



Emerson-Williams PTO Meeting  
 Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
 Minutes

**Attendees**

Conashevick,Stephanie	Iannucci,Diana	Rogalski,Jamie	Thakur,Neela
Cunningham,Rosemarie	Jara,Darka	Sassano,Deidre	Trevitazzo,Nathalie
Dee,Peping	Langdo,James	Shoham,Monika	Williams,John
Dicenso,Karen	Mattatall,Colleen	Smith,Shana	Williams,Leslie
Gallagher-Cuadras,Amy	Morris,John	Sousa,Christen	
Gilbert,Beth	Pikos,Chrissy	Struk,Autumn	

**Call to Order/Opening Remarks**

Darka Jara/Colleen Mattatall

7:01 p.m.

- Very great start to the school year with 4-5 fundraisers and events, including book fair, membership drive, school pics, scarecrow for EW, Walk to school day, and Dinner on the Lawn. Great support and many volunteers.
- Keep in mind the meeting guideline reminders:
  - Talk to and about each other the way you hope your children would speak to or about you (both at the meeting and beyond). Be respectful and kind with your words always, here and away.
  - Stay on topic. We will use a timekeeper to stay on track but remember the PTO meeting for reporting purposes of what your committee is doing. We don't expect lengthy discussions or conversations. Please curb your discussions or comments for the end or reach out to the chairperson directly after the meeting. You will be reminded or redirected if topic gets turned or time expires.
  - Introduce yourself and briefly explain WHAT your committee does for those new at the meeting.
  - If you must criticize, you MUST offer a suggestion
  - The Board will clarify rules for voting, explain why we are voting before any votes.

## **Teacher Representative**

Carissa Mierzejewski, EW Social Worker, Buddy Bench

Jennifer Kardys, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, EW Leadership Team

- Buddy benches – now installed on both playgrounds. Good for support and problem solving and empathy on playground. 6<sup>th</sup> grade made video and teachers created visuals in the classroom to show kids how to use it. 6<sup>th</sup> graders showing younger kids how to use the buddy bench and answer questions / explain how to use it.
- School wide bookclub –
  - Overall bookclub topic was chosen by the EW leadership team bookclub.
  - Every other month we have a specific book with the theme 'A Growth Mindset,' where the book supports the idea that its ok to take risks and keep trying.
  - Each grade will read the same book and will be involved in an activity involving the book, not tied to curriculum, to foster a love of reading. Grades will pair up for fun projects and act out the book, keeping in mind its ok to just try something. Read the book in October and activity in November.
  - Request for help to fund remainder of books. Neela has purchased the book 'The Bear Ate My Sandwich.' Need \$400 for 3-4 new books to continue with the book club for the rest of the year. \$16-17 per book. EW leadership team is currently voting on the books to be used for the year by 10/14. 1 book needed per grade level (8 copies of each book needed).

## **Officers' Reports**

### **Principal's Remarks**

Ms. Neela Thakur

- Thank you for a great start to the school year.
- School goals – distribute school wide academic goals, problem solving, and civic goals.
  - Math computation and basic math facts.
  - Problem solving and social problem solving - take time to think how they can solve their own problems.
  - Civic responsibility - kids are part of the planning process. Recognize civic responsibility and awareness of community and neighbors.
  - Growth mindset – to have a positive growth mind set.
  - Communication - teachers scored well last year with communication with parents. Teachers set a personal goal for communication for this school year which will involve a technology component.
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Career Day (10/28) - need more speakers but could use 1 or 2 more parents to help with coordination of the day (breakfast, lunch, and directing speakers). 9-2:20pm with breaks for lunch and recess. Rotations of speakers (15 minute segments) with visuals, props, and skills needed to have this career.

### **Secretary's Report**

James Langdo

- Approval of 9/8 Meeting minutes motioned by Shana Smith. Seconded by Leslie Williams and approved.
- Sign-in attendance sheet distributed for each attendee to add their name and email address.
- Thank you to PTO from:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team – thank you for the teacher luncheon and PTO donation for supplies
  - Kindergarten team – thank you for the new playscape, teacher luncheon and donation for supplies
  - 5<sup>th</sup> grade team – thank you for the teacher luncheon
  - Alex Lucas (grade 5) – thank you for the books
  - Mary Lacy – thank you for the get-well bouquet of roses
  - Kaitlyn D'Alesandro (OT) – donation that she will put towards a fun and therapeutic activity
  - Linda Ciarcia – for the PTO donation for supplies

- Jennifer Errickson, Carissa Mierzejewski, Mrs. Nunn, Kathy Harris, Deb Bryne, Rhea Emmanuel - PTO donation for supplies / classroom enhancement
- Elisa Root – for the books.
- James setup a Dropbox for all files. Please see James for access to any of the folders.

### Treasurer's Report

Peping Dee

- Income statement – contains new column for Revised Budget. Now have Approved Budget and Revised Budget columns.
- Book Fair (net) - 1721.24
- \$800 sponsorship money for the address directory

### Committee Reports

#### Committees

#### Chairs

- Address Directory (September) Fran Schwarzhaupt/Colleen Mattatall
  - Contact emailed Fran on 10/10. Proofs will be available soon. As soon as proofs are received, they will be sent to Colleen for review. Then directory printed and distributed.
- Assemblies Leslie Williams/Colleen Mattatall
  - Nov 18<sup>th</sup> – The Signature Project presentation by Patrick Dunning is scheduled for Friday, 11/18/2016 with assemblies for grades 4-8 at 9am and K-3 at 10:15am. The art work is a multi-faceted 76 ft. x 36 ft. mural layered with hidden secrets. A live performance including music brings the mural to life. Mr. Dunning weaves stories and images in the great tradition of Irish artists, blending art and technology.
  - Nov 30<sup>th</sup> – John Steven Gurney – illustrator of A-Z mysteries. Coming to speak for 1 hour in 3 times. Incorporates drawing and literacy fun
- Cheer/Teacher Appreciation Darka Jara
  - Kindergarten did the lunch for this month.
- Community Outreach Jamie Rogalski
  - Needs a list of who is on the committee.
  - Karen Dicenso joined the committee.
- Creative Arts Vacant
  - Needs a chairperson for town wide committee representing each school. Meet to organize assemblies for twice a year.
- Family Fun Committee Colleen Mattatall
  - Only event scheduled is Movie Night (10/21) at this point.
- Media Center Shana Smith
  - Signup is available on sign up genius. Readers needed to come into library to read to the kids.
- Membership (September) Colleen Mattatall/Beth Gilbert/  
Autumn Struk
  - Membership drive complete. Gave out magnet with \$10 or more donation. Incorporated idea of upfront donation to abstain from fundraisers. Planning to do another membership drive again in January.
- Movie Night (10/21) Leslie Williams/Autumn Struk

- We are set for 6:30pm on Friday 10/21/2016 to show Hotel Transylvania 2, as voted on by our EW students as a majority vote. We will rent the DVD from Redbox or borrow from library, if available. We've talked to the IT guy and he says it should be very simple. Autumn Struk got a donation of popcorn from 99 Restaurant in Cromwell, CT - 4 large garbage size bags full. We sent out a flyer about obtaining tickets to know how much we need to individually bag for popcorn and small water bottles, as well as the max person count allowed in the gym. We are looking for volunteers to help pass out popcorn and water when they hand us their ticket at the door.
  
- Room Parents (September) Autumn Struk/Diana Iannucci/  
Shana Smith
  - Communications have gone out. Room parents have received a room parent kit (What to do, Q&A, etc). Luncheons: K – Oct; 2<sup>nd</sup> grade - November.
  - Strawberry fest – assign each classroom to volunteer. Set up room parent community on Facebook
  
- Sixth Grade Activities Rosanna D'Onofrio/Amanda Campbell
  - Lyman orchard pies are out. Poinsettias out in early November. Ordered T-shirts - sized next week. Holiday store – notice to 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents to explain what they are looking for this year.
  
- Suggestion Box Colleen Mattatall
  - Button on website to offer suggestions anonymously.
  - Several suggestions already provided. Here are the suggestions and the PTO board responses:
    1. Suggestion 1:  
Anonymous: As an EW parent and PTO Member, I propose that the destination of the funds received from the Stop & Shop cards be changed from going to the school escrow account to going to the EW PTO general fund. I'm satisfied with being able to obtain financial information from EW PTO. It's clear to me what the money is being spent on and I am answered when I have a question. I am not satisfied with the money going into the school escrow account and not being accounted for to the EW parents that raised it. This should be a simple vote of the PTO members in attendance at the next meeting.  
  
Response: From the Stop and Shop A+ Rewards website. Can the PTA/PTO register with their Tax Identification Number (TIN)? No. Only schools can participate in A+ School Rewards. All checks are written in the school's name. It is crucial to submit the correct TIN (Tax Identification Number) when registering, as the reward payment at the end of the program will be reported for 1099 purposes.
    2. Suggestion 2:  
Anonymous: Can we update the PTO Officer section of the web site to show their photos? And, can we keep a history of past board members on in this section, by school year please?  
  
Response: We've added the past 4 board years and have elected to not include photos of the current board.
    3. Suggestion 3:  
Anonymous: I suggest having a WSPC section of our website. If they are the 'PTO' for the town of Wethersfield, we should be supporting one another and promoting their website in a section of ours.  
  
Response: Other Resources on our Website.

4. Suggestion 4:  
Can we have list of students and classroom on the website?

Response: we've added this document to the drop box- it was noted by Leslie Williams this list is always changing.

- Tiger Topics Leslie Williams
  - October issue deadline is Sunday 10/16/2016 for anything you'd like to advertise. It should be published by 10/26/16. Tiger Spotlight article offered to each grade level and received a volunteer for the December issue from Grade 3. Last month the Spotlight article was about the new playground. The October Spotlight article is on the EW Music Department by Emily Caravella and Mary Fox. We need a volunteer for November. Will ask Ms. Mierzejewski if she would be interested in writing an article about Buddy Benches at EW. Career day - grades 5 and 6 will have a spotlight area in November.
- Wish List Beth Gilbert/Christen Sousa
  - Christen completed the form and it has been signed off by Neela. Met with teachers at faculty meeting last week. 4 wish list requests at this point.
- WSPC Vacant
  - Need chair. Meeting was today. Discussed the issue where all field trip buses must be back at the school by 1:30pm. Any field trips would need to be back by 1:30. All elementary schools seeing what we could do about this issue.

## Fundraisers

- Apparel (October) Leslie Williams
  - Apparel samples were displayed at the meeting. Apparel sales end 10/14 and all orders and payment via order form or online are due by end of day. Cash or check payable to EWPTO. Online you can pay with PayPal, but there is a PayPal fee that seems to be a turn off to online purchasing. Autumn has been a great help in displaying samples for us at school. By the end of last week, we had orders for 62 items. For anything last minute, Leslie will be in the EW Cafeteria on Saturday 10/15/16 from 9-10am.
- Book Fair (September) Darka Jara
  - Almost met budget of \$1800. Book Fair (net) - 1721.24.
- Box Tops for Education (September) Beth Gilbert/Christen Sousa
  - 4454 box tops were collected from the September competition for a total of \$445.40. Ms. Foley's 1<sup>st</sup> grade class won the competition and earned an extra recess.
  - Labels for Education phasing out. Will send flyer home for last collection.
- Holiday Store (November) Beth Gilbert/Karen Dicenso
  - Dec 1<sup>st</sup> 5:30-9pm. Need to purchase 1600 more items. Currently have 900 items. Building and use form is in. Signups available online and will send home flyer.
  - Holiday on Main is on 12/1. Possible move of date before Thanksgiving.
- School Pictures (September and April) Shana Smith/Diana Iannucci
  - Picture day was a success. Finished early and was organized. 11/22 retake day. Not sure of when they will be available.

- Yankee Candle (September) Darka Jara
  - Fundraiser went well. Doesn't have exact numbers or when items will be in for pickup.

## **New Business**

- Vote: Art Show Funds Colleen Mattatall
  - No art show this year (every other year). Ms. Richard said we don't have an art show this year but would like to use the rolls of paper and have funds to buy additional rolls of paper. \$300 art show fund (for art supplies, art projects and art show). Vote on allowing use of the \$300 to purchase additional roles of paper motioned by Autumn Struk and seconded by Beth Gilbert. Approved.
- Vote: Support EW Leadership Team Book Club Colleen Mattatall
  - EW Leadership Team is a group of 10 staff members who meet with me monthly to brainstorm new ideas for our school community. They would like to do 5 book clubs in the school. There will be a sheet of suggested enrichment activities to go with each book. Each class will pair up with a class in a different grade level to do the activities related to the book, once they have read the book in their classroom. Our Leadership Team, with the guidance of our Literacy Curriculum Specialist, will be choosing the books. The books will stay with the grade level, and one will be housed in the Library. We believe she was trying to find all books with a Growth Mindset type of a theme. They have asked if we would consider funding this project of approximately \$400 which would purchase 8 copies of each of the 5 books they read this year. PTO to fund \$400 for 8 copies of 5 books (1 for each grade level and 1 for library). Motioned by Jaime Rogalski and seconded by Autumn Struk. Approved.
- School Conferences Babysitting Darka Jara
  - Currently use high school students. Looking for volunteers. 12pm-3:30pm. Create a sign-up genius with 1 hour slots.
- Volunteer for Mrs. Richard needed Colleen Mattatall
  - Taking photos of completed art work. Monika Shoham volunteered.
- Donor Drive for Erica Needs a Kidney Lisa Cornelius
  - Not PTO sponsored or funded but helping with getting people together to raise awareness. Awareness drive and separate fundraiser. Dinner-dance. Local brewery event. Facebook page is available.
- Keane After School Programs Colleen Mattatall
  - Chess, drama, yoga, Spanish, art, and mini-movers. Other suggestions or ideas, please reach out to Darka.
- Printing Sign-In Sheet Colleen Mattatall
  - Mrs. Lacy has a sign-in sheet to use the copier (to sign-up to make copies in advance).
- Committee Vacancies Darka Jara
  - 2 committee vacancies – WSPC and Creative Arts. Both have a website and Facebook pages for more info. Let Colleen, Darka, or Chrissy know if interested.
- Vote: Safe Grad Flock Shana Smith
  - We contribute \$100 to safe grad so this is in excess of the \$25. Vote to spend the additional \$25 that was not budgeted. Motioned by Autumn Struk and seconded by Beth Gilbert. Approved.

- Unity Day Volunteers: 10/19 from 10-11 (Miss M) Colleen Mattatall
  - Volunteers needed. 6<sup>th</sup> graders to mostly run with it and we would supervise. Don't need many volunteers.

### **Open Forum**

- Autumn working with Ms. Caravella for Veteran's day – video and post to Facebook and PTO page. Pictures of students and favorite veterans. Would need to be approved by Neela and posted. Send on school messenger platform and include in Tiger Topics. 11/1 deadline.

### **Closing Remarks**

Darka Jara/Colleen Mattatall

Adjourn: 8:55 p.m.

**Tiger Topic submissions are due by the Sunday after the PTO meeting.**

**Email to: [tigertopics@ewpto.com](mailto:tigertopics@ewpto.com)**