

## **Westbrook PTA – September 2019 Meeting Minutes**

### **Tuesday, September 10, 2019**

1. **Welcome** – Call to order at 7:30 P.M. The new Executive Board reintroduced.
2. **Approval of Minutes from June 2019 PTA Meeting** – Motion, approved.
3. **Co-Treasurers' Report** – PTA budget, as well as the budget for all the classes and committees, has been approved. Audit for the previous year is done. If you are spending money, there is a reimbursement form online (it can be found here: <https://www.westbrookespta.com/blank-cr8y>.) Please submit receipts within 30 days by attaching them to an email and sending them to Gilles and Tim at [westbrookestreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:westbrookestreasurer@gmail.com).
4. **Co-Presidents' Report**
  - Acknowledgments
    - a. Sarah Brady, Angela Britt and Jennifer Cannistra – Welcome Back Breakfast and Luncheon – Thank you for these two events for the school staff that were held before school even started.
    - b. Mary Clare Cahlink and Maren Matal - Back-to-School Picnic
  - Back-to-School Campaign - The dues are collected through Cheddar Up: <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/westbrook-pta-2019-20>. There are 3 components to it: (1) The family contribution - this is the largest amount and supports various PTA events/activities: Artists in Residence, support for clubs, staff appreciation events, etc. (2) Class dues - this supports your child's classroom directly, basically for the parties throughout the year. (3) PTA membership - this is just the official buy-in to the larger PTA organization. Room parents should encourage families to contribute and help their child's class win the highest participation reward. There is no repeated solicitation. This contribution supports different PTA initiatives and events throughout the year. They build our community by getting kids and parents to meet more often.
  - Easy Ways to Give – These contributions go directly to school: Clothes for Cash (bin in front of the school), Box Top\$ collection. Another option is Amazon Smile program (go to <https://smile.amazon.com> and select Westbrook Elementary School PTA as your charity of choice.)

- Is there a Scholastic Book Club in our school with monthly ordering by flyers? If your teacher does not participate in this program, we can connect you with the one who does. Parent suggests to set up Scholastic Community Club (more information will be provided.)
  - Open Committee Chair Positions – We need 1 or 2 chairs for Bingo Night in January; Local Retail Promotions Chair who will coordinate partnerships with local businesses (Ledo Pizza, etc.) Businesses usually reach out to us; MCCPTA Chair and Cluster Rep (they keep us connected to the greater community, Board of Education, other clusters); we have 1 person for Aqua Eagles and we are looking for 1 more, this position is suggested for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents, Mr. Elie helps with this committee; we have Science Fair Chair, but we are looking for some additional help for this event.
  - Directory ([www.AtoZconnect.com](http://www.AtoZconnect.com)) – Please verify your information or sign up if you are a new family (instructions were provided by email as well as sent home in students' back packs this week.) Please add your child's teacher to the profile once you know their name.
5. **Principal's Update: Mrs. Karen Cox** – We have 341 students and we are almost fully staffed. Thank you to the PTA for the breakfast and luncheon for the school staff, as well as for organizing Boo-hoo/Yahoo! Coffee for new parents which had an amazing turnout. We are working on additional cement platform, bike rack and possibly scooter rack.
  6. **Teacher Liaison Reports** – They will be presented at the next PTA meeting.
  7. **Committee Reports** – Kerry Lawrence, President of FOWS, introduces FOWS and mentions its completed capital improvement campaign in the last year and refreshed Media Center. Kerry explains basic difference between FOWS and PTA. She announces FOWS community events coming in spring. FOWS has not yet decided on what they will support this year. It will be announced at one of the next PTA meetings. Leslie Moylan coordinates room parents and encourages parents to volunteer. Chris Barone, longtime Artist in Residence Chair, is still helping as an advisor to the program and is looking for additional help. Kindergarten students will work on opera with Ms. Mary this year, 1<sup>st</sup> graders: dance residency (TBD), 2<sup>nd</sup> graders: drawing residency, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders: parodies, 4<sup>th</sup> graders: TBD, 5<sup>th</sup> graders will be working on a musical. Mike Buening, Carnival Chair, is looking for a co-chair. This will be the 76<sup>th</sup> carnival at Westbrook. Sarah Brady, one of the Staff Appreciation Committee Chairs, thanks previous chairs, Jessica Deighton and Caroline Smith for passing on their information and making things easier for the new chairs.

## 8. Upcoming Events

- September 26, 2019 Back-to-School Night, 18:00 -19:30, APR – There will be a welcome by Mrs. Cox and a chance to meet your child’s teacher who will present general curriculum per grade. The event starts at 18:00 P.M. for new parents and at 18:30 P.M. for existing parents. The event will be divided in two sessions of teacher presentations, so that it is possible for parents to attend the event for multiple children. Our specials teachers will not be at the Back-to-School Night, so please schedule meeting with them additionally if you wish. Parent will possibly volunteer to give presentation about SESES.
- September 27, 2019 Volunteer Training, 9:00 – 10:00, Fireplace Room – If you are new to Westbrook, please come to the volunteer training. There is an additional online component. Fingerprinting is necessary only for extended-day volunteering and is done in Gaithersburg. The volunteer training is one-time only, and online training is valid for three years. You do not need to register for volunteer training, please just come to the Fireplace Room on September 27<sup>th</sup>.
- September 30, 2019 No school for students and teachers – KAH will be open that day (please always confirm additionally with KAH directly.)

## 9. Additional Issues from PTA Members

- Is it possible to have a microwave in the APR?

It is a fire hazard and there is also an issue of logistics (too many students would be using it at one time.) Please buy thermostat containers as an option.

- Does the school have a policy about food in the classroom, including as rewards by teachers? When we add up the various sources, kids are consuming many treats through birthdays, classroom parties, and sometimes from teachers.

The school does not encourage teachers to use food as a reward. Mrs. Cox will send a reminder to the teachers about that. Some teachers advocate for healthier food options when it comes to school parties. Presentation makes a difference for kids and we should encourage healthier options. It would be good to get kids used to that in Kindergarten. PTA suggested it would circulate a list of suggested food to room parents for classroom parties after parents email PTA with their suggestions. PTA is reconsidering Ledo Pizza and McDonald’s, etc. as local promotions for the same reasons.

- Why is there so much teacher turnover and what can be done to stop it?

It happens for many reasons: location of our school, commute can be difficult; changes after marriage; we had a lot of young teachers hired ten years ago and now after a decade they are moving on; sometimes they move

on to different careers after, on average, teaching for five years. Some specials get cut from F/T to P/T because we are a small school, so they leave for F/T positions. In this situation of high teacher turnover, volunteering is one way to build a *community*. If a parent cannot be a chair to a committee, please volunteer your time to help another chair. Parent involvement builds a community.

\*\* After the meeting, a community member raised a suggestion in response to the teacher turnover that perhaps parents could help pressure MCPS Central Office to grant COSAs (Change of School Assignments) to allow teachers' children to attend Westbrook even if they live out of boundary. If any parent would like more information about COSAs and the process by which MCPS Central Office considers these, please see here: [https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/info/transfers/ChangeOfSchoolAssignment\\_ENGLISH\\_Web.pdf](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/info/transfers/ChangeOfSchoolAssignment_ENGLISH_Web.pdf)

- Could AIR performances be on the same day for all the grades, so that parents can take a day off and attend all if their children's performances? Could it be an all-day community event?

It would be difficult, but more definite answer will be provided.

Adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

**Next PTA Meeting: Monday, October 7, 2019**