

PTO Meeting Notes

January 13, 2021 6:00pm

Overview

- Board and Open Positions starting in 2021-2022
- Principal's Report – Dr. Chris Brown and Dr. Wegley
- New Playground!
- Winter/Spring Activities
- How to Stay Connected

Wescott PTO Executive Board

- Norbert Barszczewski, PTO Co-President
- Ankur Singal, PTO Co-President
- Molly Chen, VP of Fundraising
- Rob Strickler, VP of Technology
- Jennifer Wyton, Treasurer
- Amanda Neidhardt, Secretary
- Lina Nudera, VP of Communications

Next year the PTO board has four open positions: Co-President, Co-President, VP of Fundraising, and VP of Technology. Please contact current Co-Presidents if interested in serving.

Principal's Report: Dr. Brown

Thank you to the PTO Board. We have pulled off a lot of things so far this year in the face of great odds. In regards to Wescott, we are bringing kids back to school next Wednesday. I think it has been a fantastic school year. We have continued to evolve the fully remote student program. We do not plan on continuing it after this year. I think parents are excited about starting that in school program on Tuesday. We have some teachers in the building teaching right now but it is not what all of us signed up for when all of us became educators. I told the staff during our meeting Monday it is a step and it's a big step in getting back to what we believe is great education in D30. Just being able to do all the great events that we have done through the many years we will continue to try and do that. We will get back to that great family atmosphere. This is one of the moments where you realize just how great you had it. We are so excited to come back on Tuesday.

If you are coming back on Tuesday do take a look through our phased resources on the website and the Wescott handbook. Last Friday we sent it all out as well so take a look at the information and ask questions. In addition, if you are coming back in the building for the first time, please ask questions. We will be back at it on Tuesday. We are all excited.

On to another exciting project. To start off, this is certainly an example of the perseverance of our community, our school board, the administrators and Dr. Wegley. Not only has the administration and Dr. Wegley lead us through this time but they have also done this reconstruction project. I'm going to pass it to Dr. Wegley at this point.

Dr. Wegley

Thanks all the staff and teachers as we are all getting started. We remain committed to the kids. We said at the beginning of this year we are going to be taking reasonable risks, and I think we have done that. We are also trying to do our very best to have a full and robust remote program. I am so proud of our staff and students. The student's flexibility and perseverance will serve them throughout their life. We are all going to have things we appreciate coming out of this, and I think this will be something they will look back on and have a reason to be proud. I also want to offer you appreciation: thank you for your partnership, and your civility, we are going to keep getting through it. Thank you.

Well, this is exciting to share. This reconstruction project is the accumulation of a lot of work and effort. I only wish we had it done already. The only thing that limits us from all being in person is because of space. We are using every space we have right now. If for any reason we are in this position next year, it will be different.

I love this picture (reference slide), heroes do work there. We can't wait to see the kids. Thank you for all the little things, the balloons. . . . the lunches. . . . all the things we can do to keep some normalcy matters so much right now. Thank you.

This is my 6th year as superintendent in D30. It was clear to me when we looked at the challenges facing D30 the number 1 challenge was that our facility vision and educational vision did not align. As you know, you guys were actually the ones who started our furniture refresh. We are a hands on child centric learning district. You started some pilot classrooms at the end of last year and got new furniture in there. At the end of this reconstruction project, all the classroom furniture in the whole district will be refreshed. At the end of this project, our facility and educational vision will be aligned.

Back in 2016, we asked the kids to help with idea and they gave us a ton of ideas about where we are headed. This was of course part of our referendum; we promised that after Maple we would focus on the elementary program. If we had done this project along with Maple, the focus would've gone to Maple because it was such a larger project. Thank you for waiting.

Here is the need. (reference slide) We do a lot of teaching in the hallways. We are out of space. The need has been there and is just growing as we go through time. Even teachers are using hallways to meet. In 2005, when I started at GBN I always knew D30 kids, they are kids of character and incredibly well prepared. So when I looked for a house, I looked in D30. I love this community. I love it here, and my kids benefited from being in a community that valued education. This is a great place for kids to grow up, and we are continuing to see that. We are continuing to see new families move into D30. This is sterling place (reference slide) some are already built and some are still being built. We are already starting to get kids from here. Sterling place is an 84 home development. This is the granger property (reference slide) this is same size as Sterling Place and we could anticipate potentially another 84 home development. It's being studied now and this likely will be residential in the future.

We will continue to see people move in to D30. Just to give you an idea: in 2015 we had 1,088 students, next year we will have 1,240 students in our district and we will only grow from there. This is a great place to live and we are seeing this at Maple, we have grown from 400 last year to 430 this year and we will go up from there. Now, Maple has space. Wescott and Willowbrook combined in 2014 had 34 core

sections, that is K-5th across district. That has grown to 43 sections this year, if this year was a normal year. Next year, will be 45 sections.

The conclusion of architectural study was that we are out of space. We will continue to be tight moving forward. At Willowbrook, 19 sections was good but going up to 22 sections was tight. The kindergarten at Willowbrook made sense years ago, but now we are at a position where we are out of space at both buildings. However, if we move kindergarten back to Wescott then we don't need to do an addition at Willowbrook. And we can focus on getting Wescott back to a Kindergarten through 5th grade school in 2021-2022. We are going to 25 sections at Wescott. The project you will see will show you we will have enough space.

On December 22 we opened up for bids on the reconstruction project. We got lots of good bids. We approved the bids on January 7 and we will break ground in March or April depending on when the ground thaws. We will have some inconvenience, but we will start with the construction on the outside. Then in April/June, the internal construction will begin. The goal is to be in school fully ready to go in August. We have set a later start date for students of September 2 for next year, with teachers to come back in August with 3 institute days. We want to make sure we give them enough time to get situated and get done everything they need before the kids come back to school Now, I will turn it over to Dr. Brown

Dr. Brown – Site Plan

This is what we want to accomplish by September 2021.

This is the Northwest corner of the school. This will be on top of the existing playground. It's all new classrooms.

The Southwest corner of the school, this is the large play space near the existing parking lot, we will have a new gym, a gym big enough to inhabit all 475 students. It will also be big enough for us to be able to pull off all of the events where we involve the school and the parents. This will be the place where we can make it back to the one big family spot that we value at Wescott so much.

For parents that drive a car, we are going to extend parent pick up and drop off. The enter only entrance will no longer be aligned with Scott anymore. We are going to push it down between Scott and Brentwood. This will be a little safer and allow for more parking in front with designated parking.

The purple colors are additions. Purple on the Northwest corner and the southwest corner of the school, you see bathrooms and classrooms and the new gym.

The lavender colored areas are heavy renovation areas. The southeast area is where we will have a special education area. It's where students can access resources and services like English learner services and special education services. In the past, we have struggled with having these types of spaces. Now, students with highest need will have dignified space they can come to. We will be turning one large classroom into 4 different areas to meet this need.

The green is where the existing gym is going to be divided up into a brand new music space, and art space. In addition, in the past all students would have to cross this one point in the school to get to lunch, their classrooms, art, gym and music. It became a large pinch point in the school, to remedy that we will also create an additional walkway in southeast part of building. This will also allow the Kindergarten classrooms to have their own corridor to access art and music without having to interact with other students. We want them to interact with the other students but we want that interaction to be purposeful. This will allow Kindergarten to have their own area to get acclimated with the school.

This is the Northwest view of the school from the outside. This is on top of the existing playground.

This is the Southwest exterior corner of the school, the new gym.

This is the new hallway to the art and music rooms. As you can see lot of windows and lots of natural light

Here is the Art room. We are trying to use the existing high ceilings so you see tall windows and lots of space to hang art work

Here is the Music room. It's a nice modern space. It will have some sophisticated recording rooms and other spaces to teach, perform and record.

Here is the Gym. These are not the final colors. We will get some Wescott red in there but, you can see the idea. There will be two separate spaces divided by a curtain where we can hold gym class simultaneously and accommodate all students in the building.

Here is the new playground. This is the latest and final rendering. The playground will be going on the north side of the building and park. It's where the third grade classes are, straight downhill. This past fall we has some kids involved, and got their feedback picking colors and all kinds of things they wanted in a playground. You can see two different spaces and a glider swing. This is a space where every child can play. Student of all abilities can play. We will potentially have a wider spectrum of students and we want all students to be able to go out and play.

The new playground is a team effort. We will get there together. For the playground, the PTO has already put forth a good chunk of money towards this effort and I am excited to talk more about it.

Thank you for your patience. Wescott has been crowded and a lot of you have noticed. We appreciate the school board and Dr. Wegley for making this happen.

Dr. Wegley- Thank you to the PTO for making this a reality. The Wescott PTO is incredibly supportive and has made such a difference in what we are able to do for the kids. This will make a long term difference in D30. These K-5 schools could easily turn into Pre-K schools in the future. These are the needs we have now, and when we get back in the fall this will be a reality.

New playground!!! (Ankur)

PTO has been able to raise funds in the past and we will use that money to support the new playground, but we also need to raise additional funds. We aren't quite there yet to fully fund it.

We need ideas to fund it. If you have any ideas or would like to be a part of managing a fundraiser please reach out to us. We need people to help with this to make it a reality.

We were able to do Walk for Wescott this year. Thank you to everyone who supported, managed, and volunteered. Also, thank you to those who encouraged their kids. With a lot of activities being cancelled this year it was the biggest fundraiser this year for PTO. We were able to raise around \$12,000. That was about \$3,000-\$4,000 less than last year but given the circumstances, it was still a great job. Ten percent of that was given to Fear Not Nation.

Winter/Spring Activities (Molly)

- Speaker Series (Virtual)
- Restaurant Partnerships
 - Elly's coming up!
- Valentine's Day Room Parties
- Playground fundraiser
- Fifth Grade Lunch/Activities
- Family Picnic – TBD

The Cultural arts Committee organized a show that will be online. It's a historical perspective about inclusion and perseverance. It will be shown this Friday the 15th it's being played online for all the classes.

PTO Vacancies (Amanda)

We need volunteers for the following events. If people do not volunteer to help out we will have to cancel them. In addition, if anyone has any ideas on how to safely do some of these given the circumstances please reach out.

- Spring 2021
 - Dinner Out Series
 - Wescott Madness
 - Family Picnic
 - Read to Succeed
 - Playground Fundraiser (ongoing)
- Fall 2021
 - Special Lunch
 - Popsicles in the Park
 - Walk for Wescott
 - Monster Mash
 - International Day

How can we all stay connected? (Lina)

- Wescott Word (Weekly e-publication)
- Website: www.district30.org/Wescott-pto
- Facebook
 - Wescott School PTO

- District 30 Families
- Twitter
 - Dr. Brian Wegley (@bwegley)
 - Dr. Chris Brown (@cmbrown)
 - #D30 Learns

Questions and Answers (Rob)

Quick note on what I do and if there is anyone out there thinking about stepping up. I do all the IT stuff for PTO. I have a fifth graders and we are aging out of Wescott so my position will be open, don't be intimidated, its less than it sounds in terms of difficulty and effort. I am happy to help you get set up don't be scared. It's quite manageable.

Questions from the chat box:

What's the final number that needs to be raised for the new playground?

- \$30,000

How is the new addition being financed? Did they have to take out a loan?

- A loan was taken out to cover the entire amount needed for the reconstruction.

Conclusion (Norbert)

We too are aging out of Wescott. I just have to say this, if you want to teach your kids and set a good example for them about being part of community, volunteering is something we can all do. This is how we show them how to build a community. We have to show it to them. So please if you can, please volunteer.