

**PTA Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, October 7, 2014**

Maureen Kramer, PTA Co-President, called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm

**Approval of the Minutes**

David Kales, PTA Secretary, asked if anyone had corrections or additions to the minutes from the September 2014 meeting. As there were none, the minutes were approved and entered into the record.

**Co-Presidents' Report**

Maureen Kramer and Erin Harcourt, PTA Co-Presidents, thanked many parents in our hard-working community.

- i. Ms. Lane, Ms. Kahn, Mrs. McNeil, and all of the teachers and staff for putting together an amazing and moving dedication ceremony.
- ii. Mr. Smith and his capable building services staff for their hard work getting Westbrook ready for the dedication ceremony.
- iii. Kathleen McDermott and Ms. Thai for organizing Run@School Day during recess; there was a lot of opportunity to run laps for those students who wanted to.
- iv. Ms. Nguyen, Melissa Greene, Hallie Lightdale, Laura Kolton and the rest of the PTA Science and Environment Committee for working on the Edible Learning Garden in our courtyard.
- v. Our Co-Vice Presidents, Leyla Kenny and Orly Isaacson, for their help at the Back to School Nights.
- vi. Kathleen McDermott and Nicole Schwenker for promoting our Spirit Wear at the Back to School Nights, and Randy and Toby LeFavre of Metrologo for their assistance getting the new Spirit Wear line and website up and running. If you would like more Spirit Wear, you can find it on Westbrook's website.
- vii. Marina Bowsher for working tirelessly to get this year's Directory ready for print. Directories are now in, and you can pick them up at the Open House on Monday.
- viii. Janet Gaffney for making sure all Westbrook families register their Giant and Safeway cards so we can make money for Westbrook every time we shop at the grocery store. If you haven't signed up already, email Janet at [janet.gaffney@gmail.com](mailto:janet.gaffney@gmail.com).
- ix. Chris Dixon Barone and Jamee Whitten for organizing this year's first Trash Free lunch.

- x. Helene Krasnoff for organizing Ledo's night. These nights always do really well for our school.
- xi. Deborah Kalb for keeping us all informed with her "Westbrook This Week" emails.
- xii. Jennifer Lavorel for preparing this year's first PTA Patter. Next one will be distributed in January. There are hard copies in the back of the room to pick up in case you didn't pull it up to read on your phone or computer.
- xiii. Jesse Gordon for keeping our website up-to-date.
- xiv. Liz Brown for organizing two volunteer training sessions, and for keeping our volunteers organized throughout the year.
- xv. Kathleen McDermott and Judit Markarian for organizing and training this year's Recess Rangers. Thanks to these parents this program is up and running as of this week.
- xvi. Sarah McCullough for collecting Box Tops – just like the Giant program, the Box Tops program earns extra cash for the school for not much work.
- xvii. Cybele Bjorklund and Simmons Lettre for their tremendous fundraising efforts. We are very close to meeting our goal.

### **PTA Fundraising Update**

Co-President Erin Harcourt reported on the committee's behalf. She noted that to date 235 Westbrook families have donated \$150. \$37,250 has been collected thus far, with a goal of \$42,000 (determined by operating budget). "We are getting close." Collection end date will be Friday, October 24. Donations will be accepted throughout the year, of course.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Nan Hartman, PTA Treasurer, handed out the updated budget, and reported "we are in great shape. Nothing major has happened yet." Note: PTA Family Contribution still being collected, and Spirit Wear sales have been significant.

### **Principal's Update**

Jennifer Lane, Westbrook Principal, was really pleased with the great turnout at the Dedication Ceremony. Ms. Lane was proud of how hard the staff worked hard to make it as wonderful as it was. She also said the Ceremony made her think about all the things that are so special about Westbrook. While preparing for the Ceremony, she unearthed an old picture of the first principal. This is what really led to thinking about the long-standing traditions and what a community and family we are. "I am not a tradition at Westbrook, however," Ms. Lane said. She called herself "a face of change." Feedback from Back to School Night had a lot to do with tradition and values that are important to the community. She read them all and appreciated the feedback.

Ms. Lane next mentioned some upcoming events. Monday is our Open House. More information about this will be coming out via the listserv. Parents will be asked to gather outside in the morning while kids get settled into their classroom. Ms. Lane reminded everyone that once recesses start, the Open House is finished for the day. Although remember we always have an open door policy, and you can always email a teacher and ask if you want to step inside a classroom.

The afternoon of the Open House, Sean Layne – from ACTING RIGHT, behavior management will be at Westbrook to work with the staff (teaching through demonstration teaching), and then a staff meeting to follow.

Ms. Lane reminded everyone that the Halloween Parade will be on October 30 at 1:30 pm. Parents can gather outside (parade will follow the same route as last year). Classroom parties will start at 2 pm.

Ms. Lane mentioned that on November 3 there will be the next Leadership Team meeting. More information is to come about this on the listserv. It will provide parents an opportunity to speak up on behalf of our school. For now, keep in mind that our school is growing – 453 students is current enrollment, which includes our new PEP class. There is also a strong likelihood we will add another PEP class next year, which would bring our enrollment up a little higher. This only increases our need for an Assistant Principal.

PTA Co-President Erin Harcourt added that all parents should look for a letter coming out to the parent community in the near future to help reach out to MCPS Board – grassroots lobbying to Board of Ed members and the MCPS Office. Parent voices are important at Westbrook. Erin emphasized we are a growing school, with a larger building, a growing staff, and it would be helpful to have assistant principal.

Ms. Lane added that there is no formula for elementary schools qualifying for an Assistant Principal. MCPS considers it on a case-by-case basis. That said, she emphasized we are the biggest elementary school that does not currently have an Assistant Principal. She shared that fall is when the budget cycle opens – and she was told that is the time to speak up.

Lastly, Ms. Lane announced that Phase 3 of a technology implementation will take place in just a few months. Chrome books in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms will arrive around January.

### **Vice President's Report: Natalie Atkinson**

Natalie Atkinson reported the following activity going on within each grade level's classrooms:

K – Learning how to ask and answer questions about fiction and non-fiction text. In Writing, students are starting personal narratives. In Math, students are learning different strategies of counting numbers. With the new curriculum this year, there is an emphasis on counting to build the strong number sense. In Science, students are learning about types of weather. And in Social Studies, students are learning about different symbols and leaders.

1 – Observing growth cycle of lima bean plant. Parents, please be on the lookout for lima bean sprouts coming home later this week.

2 – Focusing in Reading and Writing on text features in nutrition books. Second graders are visiting Kindergarten classrooms to share the nutritional books they are writing in Writers Workshop. In Math, students are working on bar graphs, and analyzing graphs to create their own based on surveys.

3 – Maryland Science Center field trip on Wednesday – will explore forces of motion, which the students have been learning about in Science. In writing, students are learning how to write an informational piece on how to take action in the community.

4 – In writing, students are working on historical fiction stories. In Reading, students are reading non-fiction books in guided reading groups, and historical fiction novels in book clubs. Students are learning about how Native Americans used their environments to help meet their needs for food, shelter, and clothing, and students are continuing to study ecosystems in our eco-columns and in nature.

5 – Modeling Community of Caring values with their Kindergarten buddies. Getting ready for Williamsburg field trip next week , where students will discover more about the daily lives of colonists. In Science, students are building roller coaster designs that follow Newton’s laws of motion.

## **Committee Reports**

### **FOWS 75<sup>th</sup> Celebration**

Dana Rice shared her delight that Westbrook is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. She pointed out that not many schools in the area can say that.

On the evening of Saturday, October 25, a Sock Hop is planned for adults only in the Westbrook gymnasium. Dana said that this Sock Hop concept has been in the works since the first mention of our school getting a gymnasium as a result of the renovation. Tickets can be ordered online, and all are encouraged to join in the fun.

Then, on the afternoon of October 26, there will be a Tea in special recognition of the parents who sat in Westbrook’s PTA meetings 30 years ago, fighting to keep the

school open. Parents, students, alumni, neighbors, all are encouraged to attend. The Tea is free.

### Book Fair

Co-President Maureen Kramer spoke on behalf of Book Fair Co-Chair Tracy Schwartz, and reminded all it the Book Fair will take place November 10-13. Hours are 12-6 pm on Monday and Tuesday, 3-7 pm on Wednesday and Thursday. The Book Fair is a fundraiser for Westbrook, and all are encouraged to also purchase books for donation to our sister school, Viers Mill Elementary. Teacher request lists will be available as well. The Book Fair will take place in the fireplace room.

### Science and Environment

Hallie Lightdale, Lee Anne Graub, and Laura Kolton

Hallie Lightdale announced that tomorrow is Walk to School Day. Students will get a stamp when they get to school, and be able to sign a poster of a big shoe. Next week is National Chemistry Week. AU students will come during recess and lead a hands-on science project with the kids. Volunteers are still needed.

Leanne Graub shared that the Recycling Center is officially up and running at Westbrook. It was custom built by a generous neighbor and alum, Roger Stephens, and is housed in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade hallway under the mobile. Leanne explained a recycling cabinet was motivated because it is something tangible to coincide with Trash-Free Lunches. Westbrook is a model green school, and so it seemed fitting we should have a recycling center. We used to have boxes out front overflowing with toner cartridges and phones. Recycling collection took place throughout the school, but there was no face to the program. Markers, batteries, glue sticks, toner cartridges, and more, are all being recycled now, and as a result we are getting a little bit of money back for the school.

### Box Tops

Co-President Maureen Kramer spoke on behalf of Sarah McCullough, and reminded everyone to keep clipping box tops. October 24 is the first deadline for submission. The next collection will take place in April.

### Fall Clean-up Day

Erika Newell announced that on Saturday, November 8, from 9-noon, Will be Westbrook's Fall Clean-up Day. Parents and children who are available to come with rakes and gloves are welcome. Complimentary coffee, cider, donuts, and hot chocolate will be served, and there will be activities for kids.

Cathy Stocker asked if we could have a thank you day for American Plant for their time and effort for assisting in the planning and donations to our school's Courtyard. It was decided it would be best to plan this for a different day altogether.

### Other

Co-President Erin Harcourt reminded all Volunteers, on behalf of Liz Brown, to sign their copy of the Volunteer Form.

### Upcoming Westbrook Activities/Dates

October 8: National Walk to School Day

October 9: Picture Day

October 11: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Social

October 13: Parent Visitation Day

October 15: Teacher/Staff Potluck Lunch (hosted by 5<sup>th</sup> grade families)

October 15: Parenting Seminar: Kelly Dorfman, 7 PM Media Center

October 17: No School (MSEA Conference)

October 22: Trash Free Lunch

October 22: McDonald's Night fundraiser for 5<sup>th</sup> grade transition

October 25 and 26: FOWS Celebration of Westbrook's 75<sup>th</sup>

October 30: Halloween Class Parties

November 1: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Parent Social

November 4: No School (Election Day)

November 8: Westbrook Fall Clean-Up Date

November 8: Kindergarten Parent Social

November 10 -13: Book Fair (including Book Drive for Viers Mill Elementary)

November 10 and 11: Early Release (Teacher Conferences)

November 15: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Parent Social

November 21: STEM Learning Lunches

November 22: 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Parent Social

November 26: Thanksgiving Pie Day for teachers/staff

November 26: Early Release (Thanksgiving)

December 2: PTA meeting, 7:30 PM Media Center