste. There is a "share table" of packaged foods that come from the cafeteria line that students decide they don't want or won't eat that can be shared with other students, but we can't allow food brought from home due to allergen concerns.

Epik Kids have some great projects coming up:

Project Linus—making blankets for hospitalized children,

Cleaning the playground area, and

Souper Bowl—food collection drive to benefit Catonsville Emergency Assistance.

Ms. Mayfield, the Counselor, asks if there are any workshops, clubs or resources that parents would like to see offered or implemented at WES through the Counselor's office. Some ideas: a Parents' Book Club, Managing Children with Anxiety workshop, Helping with Homework, Managing Stress or Time Management workshops. The Counselors are very open to any suggestions. Ms. Mayfield can be reached by email at kmayfield@bcps.org. A parent asked if there could be some kind of basic form that can be sent home when students participate in a lunch bunch or special meeting so that the parent can continue the conversation at home. For example, when a student needs help with conflict resolution and other kids from the classroom are invited to attend a lunch bunch with them and the Counselor; it would be great to be able to follow-up on when your child engages with their classmate(s) in a special way.

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

Bingo Night (Debra Temple) – Scheduled for February 20. We have two volunteers who are putting it together and will be bringing concessions for the event. We will be assigning each grade a theme and asking for donations that go with that theme. There will be a representative/coordinator for each grade to assemble the donations and put together the basket for that grade. Family Game Night, Movie Night, Arts & Crafts, Baking, Maryland/Local, Orioles baskets are all theme ideas. Meeting attendees were able to cover the volunteer positions for individual grade representatives. Laurie Sabatelli will get information out to teachers to send home with students. IF we do want to give parents option of monetary donations towards the Bingo, then we either set up a donation button on the website or ask for them to drop it in the PTA mailbox. Additionally, we can do a Sign-Up Genius that covers specific items for each basket. Links can go out to the teachers to send home to parents.

Pancake Breakfast (Debra Temple) – Scheduled for February 8th at Applebees. We are looking for 6 to 7 parent volunteers in addition to the teacher volunteers to serve food and drink to WES families.

Fundraising (Debra Temple) – Off-site parents' night. We can ask businesses for drink specials or some kind of incentive for parents to come out. This will be primarily social to start with the potential to build in an optional fundraiser.

Book Fair (Elizabeth Newton) – The Fall book fair was our highest-grossing yet. The Library at WES is in need of ESOL books, so the PTA opted to take out some of the funds in cash so that the Library could make a large order of books for the growing school population. This means that we will have fewer Scholastic Dollars going in to the Spring Fair and definitely into next year based on regular school needs such as need-based Scholastic Dollars for students and scholastic magazines for those grades that want them. We will need to back away from offering specific Scholastic Dollar amounts to teachers and staff in order to conserve for those needs.

What we may do instead is ask Ms. Ahearn to identify books by classroom for that classroom's library that the PTA can provide using Scholastic Dollars. We can also emphasize the teacher wish-lists more to teachers and parents to encourage utilizing that more moving forward.

Also, the chairs are looking for someone(s) to follow them through the Fair next year in order to take over in 2021-22. We were able to identify a couple of candidates through this past Fair, but if anyone is interested, please contact the PTA. Spring Book Fair is scheduled for April 20-24. We will be seeking volunteers via Sign-Up Genius.

Movie Night (Debra Temple) – We have a WES community member who has offered to pay the licensing fee for the movie and also offered to match any donations towards Movie Night. We just need a chairperson willing to put it together. Potential date: April 2 to kick of Spring Break?

Meeting Adjourned at 7:59PM