WESPTSA Newsletter

September 2016

Get Involved with the WESPTSA!

The WESPTSA Board invites all parents/guardians of Williamston Elementary Schools' students and teachers of Williamston Elementary Schools to get involved! The great thing about the WESPTSA is that there are involvement activities for everyone - from a regular volunteer, to special events, to brining in a food item for our teacher appreciation lunch. While we would love for everyone to come to the meetings, you don't need to come to the monthly meetings to still be involved :) Join a committee, participate at an event, save box tops! To be contacted about volunteer opportunities fill out a volunteer form or let us know at williamstonptsa@hotmail.com

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https://www.facebook.com/WESPTSA/

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JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

https://www.facebook.com/groups/gowcs.ptsa/

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VIEW OUR WEBSITE

http://wesptsa.weebly.com/

Upcoming School Dates & Events

- 9/22: Picture Day @ Discovery & Explorer
- 9/23: 1/2 day of school (dismissal at 11:40)
- 10/5: Walk to School Day
- 10/5: Student count day (count means student enrollment for WCS to count as FTE)
- 10/21: 1/2 day of school (dismissal at 11:40)
- 11/3: 1/2 day of school (dismissal at 11:40); Parent-Teacher Conferences
- 11/23-25 No school (Thanksgiving)

Upcoming WESPTSA Events:

10/4 - Parent Info Night @ Discovery Media Center (6:30-7:30)

10/13 - PTSA meeting @ Discovery Media Center (7-8:30)

10/14 - Fall Box Top Collection deadline

10/20: Fun Run (WESPTSA fundraiser) during school hours

10/21: Fall Festival (6-8) @ Discovery Cafeteria & Gym and Pumpkin sale

11/1: Parent Info Night @ Discovery Media Center (6:30-7:30)

11/10: PTSA meeting @ Discovery Media Center (7-8:30)

WESPTSA First Parent Info Night Session

Narda Murphy, superintendent of WCS, spoke on the state of the schools

Mrs. Murphy shared about the current state of WCS with those in attendance, which included parents of students in all schools in Williamston. A few highlights of her talk:

- 1787 students Y5-12th, but 1811 FTE (includes St. Mary's & St. Martha's students served by ARC teachers)
- Total enrollment down 8 from last year
- 143 Y5 & Kindergartners (estimated 2/3 come from the preschool programs in Williamston and 1/4 are school of choice)
- FTE funding is $7511 for WCS (Note, outside of presentation, from a recent Detroit Free Press article that appears to be lowest in the range; see http://www.freep.com/story/news/education/2016/06/28/study-michigan-must-create-equal-school-funding-system/86289694/)
- Challenges faces WCS: aging bus fleet, facility needs, marketing the district, technology needs, state mandates
- Lots of points of pride (e.g., InvenTeam, Teachers of the Year, athletics, one of 54 notable schools for how money is spent)
- Need to get fund balance at 5% (currently at 1.8%) by 2021; prediction by end of 2016-2017 is 2.8%

Watch for an email and/or a paper coming home from school soon about the WESPTSA Fun Run! The kick-off will be around 9/29 to collect donations (the one big fundraiser for the WESPTSA - money supports technology and arts integration in the elementary schools)! As always there will be incentives for kids for raising donations. Volunteers needed!

WESPTSA Raising $ and Spending $

The WESPTSA raises money through different means across the year, including (but not limited to) the "Fun Run" in October, the Ice Cream Social in the spring, and box tops. Here is a quick bullet list of key points on different ways the WESPTSA raises money and what we spend it on:

- Box Tops - Save those Box Tops!!! Last year the WESPTSA earned about $5800 from Box Tops. The WESPTSA used Box Top money last year to purchase iTunes gift cards for teachers, playground equipment, and an iPad.
- New this year - save your original D&W receipts and send them to school to earn money for the WESPTSA. If we get $150,000, D&W will give the school for $1000.
- The WESPTSA uses its money to support technology and arts integration (including supporting trips to the Wharton Center as well as connecting arts to core curriculum [e.g., play in Spanish]) in Discovery and Explorer.
- The WESPTSA also provides teacher grants; grade level teachers decide what they need funding for. We typically give $450 per grade level, Academically Related Curriculum (ARC), and special education and teachers work collaboratively within a grade level to spend the money with principal approval!
- The technology money is provided to Discovery and Explorer to determine what they need such, as the purchase of additional Chromebooks [to support blended learning] and iPads. Note, Explorer has 5 dedicated Chromebooks per class. Discovery purchased more devices for classrooms for station teaching.