

Westfield High School Meeting October 18, 2001

The October meeting of the Westfield High School PTSA was held on Thursday, October 18, 2001 in the Lecture Hall at the school. President Lynn Terhar called the meeting to order at 7:12pm. In attendance were:

Destiny Burns	Becky Williams	Luann McNabb
Joy Sibley	Joyce Pickens	Vicky Francis
Paul Francis	Nick Owens	Mike Allocco
Lynn Terhar	Penny Douskalis	Laurie O'Bryan
Birgit Retson	Sharon Bomgardner	Sue Kiely
Bev Basoglu	Dana Cimino	Mark Richardson
Lori Knickerbocker	Dale Rumberger	

The minutes for the 9/20/01 meeting were read and approved as corrected (corrected several misspellings on attendee's names).

The guest speaker, Joy Sibley, WHS Librarian, was introduced. She started her remarks with several facts about the WHS Library, to include library hours, and the fact that she charges no fines for overdue books (only for loss or damage). She also stated that the library is normally full of students by 6:45am each morning. The library catalog is migrating to a system called TAOS, which the public libraries already use. The WHS library contains 16,000 items (built for 25,000 but the shelves are too "skinny" to hold that many). Literary gifts to the library are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Sibley provided a handout, which gave access information for on-line services, and said that feedback on the most useful sources would be welcome.

Ms. Sibley then spoke about how books are selected for the library. She explained that each school has a written collection development policy, and while most policies are similar, each are tailored to the specific school community. While the classroom is a place for focused, defined study, Ms. Sibley imparted that the library is a place for choice, decisions, options, different levels of language, skill, culture and points of view – particularly at the high school level – while not advocating or endorsing any particular content. Librarians cannot personally review everything in the collection, so they rely on authority, journals, professional opinions, catalogs, and the collections in other high schools for ideas when building their collections. County-wide ordering of materials is commonly done, as it is a cost-effective measure.

There are procedures in place to challenge materials. Ms. Sibley and her staff always have the best interests of the students in mind when making selections, and they strive to support the wide variety in the school's curriculum. Ms. Sibley pointed out that some of the greatest authors were controversial. The library staff does advise students, when appropriate, to help match the child with the right book. Ms. Sibley does not have an issue with kids seeking "bad" books in that it is too hard to find trouble in a book. There are some library restrictions, however – for example, no 9th grader can check out the book "Pillars of the Earth," and copies are kept behind the counter.

In addition to the work the librarians do in the library itself, they are also actively involved in the classrooms, conducting First Amendment workshops, Storytelling, ESOL Folk Lore and "Rock & Roll Library" programs, etc.. The library staff feels that if they are seen around the school, kids are more likely to ask them questions and seek their advice on reading choices. Ms. Sibley made the strong point that the library is about information, not just books.

She also pointed out that parents of WHS students can also check out books, and that the library could always use more parent volunteers, especially on late bus days and during lunch.

A question was asked about student internet usage, and it she had noted any problems. The librarians do not actively monitor students on the internet, but she has not noted any problems to date. Additionally, Fairfax Co. does use blocking software.

SGA Report (Nick): Homecoming was a great success, with about 1000 tickets sold and a \$10,000 profit realized. Student Congress has started, and will meet once a month. One representative from each 7th period class attends; school issues are discussed and feedback is taken back to the classroom. Of note, the consensus of the students following the Sept 11th attacks was that they were glad to have had access to the TVs so that they knew the facts of the situation in real time. The “Mr. Westfield” competition is slated for November 20th. Lynn mentioned that Mrs. Pat Bishop has volunteered to chair the All Night Grad Party committee.

Treasurer’s Report (Penny): The current account balance is \$16,819.89. The Treasurer’s Report will be filed for audit.

President’s Report (Lynn): On Oct 19th, the Class of ’05 will be collecting money for the children of Afganistan. Girl’s/Boy’s State input is coming in and a funds request will soon follow. The PTSA and ESOL class partnered on T-Shirts to help raise money for victims of the Sept 11th attacks – 400 shirts = \$3100 invested. Need to sell at least half of the shirts to break even, and they have not been selling well. SGA offered to help coordinate sales at the school, and we’ll also ask our business partners for assistance in selling them. The All-Night Grad Party committees are forming, and the theme will be “SS Westfield – Maiden Voyage.” Ms. Funesti’s and Ms. Moulton’s students are again creating learning stations projects for 3rd graders – they may want funding from PTSA to help support this effort. The Dog Dish Café was more service than money maker at Back To School Night – several positive comments were received from staff about the convenience it provided. The BITS program is up and running as of 9/29/01, and more tutors are needed. Kathy Rutkowski is moving forward with the Academic Boosters program. The first event will be 10/24/01 at 7pm (a 3.75 or greater GPA for the year is required to earn an Academic Letter). On November 12th, there will be a Parent Coffee.

Principal’s Report (Dale): Student population is 2321. Homecoming week was great. The newspaper was mailed – it a commercial enterprise, and it is student run. On 10/26/01, there will be a review of the building adaptability with architects – South County HS will reuse WHS design. Comments are welcome from the PTSA on school signage and beautification. School security issues discussed at the last meeting, such as after school coverage, were raised to the Superintendent. 1900 PSATs were administered, results are due in December. An evening meeting with the parents on how to read and interpret the results is planned. There has been one expulsion (substances); two more are pending (fighting). Next month, Dale plans to provide a full briefing on SOL scores. Honors/AP classes – 47% take at least one class this year (up from 34% last year). Stone MS is working with WHS regarding creation of Honors Middle School concept development – sharing of these concepts is also ongoing with Pyramid Elementary Schools. Boundary definition and principal search is starting for new Centreville MS. Fairfax Police may use WHS building for training and simulations during the night shift, and Dale feels this is beneficial because local law enforcement will become more familiar with the facility as a result. WHS is being pursued to participate in an aggressive driving pilot program, to include the use of speed traps on Westfields and Stonecroft Blvds. Mark (Security committee) asked is there could possible be one-way in/out access control instituted in the parking lot, especially during big events. Dale plans to brief the PTSA on the School Plan next month as a prelude to summer assignments.

Committee Reports:

Directory (Laurie): The Directory was printed and delivered to the school today. 1400 copies were ordered. 730 orders have been taken, plus copies will be given to WHS staff/faculty who joined the PTSA. They will soon be delivered to 7th period classes for distribution – Lynn will advise the teachers that they are coming. Laurie also provided an EPA Air Quality Kit to Dale for the school's use – Dale will give it to the Building Engineer.

Parent Advisory Council (Paul Francis): Held 10/9/01; topics discussed included Student Accountability Plan for grades 6-8, a Facilities Presentation, Superintendent's remarks (sales tax, TJ admissions, field trip cancellation policy, security) – of note, the web site www.schoolsout.com was provided as a source of information about school closings.

Legislative (Luann): There was a good turnout for the Candidate Forum, and the students were great. The press turnout was disappointing, and mention was made to a critical editorial in the local papers, which needed factual rebuttal. Dale mentioned that the kids really felt part of the process in this forum, and that the candidates and their surrogates were complimentary of the event. Luann also highlighted the Legislative Report card handout from FCCPTA.

Membership (Dana): There are currently 1,151 members. On Nov 7th, Dr. Katherine Kersey will speak at Virginia Run Elementary.

Newsletter (Becky): Deadline is now, plan to send it out Oct 30th/31st.

Reflections (Sharon): Theme this year is "I Hold In My Hand." The deadline is Nov 30th, applications are available and publicity via posters and Westfield Live is planned.

FCCPTA (Vicky): www.FCCPTA.org has the a full Legislative Report Card report. She highlighted a press release which stated that a survey overwhelmingly showed single issue support (transportation OR education) regarding the sales tax.

The next WHS PTSA meeting is scheduled for November 15th on 7pm. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Destiny Burns, WHS PTSA Recording Secretary

Approved as written __DRB__ Date: 11/15/01

Approved as corrected _____ Date