



**Emerson-Williams PTO Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017**  
**Minutes**

**Attendees**

Burlingame, Amy	Gilbert, Beth	Rivera, Jessica	Smith, Shana
Collette, Peggy	Iannucci, Diana	Root, Elisa	Sousa, Christen
Cunningham, Rose	Jara, Darka	Schwarzhaupt, Fran	Struk, Autumn
Dee, Peping	Langdo, James	Schwarzhaupt, Mike	Thakur, Neela
Dreger, Heidi	Malinowski, Thomas	Sebak, Michelle	Trevitazzo, Nathalie
Dukes, Christopher	Mattatall, Colleen	Semtsiv, Julia	Ward, Nicole
Fleming, Paige	Pikos, Chrissy	Shoham,Monika	Williams, Leslie

**Call to Order/Opening Remarks**

Colleen Mattatall/Autumn Struk

7:01 p.m.

- Welcome to all attendees to the first PTO meeting of the 2017-18 school year.
- PTO Board introductions: 1<sup>st</sup> year Co-president Autumn Struk, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Co-president Colleen Mattatall, Treasurer Peping Dee, and Secretary James Langdo
- PTO goals for the new school year:
  - Continue to build community and create more family-oriented events. Good opportunity to get to know everyone in the EW community (teachers, parents, etc.).
  - Continue to enhance communication through Facebook (like and follow), the PTO website, new weekly Group Vine (PEX community) emails, and paper flyers sent home.
- Thank-you letter was distributed highlighting the many volunteers and appreciation for their efforts over the summer and through the start of the school year.
- The board will clarify rules for voting and explain why we are voting before any voting occurs.
- 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.

## Officers' Reports

### **Principal's Remarks**

Ms. Neela Thakur

- Grateful for everyone's participation and attendance at the PTO meeting and for the parent support. Thanked everyone for volunteering their time in support of EW students and the school.
- Neela reminded everyone that she does post updates through Facebook at 'Emerson Tigers' and encouraged everyone to follow and like the page.
- Great start to the new school year:
  - Many new hires and new students over the summer.
  - Staff worked on defining a common school wide behavior expectations (i.e., how we explain behavior expectations to students):
    - Staff clarified the core values: respect, responsibility and safety and what do they mean for the kids.
    - Identified 11 areas of the school and defined what the core values mean in each of those areas. Staff members teach those common expectations to the students.
    - Behavior reflection form is completed by the student and the teacher. Parent signs the form.
- State budget delay:
  - Currently no state budget in place.
  - Wethersfield did not lay off any teachers. Superintendent is committed to keeping class sizes down (with 3 teachers at every level).
  - Needed to eliminate some staff positions to keep the teachers we have:
    - Lost math tutor - EW and Highcrest are without a math tutor. Will rehire Mrs. Burnham if freeze is lifted. Other schools have Title 1 funding and have a tutor.
    - Lost 2 administrative positions - STEM supervisor and literacy directory.
    - No administrative content supervisors to oversee the content for every area.
  - Budget freeze on all schools. Teachers did ordering over the summer for the school year. No supply money to order anything.

### **Secretary's Report**

James Langdo

- Approval of 6/8 Meeting minutes motioned by Shana Smith. Seconded by Chrissy Pikos and approved.
- Sign-in attendance sheet distributed for each attendee to add their name and email address.
- Thank you to PTO from:
  - Ms. Fox – for the memory book and gift card for retirement
  - Mrs. Forrest – for the retirement gift card
  - Mrs. Harris – for the retirement gift card
  - Ms. Lacy – for the mixed bags gift card and the mixed bag for teacher appreciation day, and monthly teacher appreciation lunches
  - Mrs. Intino – for the mixed bag gift card
  - Mrs. Ciarcia – for the mixed bag gift card
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Team – for the welcome back lunch
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Team – for the remodeled staff lounge and welcome back lunch
  - Elda, Giulia and James Marcelynas – for the gift cards, food, treats and activities for their family in remembrance of husband and father Jim Marcelynas
- A Dropbox is available for all committee files. Committee chairs should contact James for access to any of the committee folders.

## Guest Speaker

Ms. Root, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Team

- Ms. Root is the new PTO Teacher Liaison to enhance communication between PTO parent/committee leaders and teachers/staff. She will take more of a role in the PTO in 2017-18. She said that the PTO is appreciated greatly by the faculty and the work we do means a lot to the kids and to the faculty.
- She is in her 16<sup>th</sup> year in teaching, mostly in private schools, and came to EW 3 years ago. She is currently in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year as Grade 2 teacher.

## Treasurer's Report

Peping Dee

- Income:
  - \$22,829.78 (at end of 2016-17)
  - \$6081.86 (starting 2017-18)
- Expenses:
  - \$33,198.67 (at end of 2016-17)
  - \$4732.80 (starting 2017-18)
- Net income: \$1349.06
- Total assets: \$37,967.81
  
- Peping reminded everyone to complete the required forms and allow 1 week notice for cash box and request for reimbursement.

## Committee Reports

### Committees

### Chairs

- Student Phone Book/Address Directory Fran Schwarzhaupt/Colleen Mattatall
  - Deadline is 9/22 for signup. Goal is for at least 75% participation. Please signup or advertise in the directory. Fran is meeting with the directory printer next week and the book will be released at the beginning of October.
- Room Parents Leslie Williams/Christine Dukes/  
Shana Smith/Autumn Struk
  - Parents to help teachers to coordinate with co-room parents and with teacher for any events. The parent is focused on your child's class. 58 parent volunteers for room parents. The committee met and named 52 room parents. All teachers now have room parents (some have 1 parent). Welcome packets will go out within the next several days.
- School Pictures (9/28) Diana Iannucci/Chrissy Pikos
  - Picture day is Thursday 9/28. Forms went out on 9/18-9/19. Need volunteers to come for any amount of time to help.

- Color Run (9/30) Autumn Struk
  - Color Run info and registration form has been sent out. The event is Saturday 9/30 from 11am-1pm. Need Color Run volunteers. Need 12 teacher volunteers to throw the color powder at the kids. A signup sheet is available. Over 300+ participants. T-Shirt orders have been placed and will be in by Tuesday/Wednesday next week. For \$3 participants will get a Color Run T-shirt, glasses, and tattoos. Masks for kids will be available at the check-in table. There will be a no color track if kids don't want to get sprayed with the color. Bathrooms will be available on the day of the event.
  - Color Run donations:
    - 2 donations – Dunkin Donuts in Manchester donated 4 boxes of Joe, 4 boxes of hot chocolate and donuts.
    - Shop Rite in Manchester donated \$25
    - Big-Y donated \$25
  - Event is funded by the Keane Foundation
  
- Movie Night (10/13) Leslie Williams/Jessica Rivera
  - Free movie night on Friday 10/13 6:30pm (location TBD). The movie is 'The Book for Life.' Free popcorn and water. Sponsored by Madres Latinas of Wethersfield in honor of Hispanic Heritage month with funding by the Keane Foundation. We will need a different vendor for the movie license. Town wide event.
  
- Sixth Grade Activities Darka Jara/Janet Carbo/Paige Fleming
  - First meeting was Monday 9/18. Fundraisers coming. Currently in planning stages.
  
- Tiger Topics Leslie Williams
  - Get to Know segment now in Tiger Topics. This month will include Principal Thakur and the admins in the front office (Mary Lacy and Maria Intino).
  - Submit all committee flyers and information by 10/15 to tigertopics @ewpto.com
  - Two 5<sup>th</sup> graders have asked to work with Leslie as Tiger Topics cub reporters Dylan Murtha and Mickey Thigpen.
  
- Cheer-Teacher Appreciation Autumn Struk/Christine Dukes
  - Welcome back luncheon was hosted for teachers and staff before the school year started.
  - Laura Schneider has a new job as a paralegal and will be leaving EW. PTO gave her desk items to begin her new position.
  - Cheer-Teacher Appreciation events will be quarterly. Cheer committee might be monthly.
  
- WSPC Darka Jara
  - Darka needs others to join the committee and go to the meetings. WSPC town-wide meetings on the second Thursday of each month from 12-2pm in the board of education Stillman building. Meet with superintendent and assistant superintendent and representatives from each school.
  - Darka reported that at the last meeting the following was discussed:
    - Movie Night on the Green. 'Minions.' 9/22 5pm. Movie at dusk.
    - Budget was discussed. Budget will begin to create issues as of January 2018.
    - Walk to School – 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in October (10/4). Organized by WSPC. Flyers will go out. There will be meeting spots. Town wide event.
  - Amy Burlingame has signed up for WSPC

## Fundraisers

- Book Fair Heidi Dreger/Courtney Harlow/  
Darka Jara
  - Well run event. Tuesday and Wednesday night of the book fair was very successful. Thanked volunteers and high school volunteers. Hours of 3-5pm need to be extended next year by a couple of hours. Heidi will chair next year and Monika Shoham will be co-chair. Will get everything setup by June for next year and will confirm dates with Scholastic by April 2018.
- Membership Colleen Mattatall
  - Should have received membership flyer. If your preference is to not do fundraisers, you can make a donation upfront and don't participate in fundraisers. Companies will match charitable donations. Don't need to pay dues to become a member.
  - \$100 donation will put your name in for a raffle.
  - Flyer will be created by Peping – how to maximize your PTO donations. Companies will match donations, especially major corporations.
- Box Tops Beth Gilbert
  - Box Tops contest to be held in the fall. Winning classroom prize. Last year bought in over \$1200. Julia Semtsiv has joined Box Tops committee.

## New Business

- Book Club: At the June meeting, some teachers spoke about the successful book club that PTO sponsored. PTO purchased 7 copies of each book (1 for each grade). Each class read the same book over the course of a few days and would do activities. Teachers asked if we would sponsor this again for the 2017-18 school year. It was tabled until the fall; however, over the summer the Conashevick family bought all of the books for the school. Thank you to the Conashevick family.
- Vote: Read for the Record Colleen Mattatall
  - Submit a vote for Read for the Record, nation-wide program through Jumpstart. 1000's of kids across the nation read the same book and do activities based on the book. This year's book is 'Quackers' by Liz Wong.
  - Outside of what we already approved for budget, asking that we participate in Read for the Record by purchasing 8 copies of the book (1 for each classroom and 1 for the media center) at \$10 per book plus shipping for a total of \$100. We will need to register the number of kids who will be reading or being read to.
  - Colleen Mattatall motioned to spend \$100 to participate in Read for the Record. Seconded by Amy Burlingame. Unanimous and approved.
- Vote: Gratitude Project Expenses Colleen Mattatall
  - 2 week long program last year where kids highlight things they were thankful for. Would like to do it again this year. We still have many of the supplies. Just need post-it notes and tape, which is ordered through the school system for discounts.
  - Colleen Mattatall motioned to appropriate \$504 for the gratitude project to purchase tape and paper cubes estimated at paper cubes \$15 a pack at \$365 and tape dispenser with clear tape (70 of them) at \$139 but with discount if ordered through the school system. Autumn seconded the motion. Approved. After review of the purchase costs, the total was \$88.40. Colleen Mattatall re-motioned to appropriate \$88.40 for the gratitude project to purchase tape and paper cubes. Motion seconded by Diana Iannucci and approved.
  - Committee is meeting next week. Hoping to do this in November.
- EW Master Calendar Ms. Neela Thakur
  - Google master calendar for all events. Mary Lacy, Maria Intino, Neela Thakur, Colleen Mattatall and Autumn Struk all have access to read the calendar. Mary,

Maria, and Neela can add to the calendar. Please ask one of them to add your items to the master calendar. Please be sure to add anything that could also impact instruction.

- Fundraiser Organizer Autumn Struk
  - Many fundraisers and looking for someone who will volunteer to be EW PTO fundraiser organizer. Need 1 central person to organize - find the fundraisers and scheduling them. Central organized to book fundraisers early and map them out strategically over the year. This person will not to do the fundraiser but will oversee the business of fundraisers.
  
- PTO Closet Volunteers Autumn Struk
  - EW PTO has a new PTO closet. It has been moved to the location where the Kindergarten students go out for recess. Need people to participate to move the items. We also need shelving units. Autumn is organizing day(s) for volunteers to help bring things to the new PTO closet. All days will be after school (no weekends).
  
- Communication James Langdo
  - New Group Vine PEX communication sent weekly by EW PTO: Tiger Adventures. Sent on Sundays as a round-up of events for the upcoming week and a view into later events, all in one location. Links are available to the flyers in EW PTO website's digital backpack updated by our webmaster Chrissy Pikos.
  - We will add new PTO members to the Group Vine community after the Membership drive is complete.
  
- Keane Foundation Grant Ideas (by 9/30) Colleen Mattatall
  - Asking for grant ideas to be applied to the Keane Foundation by 9/30 (another deadline at end of year). No assemblies. Must be educational or physical activities. Can only apply for one. Suggestions provided at the meeting:
    - Kindness Rocks and tie this theme to Gratitude.
    - EW Dance – reach out to Janet
    - Court Yard related activity.
    - Billy Fisher (drummer) – drumming circle. Suggestion from Michelle.
    - EW garden - Ms. Root said there is a group getting together to consider putting in a garden. Janet Vassel and Girl Scouts cleaned up the court yard but we would need a plan for upkeep). PTO can help lead it but will need to keep it up. Ms. Root to reach out to Janet.
    - Michelle asked if they would pay for Art truck. Get estimates for Art Truck.
    - Leslie asked if they would sponsor an Art Show
  - We have two assemblies funded through Keane and through a grant application for Color Run and hip-hop. Going forward, they will not grant assemblies. Ms. Caravella is applying for hip-hop.
  
- Photo Booth Update Colleen Mattatall
  - PTO paid upfront and DJ did not show up and did not return money. Mayor office of consumer protection said the person closed the business. We will try to use a credit card in the future (credit or debit) to reserve vendors. Credit card will return money because it has fraud protection. PTO agreed to consider it a loss (\$549). Issue will now be considered closed.

- Puerto Vallarta Fundraiser (11/28) Colleen Mattatall
  - Puerto Vallarta fundraiser planned for 11/28. EW will receive 20% of all sales at the restaurant or take out all day. Made \$900 during TV turnoff week last school year.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Scarecrow Contest – 10/7 – 11/5 Colleen Mattatall
  - Enter Contest by 9/30. EW has a scarecrow but needs a theme. Need to apply to enter the contest and need someone to lead the event. Will post on Facebook and add to our weekly emails. Autumn to send out 3 options out to classes. Kids will choose from the 3 options.
- Assemblies Colleen Mattatall
  - Internet Safety - (10/10) 3:05pm at EW – please make every effort to attend.
  - Antonio Rocha – 1 for the older and 1 for the younger kids (story telling). Add the date.
- Family Fun committee (Game and Book Swap) Colleen Mattatall
  - 10/20 (tentative) – will send out flyer.
- Zumba Colleen Mattatall
  - Saturday 9/22 at 1pm for kids (2:30pm for adults). Sponsored by Madres Latinas of Wethersfield. PTO will be there selling refreshments. Money will go to them for future events.
- Yankee Candle Darka Jara
  - Due on 9/29 but Darka will give a couple extra days.
- Strawberry Fest Colleen Mattatall
  - Net \$1900 this year. Planned to make less money than last. Made it bigger but to bring in less money. Kids liked the new bounce houses. This year we want to bring in more than \$2000 but less than \$6000 for the year. Early June event.

#### **Open Forum**

- Next PTO meeting is Thursday 10/12 7pm.

#### **Closing Remarks**

Adjourn: 9:18 p.m.

Colleen Mattatall/Autumn Struk

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

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