Wellesley Middle School
2026-2027 PTO Kickoff Meeting – Minutes

Friday, September 11, 2026 (Approved Oct 23, 2026)

Attendees:
Julie Bryan (President), Sarah Tauer (President), Liz O'Connor (Treasurer), Kristin Whelton (Secretary), Janine Paye, Mercedes Leboreiro, Maja Dutkowski, Lillian Lau, Emily Tang, Diana Kulkarni, Andrea Melnick, Erin Bryan, Erinne Clausen, Yifei Wang, Amanda Crowley, Giovanna Swope, Kim Stott, Teri Ebersole, Allie Rose, Marie Fox, Brit Kelly, Garima Rana, Caroline Rummel, Michelle Cotter, Jianhua Guo, Laura Bodt

Agenda and Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Ongoing business (Julie Bryan)
    a. Introduction and vote of PTO Board Members
        i. Julie Bryan and Sarah Tauer as Co-Presidents, Liz O'Connor as Treasure, Kristin Whelton as Secretary
        ii. Motion to approve officers for 2026-27 school year; second; approval of officers with no dissent
    b. Review and vote of June 5, 2026 Minutes
        i. Motion to approve; second; approval of minutes with no dissent
    c. Treasurer's Report (Liz O'Connor)
        i. WMS PTO fundraising
            1. MS PTO is different than elementary schools. We are a bigger group but not as many fundraising events. Main income is annual appeal, with suggested donation of $125/student, but all donations are appreciated.
            2. We exceeded last year's goal with significant impact through corporate match programs – please ask your employers!
            3. Can now donate online and immediately get a confirmation for taxes.
            4. Our goal is to increase participation from last year's 33% overall participation.
            5. Where do dollars go? Speakers, authors, creative arts, language festivals, turkey promenade entertainment, reusable pinnies…
        ii. 2026-27 Budget review and Vote

1. Income
    a. Focus on general donations as biggest source
        i. 8th grade does separate donations, but we hold
    b. Other fundraising with in-town partnerships, collaboration with Schofield Shoppers Corner
    c. Working to wean off drawdown from PTO savings
2. Expenses
    a. Increased a few items this year: Turkey Promenade, Creative Arts, Beautification and Special School Needs (at Dr. Ito's discretion)
3. Vote
    a. Motion to approve; second; approval of budget with no dissent

3. What does the PTO do? (Julie Bryan)
    a. Weekly newsletter to parents/caregivers – can send once membership toolkit has closed and families are confirmed; only teachers and staff can use ParentSquare so watch for emails; can also find info on website.
    b. Fund events, speakers and teacher needs – teachers can apply for specific needs
    c. Coordinate volunteers for events, teacher support – please volunteer! There are many roles of all sizes.
    d. Connection between staff/teachers/administration and parents/caregivers – meet with Dr. Ito and Dr. Lussier regularly
    e. Raise parent concerns with WMS and WPS administration
        i. Central Council
        ii. Board meetings

    Overall, we are really looking to build a community of parents and caregivers. It's not just about events – we are focused this year on bringing parents together in support of our children and school. Please join PTO meetings!

    In addition to PTO, two key groups of note:

    - School Council (Teri Ebersole)
        - School Council | Wellesley Middle School
        - There are two parents in second year and two new parents; four parent reps meet monthly with Dr. Ito, Mr. Hoffman, Ms, Gordon and four teachers from different disciplines. Discussions include what's going well, what's tricky, issues, how school is handling things, assemblies and content. Not a heavy lift – one hour per month. Reach out to Teri with questions.
        - Submit your name for consideration!
    - METCO Family Friends (Teri Ebersole)
        - Family Friends Program | Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
        - Working to strengthen METCO Family Friends at WMS. A huge population from Boston is joining at the sixth grade level. There are not many opportunities for parents to meet each other, so looking to plan events to allow parents to meet,

including at end of Back-To-School night (please join!). Last year, we did a day after school on Friday with Chick-Fil-A where Boston kids could stay and invite Wellesley friends to join. Had a big roller skating event in Boston. Have a mailing list and can sign up.

4. Fall Calendar
    a. WMS Back-to-School Night - September 24, 6:30pm a day-in-the-life of your student
    b. 6th/7th grade Dance (late October - Halloween theme, typically)
    c. Webinar with Dr. Ito and Department Heads (Oct.)

5. PTO Events
    a. Overview and Q&A
        i. Turkey Promenade (Janine Paye)
            1. All school event in which kids bring food or household supplies for needy families; on Wed before Thanksgiving, all Advisories take food on a "promenade" to gym to leave food, then go to gym to celebrate
            2. Very fun for students, each advisory has a theme (e.g. holiday theme, sports theme); significant annual donation source for Voices Against Violence and also supports Wellesley Food Pantry; from parent volunteer perspective, each grade has ~1 hour when bringing food around, can sign up for your kid's grade as a parent volunteer in the gym; need a lot of hands for physical work (sorting, checking dates, removing glass, etc.)
            3. Janine Paye and Tanya Lisowski are co-chairing; reach out to help with planning. Big lift on collecting boxes, grab as many as possible!
        ii. Mini Marathon – spring; all school event; ~one mile; not a fundraiser, just a fun event for kids; PE teachers run the event and PTO supports
        iii. Teacher Appreciation Week – spring; have a few volunteers to co-chair; plus have smaller events of support and appreciation through the year; watch newsletter
        iv. June Book Fair – in June PTO meeting; focus on summer reading books
        v. Language events – one-hour festivals after school in ~Jan – March; Lunar New Year, French Fete, Deutschfest

6. Other PTO-supported activities/committees:
    a. Spirit Wear
    b. Beautification
    c. METCO Program
    d. WMS Cares
    e. Fundraising
    f. Parent/Caregiver Socials
    g. Creative Arts & Sciences Coordinator
    h. Nurse Volunteer/Extra Clothing
    i. Library Volunteers
    j. Parent Advisory Council/PAC Rep

k. POPS Liaisons
l. Wellesley Green Schools Initiatives
m. “Wait Until 8th” Campaign Coordinator: Allie Baker M.D.
n. School Council
o. Grade 8 Committee

7. Table Talk
    a. What topics do you want to talk about at PTO meetings? What ideas do you have for PTO events, activities or meetings?
    b. Themes:
        i. Topical areas:
            1. Technology – how are we dealing with kids finding workarounds to banned programs, how do we evolve through the year?
            2. AI – how are teachers using it, are students being taught AI safety?
            3. WMS food – follow up on last year’s survey and next steps
            4. Advisories / houses / half-houses – how does all this work, methodology, formulas for sizing, etc? Lots of focus on the how and why of half-houses, and what the future strategy is for half-houses.
            5. Curriculum variances across classrooms, e.g. some classes don’t really use summer reading books while others build assignments around them. How is this measured and coordinated?
            6. Curriculum content with focus on literacy and math
        ii. Structural ideas
            1. How to receive and respond to feedback from with parent community? How to create dialogue?
            2. Build community through information sharing. Potential for events around various communities’ cultural events and celebrations – “international game day.”
            3. Potential to have sub-communities, e.g. new families parent group
            4. Expand information sharing on volunteering, e.g. volunteer fair, kick-off meetings before sign-ups
            5. PTO meetings times – consider evenings, Zoom; enable more involvement
            6. Create a way for parents to anonymously submit questions to inform future PTO meetings, e.g. form on website, link in newsletter
            7. Create grade-specific parent socials
            8. Sixth-grade or new-family coffees – to help with the questions we don’t even know to ask
            9. Create an overview to help new parents understand paths for help and resources, e.g. if you need [x], you can go to dept heads; potential to connect to existing guidance through first newsletter?

8. Thank you and adjournment

2026-2027 WMS PTO Volunteers

PTO Board:

- **Co-Presidents**: Julie Bryan & Sarah Tauer
- **Co-Vice Presidents**: **TBD**
- **Treasurer**: Liz O'Connor
    - Manages all financials (donations, reimbursements, annual taxes)
- **Secretary:** Kristin Whelton
    - Meeting minutes and approvals

PTO Committees and Coordinators:

- **Communications Coordinator**: Liz Sower
    - Draft and send weekly PTO newsletter
    - Oversee Membership Toolkit
- **Website Team:** Jim Susinno
    - Manage all web updates
- **Social Media Coordinator:** Garima Rana
    - Manages social media profiles and content (FB, insta)
- **Spirit Wear Co-Chairs:** Sue Gibbons & Alina Nucera
    - Purchase and sell during half days (and online in Nov)
- **Beautification:** Katie Sullivan, Gema Watson Wood
    - Plant pots, refresh garden, and water as needed.
- **METCO Liaisons**: Teri Ebersole, Allie Rose, Ludvie Victor-Ackerman
    - Plan social events to build communities with our Boston WMS families/students
- **WMS Cares:** Carol Tham & Lorraine Pocon-Ramos
    - Work with staff to help WMS families in need throughout the year
- **Fundraising Coordinator:** Andrea Melnick
    - Organize fundraising partnerships with local businesses
    - Identify and coordinate fundraising opportunities with Co-VPs
- **Teacher/Staff Appreciation Coordinators:** Jennifer Cohn and Sicily Tang
    - Organize/coordinate teacher/staff appreciation breakfasts and lunches
    - Coordinate snacks for Faculty meetings
    - Coordinate staff gifts for holidays, Nurse's Day and Custodian's Day
- **Social Chair(s): TBD**
    - Organize Parent Socials
    - Organize New Family Coffee
- **Creative Arts & Sciences Coordinator:** Tanya Auger
- **Nurse Volunteer/Extra Clothing:** Leigh Thomas, Cristina O'Brien
- **Library Volunteers:** Kimberly Ebeling, Kiki Loccisano
    - Helps coordinate volunteers to help librarians
- **Parent Advisory Council/PAC Rep:** Alison McCarthy
- **POPS Liaisons:** Maddie Laurano, Brooke Razzaghi, Jie Gao

- **Wellesley Green Schools Initiatives:** Lesley Prowda, Michelle Foster
- **“Wait Until 8th” Campaign Coordinator:** Allie Baker M.D.