

Walt Whitman High School PTSA Minutes
October 21, 2008

Draft Minutes

Welcome

PTSA Co-Presidents, Vicky Strella and Sue Kanter, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Principal's Report

Dr. Goodwin reported that Homecoming Week is in full swing with Battle of the Classes tonight, the Homecoming Football Game on Friday night and Homecoming Dance on Saturday night. He reiterated his message that we need to be diligent and work with our kids to help keep them safe. There have been announcements about drugs and alcohol during the week leading up to the dance. He reinforced the role of parents. He recommends that whenever possible parents drive to and from events. Some families consider limos to be a great convenience because parents aren't involved and kids love them but some students consider limos to be safe havens for illegal substances. It is not enough to have the driver do a sweep when the kids first enter. Kids have brought alcohol into a limo after having dinner at restaurants in the past. Be diligent and work with the limo driver to check more than once. He related that just earlier this evening at Battle of the Classes a student arrived appearing to be drunk. As is protocol, the student was escorted to the Main Office by Security Officers and the police were called. When they arrive, police will administer a breathalyzer. He can't stress strongly enough the need for parents to be vigilant and to use common sense. Earlier in the month, at a home where the parents had been travelling for a few weeks, 23 students were cited for drinking at a party. At Whitman, the penalty for substance use is very stiff because of the Zero Tolerance policy instituted by former principal, Dr. Marco. The policy dictates that a student may not participate in any after school activities for 365 days from date of infraction. This includes varsity sports, Homecoming Dance, Prom, and Graduation. If approved by Dr. Goodwin, a student can serve 100 hours of community service and shorten the year long probation period to 6 months.

Notwithstanding the need to be vigilant, there are always great things happening at Whitman. This week alone, The Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Seminar which sponsors future leaders from 21 countries will be visiting Whitman NSL classes, a Video conference will take place between students from Whitman and High School 57 in Beijing in the TV Studio, and 15 British exchange students will be visiting through a program established when Mr. Mathis was in England on his Fulbright Scholarship.

There are Budget concerns due to the economy but he doesn't anticipate a diminished experience for the students. The teachers will probably not see the usual cost of living increase but teachers with less than 20 years of experience will still see an increase in pay. The County will not replace retiring teachers but the goal is to avoid furloughs that

neighboring counties are experiencing. There will be a minimal increase in class size but as always the administration will work to keep class size to a minimum.

There will probably be fewer class fees collected next year because of concerns raised in the County due to fairness and legality. This change will result in fewer workbooks, etc available through school to students.

Whitman is the beneficiary of 59 Promethean Boards from a federal grant. Dr. Goodwin acknowledged a generational gap in aptitude for technology. All teachers have training in early November. Hopefully, students and teachers alike will be using them to their fullest potential in the very near future.

Treasurer's Report

Janice Mehler presented the Report.

President's Report

Co-Presidents thanked Viking Voice volunteers: Elizabeth Seibel and Vicki Dorman; Welcome to Whitman Clubs Night volunteers: Joan Wolf and Judy Brooks; and Directory volunteers: Peg Jobst and Pat Macy, for jobs well done. Directories were distributed differently this year since we can no longer make them available as early as Back to School Night. Prepaid directories are available for pickup in the Main Office. Directories can be purchased in the School Store. PTSA Board and the Senior Class reps will work together to create a more efficient system for future purchase and distribution.

Minutes

Minutes were presented. A motion was made to approve, a motion was made to second and a vote to approve unanimously followed. The Secretary's goal is to get draft minutes posted within a week of PTSA meetings.

Special Presentation

Kenneth Hartman, Director of Youth and Teen Program Initiatives from the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, was introduced. He serves as a liaison between County Executive and Business Community in the Bethesda Chevy Chase area. The primary purpose of the Initiative is to create a healthy environment for teens by providing great activities and internships. He became involved through Positive Youth Development which promotes after school activities for teens. They are developing a Facebook page to post information about teen activities as well as public areas in the community deemed problem spots for teens. Two such trouble spots are the plaza above the Old Georgetown Road Chipotle and Elm Street park behind Modell's. These areas have become hangouts for teens after school and late into the evening. Both of these parks are under police surveillance on Friday and Saturday nights due to increased presence of alcohol and drug use. Arrests have been made of adults and teens alike.

Hartman has been tasked with getting input from local groups : Recreation Centers, Bethesda Urban Partnership, Library, Bethesda Cares, and the Homeless Coalition, local high schools: Whitman, BCC, and Walter Johnson, and Police to keep kids involved in positive activities. The first Positive Youth Development Forum will be held on November 13th. Doug Acker, SGA President, will be participating in the Forum. Check out their website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/bcc for more information.

PTSA Committee Reports

Stressbusters. Anne Hollander 1) reminded everyone about the upcoming Lloyd Thacker presentation. Lloyd Thacker is the author of College Unranked and a founding member of The Education Conservancy, a non-profit organization committed to improving the college admission process. Notes from the Lloyd Thacker talk will be posted on the website. 2) There are 19 Tip Sheets currently available to parents on topics relevant to high school aged kids including: #14 Drugs and Alcohol and #10 Homecoming which were available at the meeting. Tip sheets can be picked up in Guidance or they can be accessed on the Whitman website under Counseling. Ideas for new tip sheets are welcome. 3) Parent volunteers are still needed to help with after school clubs either as leaders or as subs when the teacher sponsor isn't available. If you would like to volunteer or want further information please contact Bekki Simms at bboo730@aol.com.

Membership

Jay Kaufman reported that membership is down from last year by 1/3 which leaves the PTSA with a \$13,000 budget shortfall. He will continue to advertise to get new members. Economy and problem with summer mailing contribute to the shortfall.

Volunteers

Karen Clarkson reported that Post Prom is now fully staffed with 3 Co-Chairs: Monica Meade, Valerie Price and Brenda Zimmerman.

Networking Committee

10/27 Junior Class "Teens and Money" Media Center 7:30pm
11/6 Freshmen Class Media Center 7:30pm

New Business

Although not a PTSA sponsored event, Co-Presidents thanked Dr. Jill Captain for providing flu shots to families before the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle McHugh, Recording Secretary