

West PSCO Meeting Minutes

Present: Ms. Caruthers, Vanessa Harvey, Nailah Williams, Kamala Lyon, Willa Pohlman, Kim Batts, Savannah Cole, Lisa Jackson, Josh and Rebecca Hertzberg, Juliana and John Grayson, Diana Perez-Reyes, Sharon Hudgens, Rhonda Green-Smith, Mohammed, Sara Markle-Elder, Cathy Reilly

1. **City Blossoms** presented on programs and curriculums that are available for use at the school, including grants that they can put in for from OSSE. These grants are offered starting around February / March. **The PSCO and Ms. Caruthers will discuss next steps.**
2. Ms. Caruthers discussed the great things that **Georgia Avenue Support Collaborative** does for families in the neighborhood, including mental health first aid (recognizing warning signs and learning basic interventions) and their work on truancy issues. Contrary to what we often assume are the reasons for truancy (just skipping school), it's often a result of health problems, family crisis, or kids needing to learn better time management, etc. **Georgia Avenue Support Collaborative will have a curbside table outside West on Thursday, September 25, in the morning to highlight their programs for families.**
3. Recent events: the **pre-k playdates and the Boo Hoo Breakfasts** went well, hopefully helping to welcome new families and make the transition to school easy for the little kids and their parents. **Farmers' market outreach** was held one Sat. in August. More below on an upcoming day at the market. Back to school night was well-attended and garnered some new memberships in PSCO.
4. **Principal's Update:** Ms. Caruthers reported that **enrollment is at 104%**! We reached our goal and then some because more in-boundary students enrolled. This means that West will be entitled to an additional \$100,000 in the budget. However, **audit day is Oct. 6**—this is the day that enrollment is really counted, when DCPS counts how many kids are actually in school.

Ms. Caruthers challenged the PSCO to think about goals and activities which will truly benefit the students, as opposed to simply fundraising, as described in the book, *Beyond the Bake Sale*. She asked each of us to consider contributing to the School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM) program to help make meaningful contributions for the students. Ways to do this include volunteering to:

- **help with a Preferred Activity Class (PAC--teaching kids your hobby or another activity)** PAC classes start in October and run through December. The dates for the next semester are being worked out.
- **making a presentation on your career** (what you do, how you got into it, etc). People interested in doing this can get help on how to structure the presentation. This kind of event (presentation or an excursion) is an SEM Type 1 activity—it benefits everyone. Then students in an SEM Type 2/3 program take the information further, doing a research project or problem solving task using what they learned.



Upcoming Events

5. **Fun Run, September 27, 7:30 Registration, 8:00 for the event:** Nat Gillespie reported that planning is going well for the Fun Run, a 5K walk/run/push a stroller in Rock Creek Park at Carter Barron. Walkers, runners, strollers and wheelchairs are welcome.

We only have a few online registrants, but people typically wait until the last minute to register. Please join us for the Fun Run and to volunteer. Thank you to those who have already volunteered to marshal and bring prepackaged food. **We still need 2 more volunteers to help with marshalling (directing runners).** Organizers are planning to hold sign-ups on Monday and Thursday morning before the race.

Actions:

Sign up online to participate at <https://westschoolfunrun.eventbrite.com> .

To volunteer, contact Nat Gillespie at ngillespie16@gmail.com .

6. **Outreach at the Petworth Farmers' Market, 9:00 to 1:00:** Sara Markle-Elder reported that the Petworth Community Market is having their annual Kids' Day on September 27 as well. But, the two events are not in conflict as the run ends around 9:00. The market goes from 9:00 to 1:00. Sara will set up, but will need some support from anyone who can come for one or two hours over the course of the market. It is a fun and effective way to do outreach in the neighborhood.

Action: Contact Sara at sarame@mindspring.com or 202-716-5510 to volunteer.

7. **Playdate at Hamilton Park:** The Outreach and Communications Committee members are trying to think of new activities to engage current and prospective families, such as holding more social events. We are considering a date to hold an afternoon at Hamilton Park to let the kids (any age) play and chat with other parents.

Other upcoming activities of the Outreach and Communications Committee include **representing West at a school choice expo on November 22**, a big event for parents to learn about DCPS schools and charter schools and **West's first open house on Dec. 4**. There is also a plan to distribute flyers, particularly in areas within the new boundary for West.

8. **Harvest Festival, Thursday October, 30, 5:30 to 7:30:** Harvest Festival is a fun, Halloween-themed party, with food, games, and activities for the kids. Lisa Jackson reported for Carrie Tiller. A planning committee has formed, and the first meeting was held August 27th. Volunteers are needed to help plan and run events at the party.

Action: Signup will be available on a poster at the entrance to the school or Contact Carrie Tiller at carelle_tiller@yahoo.com .

9. **Christmas Tree Sales:** Nat reported and explained that a decision will need to be made within a week. Holding a tree sale is a major undertaking and an investment, as the vendor will require a certain number of trees to be bought, but that it could generate \$5000 in profit. A committee of seven or eight people is needed. Activities



West Education Campus

related to this include marketing (putting out a big wooden sign on Election Day, etc) and helping with the sale. After the meeting, Atta Kiarash volunteered to lead this event.

Action: Contact Atta at akiarash@solarsolutionllc.com to volunteer to help.

Volunteer Needs

10. **Room parents:** Josh reported that about half of the classes have people who have agreed to serve as room parents. Room parents assist teachers as needed and communicate with other parents in the classroom, for example to solicit volunteers. Elaine Menotti is the room parent coordinator and can provide support to room parents. Room parents are still needed for the following classes:

- PK4- Ballou, PK4-Phillips
- K-Henderson
- 1st grade
- 3rd grade
- 4th grade
- 5th grade
- 7th grade

Co-room parents are always welcome for the other classes.

Action: Contact Elaine Menotti if you would like to serve as a room parent in your child's class.

Elainemenotti@yahoo.com

11. **Citrus Fruit Drive:** Lisa Jackson explained that the annual Citrus Drive (selling oranges, grapefruit, and tangelo boxes) runs from October 1 to 24th. The fruit is delivered to West the week before Thanksgiving. Buyers can also arrange to have the gift boxes shipped anywhere in the country. A few volunteers are needed, including one person to call the buyers to let them know their fruit needs to be picked up and two or three people to assist with accepting the delivery and handing out the boxes to parents picking up their orders. This fundraiser does not usually involve huge participation, but results in \$1000 for West.

Action: Contact Lisa Jackson at Lisa.Jackson@WestSchool.org to help with calls or distribution.

12. **Volunteer Coordinator:** We need a person who would be the point of contact between parents and other volunteers and the school, helping to connect would-be volunteers with the school. The goal is to make it easy for parents to volunteer both for tutoring and enrichment for the kids.

Action: contact Josh Hertzberg at josh.hertzberg@westschool.org .

13. **Election Concessions, Nov. 4:** West is a polling place for the upcoming elections. A curbside table with coffee and baked goods to sell to voters on their way to or from the polls is an excellent opportunity to connect with the community and raise some funds. A lead is needed to organize this event.

Action: contact Josh Hertzberg at josh.hertzberg@westschool.org .



West Education Campus

14. **Aftercare development:** A committee is needed to help find vendors to provide enrichment activities for West's aftercare program, particularly for grades PK-3 through 2nd grade. Ideas include surveying West families to find out if they are interested in activities like music, sports, yoga, etc. Rhonda Green-Smith agreed to be part of the committee.

Action: contact Rhonda Green-Smith at rhondagreen61@gmail.com and Josh Hertzberg at josh.hertzberg@westschool.org .

15. **Family Math Night, Nov. 20:** This is a fun event, in which teachers arrange for games and activities highlighting math for students and the PSCO just handles food sales. A lead is needed for this event.

Action: contact Josh Hertzberg at josh.hertzberg@westschool.org .

Other news

16. **Business Outreach:** Catherine Read has agreed to lead outreach to local businesses for fundraising. Currently, she is working on contacting businesses including Hispanic run businesses to sponsor a dance performance by the dance group Maru Montero for Hispanic Heritage Month. Please contact her at catherine.read2010@gmail.com if you have ideas, connections to businesses / organizations, or would like to volunteer to reach out to local businesses.

17. **Future PSCO Meetings are at 6:00 on:**

Oct. 23, Nov. 20, Jan. 22, Feb. 26, March 26, April 23, May 28

18. The dental van will come and provide check-ups on Oct. 17.

19. Picture day will now be held on Oct. 6.