

Walt Whitman High School
PTSA Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2010

Welcome

PTSA Co-President Sue Kanter welcomed everyone.

Approval of November Minutes

The Minutes from the November meeting were approved.

Student Government Report (SGA)

Aaron Schifrin, SGA president, provided the report. February is **Leukemia & Lymphoma** month at Whitman and several fundraisers are planned during this time, including:

- A **Guy Auction** in which junior and senior boys will be auctioned off for dates
- The **Pennies for Patients** coin collection
- A **Battle of the Beards** event in which teachers shave and design their beards and kids make donations to the cause
- Bake sales**

This year is particularly special because Whitman freshman Tim King is battling Leukemia. He is the “**High School Hero**” for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and there will be wristbands that say “**Tim’s Team**” sold at Whitman.

There are also fundraisers going on to benefit **Haitian relief efforts**, including jars in classrooms for students to make donations.

Principal’s Report

Dr. Goodwin began his report with praise for Aaron Schifrin for doing a fine job as SGA president and by commenting that the December choral concert was excellent.

The Instrumental Music concert, which was rescheduled because of snow, will take place on Jan. 26.

January has been a busy month at Whitman: Several well-known journalists including Gwen Ifill have talked to students in Social Studies and English classes and answered student’s questions. Korean students from Seoul High School spent time at Whitman. Mr. Sonnabend held a videoconference with a school in Denmark .

The Whitman Educational Foundation did well in its fall fundraising and was able to give money for students going to Korea as well as for additional Promethean Boards.

In sports, the girls’ swim team is having an outstanding season. The boys and girls’ basketball teams, the wrestling team, and the boys swim team are also doing well.

There have been sportsmanship problems at some recent basketball and ice hockey games, including a fight that broke out at B-CC after the Whitman boy's team defeated B-CC, with some students getting bruised cheeks and fat lips but no one seriously injured. B-CC suspended some students afterwards. As a result of these altercations and name calling, Dr. Goodwin sent out a Whitnet message describing the problem and reiterating the need for good sportsmanship. There will also be extra security at the home basketball game against B-CC on Friday Jan. 29th.

In sad news, two Whitman dads died recently, as did a student who graduated in 2004.

Exam period ends on Thursday, and the new semester begins next Tuesday, Jan. 26th.

Presidents' Report

Vicky Strella gave the report. There were two well-attended Networking Nights in late fall, one for parents of 9th graders and the other for parents of 11th graders. Both those grade levels will have one additional Networking Night in the spring. The 12th Grade Networking Night, which is scheduled for Feb. 22nd, will focus on Beach Week and alternatives to that annual tradition.

There will be a Book Talk right after the March 16th PTSA meeting. The book to be discussed is *The Good Enough Teen* by Brad Sachs.

Dr. Goodwin was congratulated for being featured in Bethesda Magazine as Best Public High School Principal.

The Whitman cluster will be giving testimony to the Board of Education on the Operating Budget for 2010 on Wednesday Jan. 20th.

T-Mobile is continuing to go through the process of proposing to replace an existing Whitman baseball field light with a new pole in which T-Mobile cell antennas would be placed. There is no decision yet by any entity on this proposal. After the Whitman PTSA meeting on November 17th, T-Mobile made a presentation about their proposal. About 50 people attended the meeting and there was a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages, with several questions raised about the possible health impacts. The primary advantages are getting better cell service for administrators and teachers in the building, and getting funds for the school: T-Mobile will pay \$24,000 per year in order to have the cell tower in that location with one-third of that money going to Whitman, one-third to MCPS, and one-third to Whitman cluster schools.

The PTSA has sent Whitnet and Whitcom messages that alert people that information about the proposal is available on the school's website and that anyone can send comments about it to whitmanmdptsa@yahoo.com. To date few comments have been received, though a few people have written in with strong opinions on both sides of this issue. On February 10th T-Mobile will host a Community Open House at Whitman from 7 to 8:30 PM. Anyone is welcome. At the February 16th PTSA meeting the community could decide to weigh in on the proposal, probably in the form of a vote, and the PTSA

would submit a recommendation about it. The PTSA's role is to provide an open, balanced and informed process that allows for a fair expression of the desires of the community on this controversial issue.

A question was asked about where funds from T-Mobile would go if the tower is built and Dr. Goodwin responded that no decision has been made about that yet.

Speaker: Shirley Brandman, Member At-Large Member, MCPS Board of Education

Sue Kanter introduced Shirley Brandman as a Board of Education member who was a former PTA president at Burning Tree and activist in MCCPTA before being elected to the Board of Education about three and a half years ago.

Brandman then spoke about how all the Board members are elected countywide, which she said reinforces the message that they represent all children in the county – about 140,000 students in about 200 schools. She said it's both an honor and a challenge to be in this role.

She discussed how it's now budget season for the Board, which will take a vote on the budget in February. This season is unusual, she said, because a lot of the fiscal story is still unrolling. There may be a revisiting of the budget between the times of the vote in February and when the County Council passes its budget in May.

The "low hanging fruit" is already gone, meaning anything that is relatively easy to cut from the budget has been cut, Brandman explained. So the Board is trying to really listen carefully and is not in an enviable position this year. No one wants quality of education to be cut, and local governments are required by state law to keep the level of per pupil funding level at a "Maintenance of Effort" level to ensure that quality is not reduced. The Superintendent has put out some ideas about where there could be reductions in the budget if the County fails to fund a maintenance of effort budget. The Board will look closely at those.

Comments and suggestions about possible budget cuts from parents and others in the community are also welcome. At this point everything is on the table. Increasing class size by one student is on the list of potential reductions and is receiving much attention. The Board will not be voting on this in February but will have to come back and examine the issue again if their Maintenance of Effort budget is not funded.

The legislature is now also in session and the Board's adopted legislative platform includes support for raising the compulsory age of attendance. Board members are working with our delegation in Annapolis to raise the compulsory age of attendance in school from 16 to a higher age. It is already at 17 or 18 in 25 other states.

There was a question about substitute teachers that Brandman deferred to Dr. Goodwin to answer because she said the Board rarely deals with that issue. Dr. Goodwin said that Whitman has a cadre of repeat substitutes but that finding good subs is an ongoing challenge. There was also a question about overcrowding at Wood Acres and Brandman suggested that people concerned about that talk to the principal or contact the MCPS demographer.

Membership Report

Sharron Brossi (sp?), Membership VP, reported on the total number of members to date. She said that \$36,715 has been collected in dues from parents, students, and teachers (about 920 families, 386 students, 45 teachers). The 2 co-presidents said they are very pleased with the hard work done by the membership vice-presidents.

Treasurer's Report – See attached sheet

Sheila Duncan Peters, PTSA Treasurer, reported on income and expenses – see attached treasurer's report for details.

Volunteer Report

Susan Scholl reported that Festival of the Arts, one of Whitman's biggest annual events, still lacks a chairperson even though committee chairs are in place. The chairperson needs to pull it all together for this late May event (scheduled for May 26th and 27th) to be a success as it has been in the past.

PTSA Committee Reports

Post Prom

Post-Prom chair Jody Green reported that all committee chair positions have been filled but worker bees are still needed for this event that takes place immediately after the Prom. Also still needed are raffle prizes and cash donations.

A performance by the Capital Steps on February 28th has been lined up as a fundraising event for Post-Prom. Some parents and kids are needed to work on the production that night.

The Post-Prom theme for this year is "Whitman 2010 Games." It's a sports-oriented theme. There will be a parent meeting about this and other events for seniors on February 1st.

Teen Lifeskills Session

Jeannette Siegel, parent of a senior daughter and sophomore son, presented the idea to have a series of sessions that each focus on a different life skill, such as self-defense, car maintenance, CPR, and personal finance. Each session would be taught by a different vendor, and total cost might run somewhere around \$400. Several parents liked the idea but suggested that parents be able to pick sessions a la carte rather than have to pay for all

of them. No dates have been scheduled yet for these sessions and more parent input is welcome.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rebecca Kahlenberg, co-Recording Secretary

Walt Whitman PTSA Treasurer's Report
July 1, 2009 through January 18, 2010

	Year to Date	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Income			
Cash on Hand	3,213.31	3,500.00	(286.69)
Dues and Contributions			
Contributions	0.00	11,000.00	(11,000.00)
Family Membership	0.00	20,000.00	(20,000.00)
Student Membership	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
Teacher Membership	0.00	100.00	(100.00)
Dues and Contributions - Other	30,519.46		
Total Dues and Contributions	30,519.46	32,100.00	(1,580.54)
Interest	3.83	5.00	(1.17)
Total Income	33,736.60	35,605.00	(1,868.40)
Expense			
Administration	0.00	100.00	(100.00)
Bank Service Charges	143.55	75.00	67.55
Building Appearance & Security	2,300.00	2,800.00	(500.00)
Dues to County, State PTA	2,405.25	4,400.00	(1,994.75)
Guidance Advisory Committee	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
Insurance (Liability)	179.00	200.00	(21.00)
Intercultural	0.00	100.00	(100.00)
Library Book Fund Media Center	0.00	800.00	(800.00)
Membership	63.04	250.00	(186.96)
Networking	526.20	150.00	376.20
Newcomers	96.82	400.00	(303.18)
Newsletter Printing	1,313.09	3,000.00	(1,686.91)
One Time Grants	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
Organizational Gifts	98.77	500.00	(401.23)
Post Prom	0.00		
Postage	162.37	1,500.00	(1,337.63)
Principal's Fund	0.00	5,000.00	(5,000.00)
Professional Enhancement Grants	150.00	2,000.00	(1,850.00)
Program & Classroom Grants	150.00	1,000.00	(850.00)
PTSA Presidents Fund	170.00	300.00	(130.00)

Staff Appreciation			
End of Year Luncheon	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)
Staff Appreciation - Other	402.97	1,300.00	(897.03)
Total Staff Appreciation	<u>402.97</u>	<u>3,800.00</u>	<u>(3,397.03)</u>
Student Activities	150.00	500.00	(350.00)
Technology	0.00	1,500.00	(1,500.00)
Welcome to Whitman	0.00	700.00	(700.00)
Total Expense	<u>8,311.06</u>	<u>31,075.00</u>	<u>(22,763.94)</u>
 Net Income	 <u>25,425.54</u>	 <u>4,530.00</u>	 <u>20,895.54</u>