

**WEST END SECONDARY SCHOOL PARENT ASSOCIATION**  
227 WEST 61<sup>ST</sup> STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10023  
WESSPA.ORG

**PA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**

November 28, 2023  
9:00 AM In Person

**I. Opening**

Co-President, Rebecca Weel called the meeting to order at 9:09 am. There were approximately 30 participants in person.

**Agenda**

- Media Literacy and AI by Take Two Films Academy
- Approve October Minutes
- Presidents' Update
- Treasurer's Report

**II. Take Two Film Academy - Media Literacy and AI**

Started as a film school for kids. It now works in schools and has a curriculum developed all over the city. Take Two is currently doing a residency with 8th grade students on their Legacy POL. Take Two is also partnered with Tribeca Film Festival. Megan Kiefer is the founder.

Trying to figure out how to interact with AI. What are the beneficial ways of dealing with it and those that are not beneficial. Justin Harris spoke about the history of radio ads promoting snake oils and the need to validate claims. Many people bought those snake oils and some died.

AI is always a people pleaser. It wants to give you the shortest, easiest answers to please you. The more detailed the prompt, the more detailed export you will get. Algorithms will continue to offer content as users explore more of the prompts. There are positives to this, such as finding music and identifying similar artists.

Students don't know a world without smartphones. 45 minutes can go by very quickly. Compared to reading a book or watching a movie, students may not get to the good parts fast enough and be frustrated.

NOMO-phobia - It is a condition where we may interact with something boring, we reach in our pockets for our smartphones. That is not good as a lot of creativity comes from being bored and gives time for self-reflection.

Take Two works on narrative and documentary films. Students are shocked when they have to do multiple drafts.

Danger of rabbit holes. There is a podcast from the New York Times by Caleb Kane that discusses rabbit holes. The podcast shows how you can algorithm design and keep viewers engaged for as long as possible. It explains how this played a significant role in a change journey from a mild Obama supporter to adopt racist far right conspiracies.

How can we counter this? We can set limits on our phones to limit the amount of time on each app. Tracker on iPhone will also identify screen time for the day and week. Justin suggested watching The Social Dilemma on Netflix.

Need to make students aware of how algorithms work. Justin also suggested planning for detox time from electronic times. That may include limiting Spotify, and using CDs or vinyls. Family activity options that are non-electronic include baking, doing puzzles and playing board games.

Teachers have asked Justin how to tell if students are using generative AI such as ChatGPT for their papers. Papers can be written from the perspective of a 7th grader. It uses natural language to teach us things and talk to us.

Justin showed an AI-generated photo of the Pope in a ski jacket that is not real. If you see images that are not real, you can reverse image search to see if it is real. He also shared an AI-generated voice of his, then had an AI algorithm clone it with Lynne's voice. It created a believable "fake" message from Lynne. Laurie explained how she has seen phone number masking in the legal trademark fields. Real time face conversion can be done as well too.

Question was asked about the efficacy of deleting cookies when doing searches. Justin suggested deleting history and cookies in different apps such as Tik Tok and browsers. YouTube is older and better at dealing with users reporting inappropriate content. Newer and less regulated apps, such as Tik Tok are not.

Social Media Transparency Act is a reporting law that is under consideration in New York State legislative assemblies. There are opportunities for advocacy to help get this legislation passed.

Parents asked if Take Two could do some AI and social media safety training. School and PA will discuss. M3GAN movie came out in the last year or so, called Megan about the reaction of a teen when an AI doll is taken away. The scene can probably be found online.

Question was asked if AI is storing phone numbers and social security numbers. Justin suggested that might be from past purchases and to be sure to read the fine print on what data that sites are retaining.

Take Two Media Initiative has articles on social media resources.

## **II. Treasurer's Report**

Jason highlighted changes from the last meeting. Cabaret profits will be \$2600 after paying the last vendor. Two field trips were paid for, but one was reimbursed by the school. Some additional coffee chats were done under hospitality. There was some outlay for track uniforms. That will be offset by fundraising. Funds have been collected from grants for the Robotics Team. Two payments were done from the general operating fund, one to our accountant.

Treasurers can be reached at [patreasurer@westendsecondary.com](mailto:patreasurer@westendsecondary.com) with any questions.

## **III. President's Report**

Samantha Benowitz and her team have led a successful effort to raise money for the Robotics Team.

Parents will receive a note today about Family Giving, since today is Family Giving Tuesday. "And so every dollar that you donate to the Parent Association goes directly to supporting all of the wonderful initiatives we have in the school, enriching the curriculum, beautifying the building, making sure that teachers have all the supplies and the support they need so that you can respond to the letter and look forward to hearing from you."

October PA meeting minutes were approved.

The WESS Book Club is being launched by Ami Kantawala on Tuesday, December 12. Ami is a professor at Columbia Teachers College. It will be 9:30-10:30 in the morning. First book will be Angela Duckworth's "Grit".

The WESS Food Festival will be on March 2, 12-3. It will be the second annual event. It's a collaboration between BSU, PA, SLT and school.

The date for the Spring Benefit will be Friday, April 5 at the Hudson from 7-10pm.

PA presidents can be reached at [papresidents@westendsecondary.com](mailto:papresidents@westendsecondary.com)

## **IV. Principal's Report**

Jessica discussed challenges with foreign languages. Coaches are working with the middle school foreign language teacher. There has been improvement in classroom management but they continue to work with developing skills with a new teacher who believes in the growth mindset and is willing to improve. The team will address concerns brought up about communication during the PA meeting. Joe Rodriguez, Assistant Principal, addressed the hiring of a new AP Spanish Teacher and expected to hire an in person classroom teacher for 10th grade Spanish in the next couple days, having just met with an excellent candidate. The class will focus on ensuring students can meet the LOTE Checkpoint B requirements.

**V. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:31a.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Barry G. Waldman  
Barry G. Waldman, Recording Secretary