



**Westlake High School  
General PTO Meeting Minutes  
October 14, 2016**

- A. **Call Meeting to Order**—Kara Guess called the meeting to order at 12:00pm.
- B. **Approval of September 2016 Minutes**— Liza Savage made a motion to approve the minutes from the September general meeting. Debbie Preston seconded the motion. Minutes approved as posted on the WHS PTO website for September 2016 meeting.
- C. **Special Guest Reports** – Eanes Education Foundation co-chair Lynn McFarland and Eanes ISD Superintendent Dr. Tom Leonard.

Eanes Education Foundation – co-chair Lynn McFarland

- EEF fundraising campaign began October 1, 2016 with a goal of funding 50 teacher/staff positions district-wide next school year.
- EEF currently funds 13 positions at Westlake High School. EEF participation from Westlake High School families averages about 20% - EEF hopes to increase this percentage,
- Ms. McFarland noted that every donation helps and wants to dispel the myth that donations need to be in large amounts.
- Online donations can be made at [eaneseducationfoundation.org](http://eaneseducationfoundation.org).

State of the District 2016 presentation - Superintendent Dr. Tom Leonard

- Dr. Leonard presented the “condensed” version of the State of the District presentation made to the Board of Trustees. The entire presentation, as well as the Powerpoint used, will be available on the district website.
- Dr. Leonard explained that the critical elements of an effective school district include staff, reasonable class sizes, programs, facilities and budget. His presentation addresses these elements within three sections: 1) highlights; 2) updates; and 3) focus.
- Highlights:
  1. Westlake students continue to achieve higher than average ACT/SAT scores. 2016 PSAT scores for Westlake students reflected 28 national merit semi-finalists, 59 commended scores and 10 Hispanic recognition recipients. Westlake students’ performances are comparable with other high-level high schools.
  2. State of Texas performance index scores for Westlake High School and the Eanes school district are within the top four high schools and districts.
  3. Westlake won the 2016 Lonestar Cup for the first time since 2001. The Lonestar Cup takes into account the school’s performance in multiple areas, including athletics, band, debate, UIL scholastic competitions, etc.



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4. 99% of Westlake's 2016 graduating class were accepted directly into college. 78% of the class planned to enroll in a four-year college, 12% planned to enter into a two-year college and 10% had alternative plans, such as entering the armed forces, taking a gap year, etc. It was noted that gap years are becoming more common and are viewed as a healthy option. The class received \$20.5 million in financial awards for college.
  5. 63 teachers have received their Masters degrees through the PTEP program funded by the EEF.
- Updates:
    1. The district budget shortfall was reduced more than expected due to several factors including lower expenses and higher tax collections. However, the amount of taxes sent to other school districts through the Texas Legislature recapture system increases annually. In 2014, Eanes sent \$62.5 million into the recapture system; by 2016, the amount increased to \$82 million. The district tax rate could be cut significantly if recapture was not required. Refusing to send tax collections into the system would not change the result, as the TEA can re-assign portions of the district's tax base properties to other districts. EEF helps significantly by funding teacher positions.
    2. The district's population is growing at 1-2% annually. The high school's population saw a large increase in 2016. The numbers of transfers into the district have been decreased. The number of classes with 30 or more students have decreased.
    3. The recent bond proposal passed with a 65% voter approval. Bond expenditures for the high school include among other things expanded robotics program and facilities, roofing issues and parking expansion. Bond details can be found at <http://www.eanesbond.com/index.html>.
    4. The district is expanding its legislative agenda for more advocacy with legislative representatives.
  - Focus:
    1. The district is constantly considering new ideas for coursework. Ideas being considered include language immersion beginning in kindergarten and culinary arts such as aquaponics, farm-to-table sustainability. A group is being formed to study other programs at other schools and provide recommendations. The new Business Incubator program at Westlake High School is an example of the innovation focus, with local volunteers teaching business and entrepreneurial skills to students who will present ideas for funding.
    2. The district wants to establish a guaranteed viable curriculum whereby the curriculum for all grades include aspects of social and emotional learning, written and oral communications, and embedded technology.



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Social and emotional learning (SEL) addresses self and social awareness, responsible decision making, collaboration, empathy and compassion and grit and resiliency. Communications would include vertical and horizontal aligned curriculum focused on writing skills.

3. Operations improvements will always be a focus, requiring constant evaluation of facilities, demographics, fundraising and other areas needed to meet the needs of the district as it continues to grow. The district is applying to be a District of Innovation, which will allow for more local control of certain things (like teacher certifications) and exemptions from state requirements.

D. **WHS Principal's Report**— Within Dr. Leonard's presentation, Principal Steve Ramsey reported on the school's ongoing initiative to improve the quality of life for students, with a focus on daily experiences, reduction of stress, and responsiveness to concerns as raised, including safety concerns. The school wants students to feel empowered to talk with their teachers on a regular basis.

E. **PTO Presidents' Report**- Kristin Paull was absent due to conflicting district obligations. Kara Guess deferred to the Treasurer given time constraints.

F. **Treasurer's Report** – Gayle Starnes provided the attached report and confirmed that PTO funding is doing well and is above budget to date.

G. **Counseling office** – no report.

H. **Student Council Report** - no report.

I. **Committee Reports:** Committee reports were deferred due to time constraints, except as follows:

- **Mums:** Kathy Elswich reported that the deadline to order mums on line was extended to October 17, 2016.

**Meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.**