

WHS PTSO Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 25, 2024
10:00 am-11:30 am

Executive Board Attendees: Jamie Chisum, Meridith Edmonds, Melissa Mack, Joelle Reidy, Megan Dyer, Kristen Toffer, Niki Ofenloch, Amanda Turner

Administrative, Faculty & Community Attendees: Drew Kelton

Parent & Guardian Attendees: There were six non-executive board members in attendance

PTSO Business and Announcements

- Lynn Lyons, LICSW, will speak on April 30 at 6:30pm in the WHS auditorium. Anyone is welcome to attend. The WHS PTSO is splitting the costs with the Wellesley Health Department and the WPS Department of Student Services.
- This weekend, volunteers will be at WHS from 8am-11am doing yard work. All are welcome.
- Megan Dyer reviewed the open 2024-2025 PTSO positions, including 12th grade parent rep, incoming 9th grade parent rep, fundraising chair, social media chair, and a METCO partnership role. If you are interested or know of someone who is, please contact Megan.
- We are hoping to schedule one more Challenge Success fishbowl before the end of the year. More details to come.

Budget Updates

- To date, we have collected just over \$54,000 (~84% of our \$65,000 budget). Should we fall short on fundraising, there are some PTSO reserve funds that can be used to close the gap.
- PTSO funded activities include an upcoming teacher appreciation luncheon on May 1.
- For the 2023-2024 school year, 18 faculty grants have been approved to date. Recent grants include funding for a mini fridge in the Special Ed department, a summer theater workshop, a Native American history class, and attendance at the AP Summer Institute (English). Funding was also provided to the Science department for team t-shirts and to the Child Lab for Reading with Bunnies (students and bunnies were on hand for storytime).
- Kristen provided some additional detail on how donations have been used this school year.
- Thank you to everyone who has donated. If you are unsure if you made a contribution earlier in the year, you can contact Kristen Toffer.

WHS update from Dr. Chisum

- The video of today's Friday announcements was shared.
- One student, as part of their senior project, is working to establish an alumni speaker series during senior week. The first speaker, Alex Spiro (2001), will speak on May 20; Mr. Spiro is an attorney for Elon Musk and other high-profile clients. The senior project also includes creating a database of graduates that can be used to identify future speakers.
- Across the school, seniors are starting to enter the reflective phase as they approach graduation. Some juniors are starting to think about college applications (several have already asked Dr. Chisum about writing recommendations). For sophomores, the anxiety about junior year is starting to hit. And freshmen are happy to no longer be the new kids.
- The final day of school is 6/12. Make-up day is 6/13, and teachers are done on 6/14.

- Dr. Chisum's advisory group is graduating this year, which is bittersweet; he is looking forward to meeting his new 9th-grade advisory group in the fall.
- Yesterday, we welcomed Dudley, WHS's new facility dog, who will be at school three days per cycle (in the Bridge program). All students are welcome to come by and see Dudley.

School Committee Update

- Niki Ofenloch provided an update on some current topics before the School Committee.
- School Calendar Task Force: the second task force meeting recently took place, and there are 28 task force members. Between now and the next WPS calendar vote in November 2024, the task force will provide a report to establish a policy on how WPS evaluates current holidays and proposed additions. Their work will include due diligence on how neighboring towns are handling similar questions.
- Other focused teams include the Preschool Task Force and the Early Literacy Committee. A brief update on the elementary METCO program was also provided.

Open Discussion: Internet safety and social media usage among teens

- Recently, several parents asked the PTSO for information and/or guidance on navigating tech and social media challenges with high school students.
- Vice Principal Drew Kelton talked about some of the challenges he sees among students, including online bullying. From fake social media accounts being created to escalating insults among friends over text chains, Mr. Kelton noted how quickly things can get out of hand. He advised that students share information and involve others—that includes teachers, other school members, parents, etc.
- Mr. Kelton also noted that kids video everything—in class they video teachers, classmates, etc., often crossing legal boundaries. If a student posts an unflattering video of someone in a group chat and makes an unflattering comment, it automatically meets the definition of cyberbullying because sending it to multiple recipients is considered repeated behavior.
- With online bullying, Mr. Kelton may advise parents to go to the Wellesley police because they have the ability to access information that WHS cannot.
- WHS has worked hard towards a restorative approach since kids may be in the same class for four years. There is an emphasis on healing and restorative measures so students can at least coexist. It takes a partnership with parents.
- There has been a lot of focus on learning loss during Covid. Mr. Kelton said he is also seeing a loss of social and studentship skills (executive functioning).
- There was a question asked about WHS's policy on phones. Phones should not be out in class unless the teacher has given permission. Some teachers have students put phones in over-the-door holders when they come into class; the challenge is that students can access accounts on their laptops.
- There was a brief discussion about the "Wait Till 8" campaign and family screen rules.

Adjourned at 11:32 am

**Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Turner, PTSO Secretary**