

WESPTSA Newsletter

January 2019

Volunteer... Get Involved!!!

We at the WESPTSA need you! We cannot do what we do without you! We will take any amount of time - or donations - you can give... we take as much or as little. Please feel free to email Camilla Fritts to get on her email distribution lists for volunteer opportunities (frittscam@gmail.com).

Here are next year's needs (note the election will occur at the April or May 2019 meeting but self or other nominations are sought prior to then):

- PTSA President
- PTSA Vice President
- PTSA Secretary
- PTSA Treasurer
- Family Math Night Co-Coordinator.

If you have interest in any of these these positions or questions about what they entail, please feel free to reach out to the any member of the PTSA Board, including current President Emily Bouck (ecb@msu.edu).

We want to hear from you...

Please let the PTSA know what information you want in your newsletter? How can we help you as parents and teachers? We are happy to provide information/articles requested by our members and readers. Thank you!

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LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

[https://
www.facebook.com/
WESPTSA/](https://www.facebook.com/WESPTSA/)

2

VIEW OUR WEBSITE

[http://
wesptsa.weebly.com/](http://wesptsa.weebly.com/)

3

COME TO OUR
MEETINGS

Generally 2nd Thursday
each month at 7pm

Upcoming WESPTSA & School Events:

1/10: PTSA meeting
(Discovery library
7-8:30pm)

1/18: 1/2 day of
school

1/21: No School

2/7: PTSA meeting
(Discovery library
7-8:30pm)

2/15: 1/2 day of
school

2/15: Box tops due!

3/7: PTSA meeting
(Discovery library
7-8:30pm)

3/13 & 3/14: 4th &
5th grade play - the
Wizard of Oz

3/15: Family
Reading Night

3/18-3/22:
WESPTSA Used
Book Sale

To note: PTSA Schedule Changes

The PTSA wants to make our readers aware of a few schedule changes:

- February 7th is our February PTSA meeting; this is the first Thursday of the month rather than the second. We moved it up a week to avoid a conflict with Valentine's Day
- March 7th is our March PTSA meeting; this is the first Thursday of the month rather than the second. We moved it up a week to avoid a conflict with the 4th/5th grade play (which is the 13th and 14th of March)
- Family Reading Night changed from March 22nd to March 15th. We apologize; the date needs to be changed to avoid a conflict with the Mother/Son dance. Thank you for understanding.

Planning Ahead to March

March is Reading Month and the PTSA has several activities planned to support.

- The Used Book Sale collection will occur 3/11-3/15 Through Friday, March 15, volunteers will be on hand to collect books at Discovery and Explorer before school starts. Drop off boxes will be available for those who want to bring books at other times.
- The Used Book Sale will be held March 18 through March 22 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the hallway between the cafeteria and the media center. All books are 25 cents each and proceeds will be used to purchase new books for the elementary schools' library.
- Family Reading Night will be March 15th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Discovery Media Center. The theme this year is music.
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New PTSA Sponsored Activity

January 22nd and 23rd will be host to a new PTSA-sponsored activity: Family Code Night. Each night can accommodate 30 families (each family gets 1 piece of technology) and families can only sign up for 1 night. It will be an opportunity to learn some coding as a family

Discussing and Protecting Food Allergies at Williamston Elementary Schools

Williamston Elementary Schools are peanut and tree nut free as a means of protecting students with food allergies. This is inclusive of all rooms and spaces within the elementary schools aside from the cafeteria. The cafeteria allows food with peanuts and tree nuts as there is at least one table reserved in the cafeteria for children with food allergies.

First, what are food allergies? A food allergy is a “a serious and potentially life-threatening medical condition.” It occurs when a body reacts to food item as an allergen. The reaction can vary from individual to individual - from the mild (e.g., hives, abdominal pain) to the severe (e.g., anaphylaxis). While many students must consume (even in the smallest or trace quantity to have a reaction, some students can experience a reaction through exposure, such as touching someone who ate peanut butter but did not wash their hands or even via airborne exposure). In the US, we discuss the top 8 food allergens: peanuts, tree nuts (e.g., hazelnut, walnut, almonds), milk, egg, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Of course, individuals can be allergic to other foods (e.g., sesame, particular fruits). Sesame is often now considered the ninth most common allergen.

Second, what does it mean for classroom spaces to be peanut and tree nut free? It means that no food item - whether store bought or homemade - that contains or may contain peanuts or tree nuts should be brought or and/or consumed within the space. In the US, it is a requirement that food products - outside of fresh produce, eggs, fresh meat, and particular highly refined oils - to be labeled for the top 8 allergens. Regardless of the amount of allergen within a food item, it must be labeled. Although it is not a requirement to label a top 8 allergen may be in an item (i.e., referred to as cross-contamination), many companies voluntarily add a warning such as stating an allergen may be present or that an item may contain.

Third, why should I be concerned with food allergies if my child does not have one? For one, food allergies can be serious; they can be life threatening and across the world children and adults with food allergies have died from consumption or exposure to their allergen(s). In addition, students who have food allergies are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 protects students from discrimination and provide reasonable accommodations. One such accommodation is a learning environment free from their allergen. Williamston Elementary Schools provide students with food allergies a universal accommodation by making the learning spaces - outside of the cafeteria - free from peanuts and tree nuts.

Fourth, what can I do? You can help protect all children by making sure you do not send food items with allergens to school to be consumed within classes, especially peanuts and tree nuts which are explicitly listed.