



Emerson-Williams PTO
Meeting Minutes for
Thursday, September 9, 2021

Attendees

Anderson, Liz	Burlingame, Amy	Carvalho, Stephanie	Hernandez, Andrea
Keys, Liz	Mattatall, Colleen	Root, Elisa	Skaparas, Laura
Smith, Shana	Sousa, Christen	Struk, Autumn	Szczepanski, Anna
Thakur, Neela	Williams, Leslie	Zaparanick, Melissa	

Welcome

Leslie Williams/Stephanie Carvalho

Call to order at 7:00pm.

- Leslie welcomed everyone to the PTO meeting and provided her background.
- Stephanie welcomed everyone and provided her background.

Secretary's Report

Stephanie Carvalho

- Stephanie asked for everyone to review the minutes from 06/03/2021 meeting.
- Approval of 06/03/2021 meeting minutes motioned by Anna and Neela.
- Stephanie read notes of appreciation from Grade 2 teachers, Grade 3 teachers, Grade 4 teachers, Grade 5 teachers, Grade 6 teachers, Mrs. Jahne, and Ms. Root.
- Stephanie mentioned a sympathy card was sent over to Mrs. Doten who lost her husband over the summer.

Treasurer's Report

Leslie Williams

- The current PTO bank balance is \$12,521.38 as of 09/09/2021.
- Budget was approved on 6/3/2021 and noted that the expenses are more than what is expected to be brought in.
- Money going out was cheer reimbursement of two retirement gifts and a baby gift, kindergarten hand project supplies, renewal of website domain, and wish list math software.
- Deposits were from Amazon Smile and Shop with Scrip fundraisers.
- Pending deposit is from community bag program fundraiser.
- Leslie mentioned that there were recently 7 checks that were located from dates of January 2020 – July 2021. Leslie noted that she took responsibility for these checks as she was not aware that they were located in a bag with supplies. The amount of the checks totaled \$829.60 and Leslie

has reached out to the businesses to have the checks reissued. Thus far 2 out of the 7 have been received. These checks were related to donation matching gifts and fundraisers.

Principal's Remarks

Neela Thakur

- Welcome and it is nice to be able to be in person and the school year is off to a great start. There is so much to be grateful for.
- The teachers are able to focus this year on one type of instruction rather than with in person and using google meets. This is more manageable and there is less stress.
- There is a lot of repair work that needs to occur around academics and social/emotional learning. There are a lot of students that are struggling and it has been busy for Neela, the therapist, social worker and psychologist.
- Neela would like to focus on how to pull everyone back as a school community and she is looking at things can be done and is looking at the PTO for brainstorming ideas.

Nominations

Leslie Williams

- Open positions are Co-President and Treasurer and nominations are open.
- Laura Skaparas nominated herself for Treasurer and provided her background.

PTO Liaison

Elisa Root

- Elisa agreed with what Ms. Thakur stated.
- The staff are nurturing each other and the children.
- Everyone has been missed, students and parents too.
- Elisa thanked the PTO for the back to school luncheon and noted that this was the first meal the staff had together in 2 years and everyone missed one another.
- Social/Emotional learning is the focus this year. There will be a new curriculum starting in the next week called RethinkEd and is being used for grades K-8.
- Reminder to make sure the students are bringing charged Chromebooks, a bottle for water refills, masks/extra masks, and a towel or blanket for when they can sit outside.
- Hybrid open houses are on 9/21/2021 from 6pm – 8:10pm for grades K-3 and on 9/22/2021 from 6pm – 8:10pm for grades 4-6.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports:

Board of Education/WSPC

Colleen Mattatall/Amy Burlingame

- Colleen explained what WSPC does and noted that if anyone is interested in participating that she can provide the Zoom link.
- Colleen noted that she is the co-president of WSPC with a Highcrest parent co-president for this school year.
- Movie on the Lawn which is typically sponsored by WSPC is cancelled.
- Wethersfield Education Foundation will be hosting an Author of Residence program the week of October 23, 2021. A Wethersfield author will work with grades 2-6 in a writing workshop. This will occur at E-W on 10/29/2021.
- Walk to School Day is on Wednesday, 10/6/2021. A flier will be coming and assistance with running this day is being sought out.
- The superintendent also has been able to use COVID relief funds to hire 7 math specialists across the district.

Book Fair**Amy Burlingame**

- Book Fair is back but on a smaller scale.
- The fair will have only books for sale.
- The fair will run the week of open house. On 9/20/2021, students will be able to preview. On 9/21/2021-9/22/2021 there will be an opportunity to shop at night from 6pm to 8:30pm. On 9/23/2021, purchases will be made by students only during school hours.
- There will also be an online site to shop and the profit will be 25% to the PTO. This online site will be available from 9/12/2021 - 9/25/2021.

Cheer**Leslie Williams**

- Sympathy card sent to Mrs. Doten for the loss of her husband.
- Jimmy Discenza's (head daytime custodian) wife recently had a baby boy.
- Taylor Kosakowski, aka Mr. K, (school psychologist) got married in 6/2021.
- A chair is needed for Cheer committee.

Dinner on the Lawn**Colleen Mattatall**

- Scheduled for 9/17/2021 from 5pm – 7pm.
- There is a new family to E-W who is part of the band the PPTs which is a rock band that offered to play. The family member is also the principal at Webb.
- There will be no bathrooms available and this is a free event.
- As it is outdoors, masks will not be required.

Membership / Opt Out Fundraiser **Leslie Williams**

- Don't forget to register to become a member. Fees are voluntary.
- Ms. Root provided a generous donation.
- Mrs. Moore provided a donation.
- Opt Out Fundraiser is supported by Neela. Some have done it and made their donation.
- Pre-COVID the PTO was spending about \$50 per student to fulfill all the normal activities; \$120 for a sixth grader.

Sixth Grade Committee**Christen Sousa/Autumn Struk/Shana Smith**

- All the \$120 donations received as part of the Opt Out Fundraiser will go directly to 6th grade.
- Suggestion was made to book Puerto Vallarta restaurant night fundraiser.

Room Parents**Leslie Williams for Karla Pelarinos/Joella Thombs**

- Looking for room parents for all grades.
- Go to ewpto.com to sign up to be a room parent.

School Pictures**Shana Smith**

- Pictures will be on 9/29/2021 for grades K-3 and 9/30/2021 for grades 4-6.
- Retakes will be on 10/25/2021.
- All the children will have their pictures taken and a QR code will be provided. The pictures will be taken in the gym.
- There will be no class picture for the fall; composite picture will be provided. Pictures will be sent home in the backpacks.
- TBD if spring pictures will be occurring.

- Composites of classes from the June 2021 school pictures day are in and need help getting them to the appropriate students to take home.

Shop with Scrip

Stephanie Carvalho

- Stephanie provided information on the gift card fundraising program and how it works.
- Explained that actual gift card orders will be placed once a month based on the fee associated with shipping.
- Explained that there are e-cards available as well and that certain times of the year various vendors provide a higher percentage profit to the PTO.

Spiritwear

Leslie Williams

- Spiritwear store will be open all year online; link to Spiritwear site is accessible on ewpto.com
- Once or twice a year such as in November 2021 there will be additional products available for purchase.
- Spiritwear will be re-promoted when new products are available.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominations

Leslie Williams

- Nominations officially closed at 8:15pm
- Vote on Treasurer (Laura Skaparas) - 15 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstentions.
- Laura was voted in as the new Treasurer for the 2021-2022 school year.

Harvest Fair

Leslie Williams

- Scheduled for Saturday, 9/25/2021 from 9am to 12pm by Wethersfield Education Foundation.
- Fair is for grades Pre-K – 3, but open to all families and is at the Barn at Kycia Farm.
- E-W is in need of someone to assist with running a table with a fall activity or display.

Yard Cards LLC

Leslie Williams

- Vendor lives in Wethersfield and wants to sponsor E-W in some way.
- Vendor put together packaged bundles for occasions throughout the school year.
- This is not in the budget and Board could only offer \$50 prior to start of the year. Proposal to hold a vote on using funds to purchase a bundle. Motion did not move forward.
- There was a vote to give \$125 (regular price for a 1-day rental) with the cheer budget paying for the Welcome Back sign. 15 Yay, 0 Nay and 0 Abstentions.

JumpStart for Reading

Leslie Williams

- Taking place on 10/28/2021.
- No money from the PTO is needed as an E-W family donated the 10 books.
- It was also discussed about having Ms. Root reach out to Mrs. Brenda McLaughlin about the Nutmeg books and getting a quote or purchase order for the PTO to proceed with the purchase.

Gaga Ball Pit

Colleen Mattatall

- The history of the E-W gaga ball pit was explained.
- The students will be able to utilize it this year and Mrs. Dalke will be teaching the children about the game, rules, and safety.
- 10 balls have been purchased for the game and will be arriving soon. Balls that had been inside the PTO closet are no longer there.

Open Forum:

- Student Directory – need someone to take it on.
- Holiday Store – Neela is assuming that it will not be held this year. There are online store options, if anyone is interested in this committee.
- Community Building – Anna mentioned having the students in K-3 and 4-6 vote on various movies and encouraging them to have a family movie night given that Movie on the Lawn has been cancelled.
- Scarecrows on Main is being led by Anna. She has the assistance of Liz Anderson and will be reaching out to the 5th grade girl scouts to see if they would be interested in assisting. Anna has the idea of dressing Stripes as a farmer and using small pumpkins to be the E-W pumpkin patch.
- Autumn had brought up that D.A.R.E. was not being offered and asked how much it would be to have an officer come teach the students. Neela advised that it is not about cost of the police providing the course, it is more about the lack of police staffing. Sally Dastoli is looking into alternatives. Discussion was had about a writing campaign to Mr. Emmett and Ms. Dastoli about having a program or alternative program in place.
- Autumn asked about mask breaks on rainy days. Neela indicated that the students can ask the teacher for a break and they would be able to go in the hall for a mask break, as needed.
- Community building idea: Pen pals with classroom buddies in different grades.

Next meeting 10/14/2021**Closing Remarks****Leslie Williams****Adjourn: 8:53pm**