

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

**PA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**

September 28, 2023  
9:00 AM In-Person

**I. Opening**

Co-President, Rebecca Weel called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. There were approximately 54 participants in person.

**Agenda**

- Presidents' Update
- Principal's Message
- Treasurer's Report
- Approve June Minutes
- Introduction of Exec 2023-204 Board Members
- Plan for 2023-2024
- Questions

June PA meeting minutes were approved.

**II. President's Report**

Vice principals, PA Presidents and Karyn Gooden introduced themselves

Cabaret Night is scheduled for November 15 at the Triad Theater. Comedians, pianists and performers entertain WESS parents. It is one of the earliest fundraisers of the year.

Parent socials and education nights are being planned. Ami Kantawala, a parent and professor, will be hosting a monthly book club. Other planned activities include Teens and Technology and Discussion Panels.

The second annual WESS FoodFest is planned for this year. It is a collaboration of PA VPs of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Student Leaders, SLT Teachers and Administration.

WESS Benefit is planned for the spring.

WESS Boosters - Already exists for sports and now being rolled out for the arts. Last year we had the first WESS Arts Night. Erica Johnson will be leading the Arts Boosters.

Middle School Student Grade Socials will be planned for the year.

Fundraising for the school is filtered back into the school and classrooms to support field work, lab work, art supplies, musical instruments, passages, intensives, professional development and more.

Volunteers are always welcome. Looking for 6th grade and High School representatives. Elections will be held during the October PA meeting. Up to three 6th grade parents and two HS parents.

Help is requested to help plan the WESS Spring Benefit.

WESS Cares - During the school year there are charitable drives and social action.

Teacher Appreciation Team - There have been meals, coffees, massages. Parents are encouraged to volunteer.

The PA issues a monthly newsletter and will be re-launching a WESS PA website.

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

### **III. Treasurer's Report**

Plan to raise approximately \$200,000, similar to last year. Family Giving is about half of that amount. The year runs from July 1-June 30. Some funds came in over the summer as some parents do monthly contributions. Parents should explore if their companies do fund matching.

Deposits have been made for 8th and 12th grade passages/graduations. Some expenses were spent on the school greenhouse, including the services. Ideally, there would be a grant for that. Parents with grant writing skills are encouraged to participate.

Some funds are allocated for teacher professional development over the summer.

Dues for high school sports are \$55. Costs typically even out over the course of the year. PA covers those that cannot afford the fee.

PA funds were moved to more interest-bearing accounts over the summer. This has already resulted in interest revenue.

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

### **IV. Introduction of Exec 2023-204 Board Members**

Board members that were present gave short introductions. Karen Cape, Communications Secretary, explained the importance and usage of the Membership Toolkit. It is very important to update the Blue Card info first and then Membership Toolkit (PA Directory). Sixth grade families will be uploaded to the Toolkit this week. A new PA website will be debuting in the next week.

Co-Presidents - Yvette Russell and Rebecca Weel  
Co-Treasurers - Jason Benowitz and Trish Bechard  
Vice President of High School - Jill Gabin  
Vice President of Middle School - Jennifer Richey  
Vice President at Large - Max Alvarez  
Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Aishwarya Kumar and Samantha Benowitz  
Communications Secretary - Karen Cape  
Recording Secretary - Barry Waldman  
6th Grade Representatives (through October election) - Galia Galansky and Erica Johnson  
High School representative (through October election) - Liz Sorem

#### **V. Principal's Report**

Jessica Jenkins spoke about how the school has evolved in its 9th year and is a well-oiled machine. WESS was opened initially with only the 6th grade and a grade was added each year. Back to School Night will be held over Zoom based on DOE and teacher union rules.

Administration is looking for dates where parents can come into their childrens' classrooms to see classes in action.

School is applying to be a nationally recognized school for EL (Expeditionary Learning). Schools can apply to be credentialed every 5 years. We could not apply until WESS was fully at scale.

High school Spanish teacher re-hiring is being held up in the process with the state. ILearn, an online Spanish course offered by the DOE is being used to teach students virtually right now.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am..

Respectfully submitted,

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