

**WEST END SECONDARY SCHOOL PARENT ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

November 20, 2023

Agenda

- Introduction of complete EB
- Presidents' Message
- WESS School update
- Treasurers' Report
- Upcoming Events
- WESS Cares
- Teacher Appreciation
- Parent Education
- Updates from EB members

I. Call to Order

Co-President Rebecca Weel called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

In attendance: Rebecca Weel, Matt Merdinger, Rachel Polimeni, Sheri Wilson, Laurie Marshall, Max Alvarez, Jill Gabin, Karen Cape, Jason Benowitz, Samantha Alvarez Benowitz, Jennifer Richey, Liz Sorem, Karyn Gooden, Trisha Bechard and Barry (Elain) Waldman.

II. President's Update

Brief introduction for each member of the now complete WESS PA Executive Board for 2023-4. The WESS Spring Benefit (formerly known as the Auction), has a confirmed date on Friday, April 5 at The Hudson.

We will be launching the Book Club with Ami Kantawala, who is a Teacher's college professor. She will lead the club and discussion. The first date will be Tuesday, December 13 at 9:30AM at WESS' cafeteria. This update will be shared in the upcoming PA newsletter.

Chancellor Banks is coming to D3 at the Joan of Arc building in the auditorium and would like our executive board to attend the meeting. It's our chance to advocate with the Chancellor, Karyn will be in attendance as well. There will be 3 student performances.

Updates from Karyn Gooden:

- College March info went out today
- The 10th grade trip to Costa Rica application has gone out
- 9th grade application has gone out for Grand Canyon

- 38 spots available in each trip
- Application process consists of two key factors:
 - Habits of work
 - Essay explaining why a student wants to go on the trip

Next PA Meeting will be at WESS in person on November 28 at 9AM

- Speaker from Take 2 Film will discuss navigating the internet, Chat GPT and relationship with Tech

Samantha raised over \$28,000 for the High School robotics program (9th and 10th graders) at WESS from various grants. Still need another \$10,000 for this year to fulfill all program needs. There are a couple of grants still outstanding. The Robotics coach (Noah) costs \$22,000/year which is the biggest cost. Supplies will be reused in future years.

Rebecca pointed out that current middle schoolers in the after school LEGO Robotics class have a different coach with less enthusiasm and not as strong. Kids tend to be on their phones for a lot of the class, in part because they don't have them during the school day..

Also very impressed with the Robotics fundraising done to date, so would love for Robotics fundraising to also push for general WESS PA support/fund.

Karyn confirmed will be doing a gift drive for kids in temporary housing given its success last year.

Karyn shared that 6th Grade parents had 100 parents attending the POL. Great success!

Sheri owns a few restaurants in Harlem and would love to get involved in using her restaurants to help fundraise for the school. She suggested a group brainstorm ideas for future events like trivia night, bingos, karaoke, etc. Winter timing on Tues-Thurs works well in the heated tent. (i.e. Rowhouse, etc)

III. Treasurer Report

\$1,150 received in Family Giving to date.

\$2,800 revenue generated from Cabaret Night this year, compared to \$3,800 generated last year.

Some expenses for coffee chats. Expenses for sports fees but funds will be coming in to cover those fees. Track uniforms are being covered by PA, but most if not all costs will be fulfilled by funds raised by the students and dues.

\$1,918.48 in interest generated.

Discussion on when to start Family Giving: We will launch a family giving campaign next week, although we've had a tradition of doing it in February.

Jason mentioned he knows someone for a potential Financial Literacy session for the high school students. Would like to connect her to the right contacts at WESS to coordinate future sessions. Karyn mentioned The Life Essentials Club would be ideal for this type of session. Some of these topics are covered in the non-AP economics class, but can also consider spreading the curriculum more broadly.

Rebecca welcomes suggestions of future speakers to join our PA meetings that might be of interest to the parent body as long as affordable rates.

IV. Diversity and Inclusion Update

Building on last year's success, Rebecca and Karyn approved the **Food Festival** date is set for Saturday, March 2 2024. This is an initiative by Samantha and Ashuaria to bring the WESS community together to share each other's culture. This year, we would like to add entertainment provided by the kids and teachers in addition to food. Last year, it served as a way to promote the upcoming auction as well. Largest club we associated with was the Black Student Union. Will get the word out soon to save the date, planning meetings will begin in January.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Waldman, Recording Secretary