



Emerson Williams PTO Meeting Minutes
 Monday, May 12, 2025
 6:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Sarrah Hughes	Katherine Patnaude	Andrea Hernandez
Elisa Root	Neela Thakur	Leslie Williams
Lauren Rhines	Nicole Wante	Katrina Ross
Laura Neville	Anthony Uccello	

Welcome: Sarrah Hughes

- Call to order 6:04 pm
- Welcome to everyone and introduction of board members
- Introduction of those in attendance

Treasurer Report: Katherine Patnaude

- Current balance reviewed.

Principal Report: Neela Thakur

- Thank you to volunteers
- School dance went well (time of the dance was good)
- Grateful to Christen Sousa for spearheading the talent show
- Kids in Addams Family were remarkable
- Staff grateful for staff appreciation – loved ice cream and coffee trucks
- 5/13/25 opportunity to meet new superintendent Jeff Whibey before BOE meeting. He starts on 7/1
- Losing assistant superintendent and resignation of HR Director. 7/1 will have new superintendent. He will hire interim assistant superintendent focused solely on HR from 7/1 – 1/1. On 1/1 hire new assistant superintendent of schools. Not sure on the structure yet, what the focus of the job will be. Outgoing assistant superintendent focus was curriculum.
- New superintendent will be meeting with each principal individually
- Referendum vote on school buildings is 9/16 – need people to come out and vote

Teacher Report: Elisa Root

- Tues 5/20 6-7:30 concert
- 5/27 12:30 – 2:30 and rain date is 5/28 – field day. Parents invited
- Jimmy Discenza is transferring to Charles Wright at end of May. New custodian John Iacobucci will start in May
- 6/16 last day of school, early dismissal

Wethersfield Education Foundation: Lynn Sweet-Dobrow

- Not in attendance

COMMITTEE UPDATES

6th Grade Committee: Lauren Rhines

- Delivering yard signs. Ramping up. Field trips in May
- Looking for donation of food to Pine Acres day
- Made about \$605 at Casadoro (5% of total made), \$170 from yard signs, Puerto Vallarta made \$1250 (20% of total)
- Note – no longer allowed to do 2 Puerto Vallarta nights, just one

Strawberry Fest: Lauren Rhines

- Is Friday – need more volunteers
 - Need dunk tank
 - Craft table – hoping some 6th graders will sign up
- Have Nature Center animals, as long as weather is ok
- Have a lot of raffles

WSPC: Anthony

- Supported national bike and roll to school on Wednesday 5/7. Handed out information from DOT.
 - Sarrah Hughes discussed trying to promote more next year including the day in the fall
- Volunteer awards –
 - Wethersfield Education Foundation won community foundation – donated over \$70k.
 - Emerson volunteer of the year – Andrea Hernandez
- WSPC planning to provide popsicles for Field Day

Athletics: Anthony

- Karate program ended 5/2 – students had graduation on 5/3. 8 classes twice a week. 2nd year at Emerson doing the program. They are willing to donate coffee and donuts to teachers (coming on 5/13)
- Soccer – Saturday 5/17 at 7 at Trinity Stadium - \$21 tickets (\$4 to PTO). A week ago no tickets were purchased.
- Had Wolfpack fundraiser. UCONN men and womens were not a fundraiser.

Beautification: Andrea Hernandez/Laura Neville

- No new ideas at the moment. Just maintenance of the paint. Haley is happy to do it. Need to check if we have paint left, but paint will need to be purchased. Paint in the circle needs to be touched up.
- Ms. Root mentioned Girls bathroom near the art room – painted messages are peeling away. Committee will look at the bathrooms and see what needs to be touched up.

Bookfair: Andrea Hernandez/Laura Neville

- Placement – being in the library was better than everywhere else. Suggestion would be to work with Mr. Lopez and doing during their library.
- Easy on the admin and ordering. Set up is a lot of work and need someone who knows there for when register goes down, etc. Need someone who has time to invest in it – need to be there all the hours that week.
- September dates –
 - open house is 9/17. Week of 9/15 would be good. Set up on 9/12 and do 9/15-19
- Bonuses to having a second bookfair

Buddy Bench: Andrea Hernandez/Laura Neville

- Money that was donated for the bench in 23/24. Have not heard from them. Lauren Rhines reached out to Sally Katz and she hasn't heard from them either. She will find out if we can use a different company to get a bench.

Budget 25/26: Katherine Patnaude

- Discussion on proposed budget
 - Suggestions on restaurant nights
 - Decrease wishlist, increase cheer

NEW BUSINESS

Fundraiser Ideas: Sarrah Hughes

- Savers Drive – Savers will give us money per pound, would need to rent a Uhaul. Use parking lot at the school. Twice a year – fall and spring
- Flower fund – will look into nurseries. Mums and pumpkins, poinsettias
- Purse bingo

Meeting Days/Times for 25/26 school year: Sarrah Hughes

- Monthly meetings – Mondays at 6:30. Dates TBD

Committee Chairs and Budget 25/26 Reminders: Sarrah Hughes

- Any voting will happen at June 2nd

Open Discussion

- Lauren Rhines – School building committee – met last Monday. Tentative timeline – thru council by 6/2. At 6/2 will call public hearing on 6/16. Referendum is 9/16. Will be information coming out.
 - First phase of project (6 phases) – grant application thru state OGA – due 6/30 – building new Highcrest on Kycia farm and tear down existing Highcrest. State said tear down has to be in phase 1.
 - Referendum 1 will include building new Highcrest and tear down existing (with high escalation rate, because will be torn down at end in 2033), Renovate Charles Wright and Webb (\$85m to renovate Webb).
 - 2nd referendum (most likely 1-2 years out) – renovate Emerson and Hanmer
 - Budgeting at bare minimum state reimbursement rate. But if get more from the State will bond less.
 - Goal is to make schools equitable in classrooms and size. Will redistrict. And make outdoor space more equitable
 - Cost – about \$150m (do nothing plan is \$90m deferred maintenance plan – and reimbursement rate is significantly less)
 - Will continue to do deferred maintenance through operating budget at the existing schools until they are renovated or demolished. But no significant new capital projects.
 - PAC will be sending out flyers, mailers, yard signs. Will be doing public education plan.
- Lauren Rhines – item to vote on – get a gift for every student. Last year did beach balls. Asking for funding not to exceed \$500 for a student gift

ITEMS TO VOTE ON

End of the year gifts for the school – funding not to exceed \$500

- Sarrah Hughes motioned to approve
- Andrea Hernandez seconded
- All in favor, funding approved

Meeting called to close at 7:37pm