



Westlake High School

General PTO Meeting

September 25, 2015 Minutes

- A. **Call Meeting to Order**—Reesa Thorne called meeting to order at 12:04pm.
- B. **Approval of May 2015 Minutes**— Karen Meyer made a motion to approve minutes. Cammi Crawford 2nd the motion. Minutes approved as posted on the WHS PTO website for May 2015 meeting.
- C. **Department Chair Reports –**
- Part I:** Heidi Sauer; Lead Counselor, covered the following key topics of interest:
- a) An overview of the key services provided by the Counseling Office:
 - Responsive Services- drop ins, stress management, peer relations, and personal issues
 - Individual Planning- goal setting, future college planning and schedules
 - Guidance Curriculum- provided in small and large groups, social and academic topics, peers and support groups, teen teachers
 - System Support – support to teachers, staff, parents, community and professional development
 - b) There are several “seasons” for the counseling office: start of school, college applications, course selections, AP testing, “rescue” plans/graduation support. In between are the quieter times when they have more time to process the day to day workload
 - c) Primary ways to meet with the counseling office: drop in lunch or before/after school, fill out request form to be called from class, send email asking for a pass, appointments are not required but preferable. If a parent wants the counselor to talk to your student you can contact them ask for this.
 - d) Key items the counseling office wanted parents to know:
 - Email is the best way to contact them
 - Don’t listen to what ‘everyone else is doing’, you need to decide what is right for your child
 - If you have a question about WHS and don’t know where to start, they are a good place to ask
 - Their goal: students being independent thinkers and self advocates
 - They value parent involvement and support
 - High school is a safe place to “fail” so consider this before rushing to “save”
 - There are 7 guidance **counselors**, divided up by alphabet (please refer to the WHS website for how split). There are also support counselors and interventionists and The Learning Center (see next department presentation below).
- Part II:** Renee Field; The Learning Center: Shared information on The Learning Center which is located across the street from the Westbank WHS campus entrance:
- It has been around for 23 years and is a great alternative campus by choice (e.g. kids are not sent there)
 - Diverse set of students: athletes, musicians, artists, special education. In general it is a slice of Westlake and currently has 48 students with a goal to keep it under 50.
 - Students go to WHS campus for science and foreign language
 - PTO supports their yearbook which the students are very proud of, samples of the yearbooks were passed around and several quotes from it read. Ms. Field thanked PTO for their support.
- Part III:** A question and answer session for the above two sessions was held. Ms. Sauer and Ms. Field addressed questions from those in attendance. A rich conversation with key takeaways being:
- Service hours: Heidi shared that they are not required to graduate WHS but are encouraged. Students need 70 hours to have the distinguished cord at graduation.

- Recommendation letters for college applications: Thank you for teacher support on recommendation letters are appreciated, there is no expectation for any monetary reward. It is an honor for teachers to support students in this way where appropriate.
- Sophomore and Junior PSAT: See counseling website for more information they have shared at back to school night. Several changes have been made to SAT format so good to go review this information. Juniors will be taking PSAT in October. It is used to determine National Merit Finalists/Semifinalists.
- Sophomore conference: It will be in February but this year we won't have a PSAT test score to review because only Juniors will take the test this fall and Sophomores in spring but not in time for the conference. WHS will continue to ensure these meetings are useful and at minimum can help parents understand what to expect and do with test scores. This is the first time college application process is discussed.
- Senior parent meeting: Naviance is the major tool used for college applications. Contact the counseling office if you want to better understand how it can be used (e.g helping identify which school most realistic for application). Counselor office **uses** Naviance for their Nominated Scholarships so important for students to have their college preferences listed in there.
- TLC is for Juniors and Seniors only: Parents find out about it typically through engagements with Counseling office or WHS faculty (e.g. teacher referral suggestion).

D. **WHS Principal's Report**—Dr. John Carter was off campus and Mr. McKelvey, Assistant Principal addressed several key points and questions:

- Parking: Next semester the WAC will be finished and some additional new spots will be available. Exact amount still being determined. There are still many juniors on the waitlist for these spots. More will be communicated when known. Question raised about whether the school had considered having students 'share' spots so they have parking just on the days they really need (e.g. mentoring), this won't be done for this year.
- Start to school: Back to school night went well, overall the school year is off to a good start.
- Renovation of the library area was completed over the summer creating a new room currently called "Shrieking Shack". The PTO funded the new furniture for this collaborative space which was much appreciated.
- Timing of class rank/transcripts release was discussed as some felt they were released later than required. Counseling office will be asked to report back on this issue.

E. **PTO President's Report-**

A. Reesa Thorne reported on the following

- Allocation: requests from teachers were due Sept 25th. The next allocation request will be in the spring.
- Teacher appreciation: off to a great start with pizza and salad served to teachers for back to school night. Next one is Oct 15th breakfast. **Volunteers always needed to help.** Accepting donations of \$25 gift cards for teachers holiday gift, there is drop box at the Chaps Court entrance (ask Judy)
- Volunteering: There are many volunteer opportunities at the high school, great way to support the school in addition to financial support. Also helpful way as a parent to be involved and at the school. Key areas to get involved: Mum making, Library support, Photo copying for teachers, special teacher projects. Email WestlakePTOVolunteering@gmail.com if you want to get more information. For all volunteering you can choose how much and how often you want to participate.

B. Liza Savage-Richardson reported on the following:

- Mums: Excellent work done by all the Mum volunteers. Having the online sales option really helped ensure we were able to meet the needs of students in time given the earlier homecoming and meet our fundraising goals.
 - Concessions: We are having record-breaking concession sales this year. The concession team is doing a great job responding to this unprecedented demand and adjusting the processes to make them stronger than every.
 - Presidents Council Meeting: Liza attended this EISD meeting and shared key points discussed. Construction of the WAC will be done in January. Several WHS facility changes planned in Fall 2016 such as robotics moving to larger space and IT offices moved to different location. Balanced budget goal is by 2018/19 and Dr Leonard will be sharing details in the EISD State of the District meetings (WHS one is Friday October 16th Noon). Dr Leonard is creating a Revenue Task Force with parent involvement to help identify other revenue opportunities. EEF has a goal of \$2Million this year (up from \$1.6M).
- **Project Graduation** – Dulce Stenglein reported that their efforts are underway. Raffle tickets are being sold currently as key fundraiser.
 - **Treasurer's Report** – Karen Meyer shared the treasurer report. Karra Guess motioned to approve, Debbie Preston 2nd it. Headline summary:
 - PTO*
 - Received \$115,391.40 in total revenue to date
 - Received \$26,475 in No Hassle Fundraiser donations to date
 - Paid \$4975.87 in PTO Bucks
 - Netted \$39,204.28 in Mum sales
 - Cash Balance as of 9/23/15 was \$159,013.49
 - CONCESSIONS*
 - Netted \$51,164.40 in concession sales
 - Spent \$16,799.03 in COGS for restocking
 - Distributed \$34,210.17 to other WHS clubs
 - Spent \$5101.56 buying new equipment or repairing equipment
 - Cash balance as of 9/23/15 of \$58,736.12 in checking account and \$7763.44 in equipment account
 - **Club Representatives Event Sharing**
 - **Speech & Debate** – Deirdre Allinson shared that there is a new teacher this year. There are 35 kids participating. Have been to Dallas twice with great support. Hill Country has a debate club now and Westridge is starting one.
 - **Choir** – Stacey Ussery shared that the Madrigals were invited to sing the National Anthem at an event that is swearing in 800- 1000 new citizens
 - **Band** – Julia Webber shared that the Banks of America competition and Marching Band Festival are coming up.
 - **Robotics** – Erin Hummel shared that RTC season has started. There are 6 teams.
 - **Rugby** – Cammi Crawford shared that it starts next spring

Meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.