Updated July 2026

PTO

Weston
Parent
Teacher
Organization

Weston PTO Board Member Handbook
2026-2027

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PTO President's Welcome Letter

Dear 2026–2027 Weston PTO Board Members,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year!

The Weston community is incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated, creative, and enthusiastic team of volunteers serving on our PTO Board. I know we all share a common goal: to give back to our schools while building meaningful connections among families, faculty, staff, and administrators.

I look forward to working alongside each of you as we continue to support the PTO's mission. Together, we are committed to enhancing the educational experience of every student while fostering a strong sense of community throughout the Weston Public Schools. We strive to keep families informed and engaged by strengthening the partnership between home and school and serving as a trusted link for communication and collaboration. At the heart of our work is a shared commitment to supporting our district.

As a Board, I am excited to build on the important work already underway and continue advancing initiatives that reflect the mission of the Weston PTO. To help you feel informed and prepared in your volunteer role, we've created this Board Handbook as a central resource for information, procedures, and helpful references throughout the year.

Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and energy with our school community.

With appreciation and excitement for the year ahead,

Michelle Callanan
Weston PTO President 2026-2027

2026-2027 PTO Board Meeting Schedule

Board meetings will be held from 9:00am to 10:30am in the Case House large conference room, unless otherwise advertised or communicated. While there will always be a Zoom option available, our hope is to encourage as much in-person attendance as possible. Please reserve Zoom for occasions when attending in person is not possible.

Please note that each month, all chairs are responsible for updating their respective reports in Google Docs at least two (2) days before each PTO Board meeting. A link to the report document will be provided to you by the PTO Secretary, along with our meeting agenda and the Treasurer's Report.

Wednesday, September 9, 2026

Thursday, October 15, 2026

***Thursday, November 12, 2026**
Please note this is an evening meeting beginning at 7pm

(No December Board Meeting)

Wednesday, January 13, 2027
Nominating Committee process for 2027-2028 begins

Wednesday, February 10, 2027

Wednesday, March 10, 2027
Vote on 2027-2028 Board slate

Wednesday, April 14, 2027
Vote on 2027-2028 budget

Wednesday, May 12, 2027

Wednesday, June 9, 2027
Transition Meeting

The annual PTO transition dinner will be held on **Tuesday, June 1, 2027** from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Please save the date so we can celebrate the school year together!

2026-2027 Weston PTO Board Contact List

President	Michelle Callanan	president@westonmapto.org	617 429 2273
Vice President	Jeff Lucas	jlucas422@gmail.com	781 290 9500
Treasurer	Diana Jackson	dianahjackson@yahoo.com	617 717 4719
Secretary	Anna Berger	annasboston@gmail.com	617 818 7382
Legal Counsel	Lizzie Pignatelli	lizziecarr@gmail.com	517 285 9279
Country School	Jessica Catlin	tajhilliard@gmail.com	781 249 3440
	Nicole Charos	nmloux@gmail.com	201 230 0200
Woodland School	Erin Bascom	bascom.m.erin@gmail.com	617 922 3327
	Nicole Warren	nblais19@gmail.com	617 460 9862
Field School	Jaclyn McDonald	jstraversi@gmail.com	508 826 5346
	Maggie Corson	maggiemcorson@gmail.com	352 598 3223
Middle School	Lisa Battistoni	lisa.battistoni@hotmail.com	631 807 7624
	Lauren Cofino	laurencofino@yahoo.com	415 596 9015
High School	Jenny Rodriguez	jtrodriguez1106@gmail.com	617 922 1623
	Arghavan Batal	arghavanshahidi@hotmail.com	617 680 8318
Community Outreach	Laurie DiBona	laurie.dibona@gmail.com	716 983 7192
	Kim Rocco	kimmers.rocco@gmail.com	617 304 7264
	Shannon Glick	shannon.m.mcauliffe@gmail.com	508 868 7814
Parent Education	Vinda Souza	vindarao@gmail.com	617 750 2774
	Hannah Crawford	hpmoran@gmail.com	774 200 1693
	Taran Pawar	tkpawar@gmail.com	559 392 9307
Family Engagement	Ashley Boer	ashley.boer@yahoo.com	401 636 0079
	Jackie Whitten	jackieswhitten@gmail.com	617 799 2390
	Cheryl Silveri	cheryl.silveri@gmail.com	860 930 9422
Communications/ Westword	Katie Daunis	kgrinnell4@yahoo.com	612 210 9367
	Alexi DiCosola	alexidico@gmail.com	781 400 4053
	Simi Saini	satwant02@gmail.com	617 955 9999
	Casey Selover	cselover@gmail.com	617 548 6229
Directory	Ashley Jester	ashley.jester@gmail.com	724 840 4783

Membership	Abby Prague	abigail.prague@gmail.com	301 219 8357
	Christine Fragale	christinelynnfragale@gmail.com	401 486 2130
	Alice Zhang	alice@ajaclub.com	617 806 6205
Green Team	Phoebe Beierie	pbeierle@gmail.com	607 342 4517
	Mojgan Anvari	mojgan.anvari@gmail.com	949 702 0007
STEAM	Amy Casilio	ancasilio@gmail.com	626 696 0204
	Carla Smith	carlaworthingtonsmith@gmail.com	339 222 0241
	Alden Jones	aldenjones@mac.com	617 212 2293
	Stephanie Krebs	sk004e@gmail.com	301 788 1309
	Mallory Walker	mallory.h.walker@gmail.com	314 803 2507
WEEFC Liaison	Taylor McIntire	taylor.mcintire@me.com	617 306 8601
METCO/BWMPO Liaison	Shatasha Mayo	rmayos718@aol.com	617 894 8183
School Committee Liaison	Jane Li	lij@weston.org	617 697 7030
SEPAC Liaison	Amy Casilio	ancasilio@gmail.com	626 696 0204
WFAC Liaison	Yunji Davenport	yunji.davenport@gmail.com	615 972 0391
WeStar Liaison	Xiaolin (Lin) Chen	xiaolinchen955@gmail.com	508 960 9996

Board Expectations and Conflicts of Interest

As PTO Board members, we are expected to act in the best interests of the organization. Board members should disclose any financial or personal interests that could influence a decision, avoid participating in decisions where a conflict exists, avoid preferential treatment when selecting vendors or service providers, and seek guidance from the President or Legal Counsel whenever questions arise. All Board members acknowledge the PTO Conflict of Interest Policy annually.

Weston PTO Mission Statement

The Weston Public Schools Parent Teacher Organization (Weston PTO) is an all-volunteer, parent-run, non-profit organization committed to fostering a sense of community within our schools. We seek to keep parents connected and informed by facilitating a closer relationship between school and home and serving as the communication link between the two. At the heart of our mission is a commitment to strengthen the Weston Public Schools' capacity to provide the highest quality education possible for all students. We strive to do this by:

- Facilitating communication and supporting our schools
- Streamlining important communication through *Westword*, our weekly email newsletter, which contains school-related news and updates and information about upcoming programs and events at school and within the community
- Hosting various Parent Forums within each of the five schools throughout the year
- Sponsoring and planning Parent Education events and speakers
- Identifying visiting artists, authors, scientists, and performers for students in grades Pre-K–12, then submitting those opportunities to WEEFC for grant funding
- Organizing Community Outreach drives that support local charitable organizations, while affording students an opportunity to practice social responsibility and compassion for others
- Offering our members a directory of students, families, and faculty/staff
- Coordinating volunteers for school events and providing supplemental supplies and resources
- Hosting numerous faculty/staff appreciation events in every school throughout the school year

Our annual budget is raised solely through membership dues. We urge all families with children attending the Weston Public Schools to join as PTO members each school year.

Parent involvement is a fundamental part of what makes a school community rich and robust. We take great pride in the strength of our PTO and encourage you to learn more about our programs and get involved in any of the many volunteer opportunities that work with your interests and schedule.

PTO Communications Guidelines

The PTO seeks to keep WPS families *connected* and *informed* by facilitating a closer relationship between school and home and serving as the communication link between the two. Effective communication is central to our mission.

A. Communications Objectives

Although most PTO communications are directed at our member families, we also regularly communicate with the wider Weston school community: Weston Public Schools families, superintendents and principals, teachers and staff, and the School Committee. The table below summarizes our audience and the objective of our communications.

AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES
WPS families	● Build relationships among families in the school community by encouraging participation as an attendee or volunteer in PTO-sponsored or other school-related activities ● Raise awareness of issues relevant to the school community ● Encourage financial or in-kind contributions to worthy community and school-centered causes ● Raise awareness of the PTO's contributions to the school community and thus encourage PTO membership
Superintendent and principals	● Understand issues of importance to school administration and facilitate awareness and communication to WPS families
Teachers and staff members	● Act as a communication channel between teachers/staff and WPS families
School Committee	● Act as a neutral communication channel between School Committee and WPS families ● Highlight the PTO's contributions to the school community and seek feedback

B. Communications Content

The key role of the PTO is to keep WPS families connected and informed, and we should strive to ensure that our communications are relevant, timely, and complete.

- Actively promote activities sponsored or supported by the PTO, our "partner" organizations (WEEFC, WCCA, BWMPO or Weston Booster groups) and the Weston Public Schools.
- Content from other community organizations (e.g., Land's Sake Farm, the Rotary Club of Wayland & Weston, the Weston Recreation department, local sports organizations) should be directed to the Westword editors for inclusion in the community news section of the e-newsletter.
- Give credit to the PTO! Each communication from the PTO to the school community is an opportunity to promote the PTO brand. Each communication should always include a reference to the PTO (e.g., "This event is sponsored by the PTO" or "The PTO STEAM Committee presents…").
- Foster awareness about pertinent issues and matters that concern the school community. As the PTO Board, we maintain a neutral stance. We can provide factual information about school-related issues without adding personal opinions or engaging in editorializing, while also emphasizing the appropriate channels for directing questions and comments.
- Always be respectful. Do not use photographs, especially of WPS students, without permission. See the "Use of Photos and Videos with Weston Students" section below for more information.
- PTO communication channels should not:
    - Advertise or promote any business, although we can acknowledge contributions or donations by businesses to PTO events.
    - Endorse a political candidate or platform. The PTO is a 501(c)(4) tax-exempt organization and we are required to follow IRS rules. Specifically, we cannot be involved in political campaigns, either directly or indirectly.
    - Use any contact information available through Membership Toolkit for business development or political campaign purposes.

C. PTO Communications Channels

The Weston PTO relies on a variety of channels to distribute information.

- Westword e-newsletter: This weekly e-newsletter, distributed via email on Sunday, provides announcements about PTO-sponsored or school-related activities and about community events. The editors group the announcements by school, and a "community news" section also provides a venue for announcements not directly related to the schools or PTO.
    - If you would like to submit an announcement for publication in Westword, send it to the Westword editors westword@weston.org by the Monday before the upcoming week's publication (or such other deadline announced by the Westword editors)

    - If you receive a request to distribute an announcement about an activity that is not sponsored by the PTO but would be of interest and relevant to WPS families, guide the requestor to the Westword editors who, in conjunction with the president and vice president, decide if the activity or event should be included in the community news section.
- Email messages: Outside of Westword, the PTO's most consistently used communications tool is email messages, which are sent via the Membership Toolkit platform. Please try to consolidate emails as much as reasonably possible.
- PTO social media channels: The PTO communications chairs manage the PTO pages on Instagram. They also use YouTube for the posting of recordings of PTO-sponsored events, typically the parent-education seminars. (See the "PTO Social Media Posts" section for more information.)
- Posters and fliers: We are moving away from traditional flyers. In an effort to be more green, schools no longer put flyers in backpacks.
- PTO website: The District maintains the PTO's web page, which is embedded in the Weston Public Schools website. The PTO's web page serves primarily as a repository for important information about the PTO that does not change frequently. Other channels, like Westword or email, are better suited for more dynamic, time-sensitive information. Contact Julia Neulight (neulightj@weston.org), the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, if you would like to incorporate content into the PTO's web page.
- Weston Public Schools calendar: The school community can learn about PTO-sponsored activities through the calendar available on the WPS website. Contact Julia Neulight (neulightj@weston.org), the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, to add any PTO-sponsored events to the WPS calendar.
- PTO board meetings: Members of the school community can attend the board's monthly meetings to learn more about the PTO's activities and initiatives and to provide their input. These meetings are open to the public.
- Annual PTO update to the School Committee: In June each year, the PTO President and Vice President deliver a presentation at a School Committee meeting. This presentation highlights the PTO's contributions during the previous school year and it provides a forum for the Committee to provide feedback. To prepare for the presentation, the President typically seeks input, including digital assets like photos, from board members that reflect the scope of their activities during the year.

D. PTO Social Media Posts

- The Communications team created a Google Form for PTO Board members to submit photos and information that you would like posted on the PTO's main Instagram and Facebook accounts.
- Please submit social media ready photos and posts.
- Please make your best efforts to submit information a week before it needs to be posted, but the Communications team has discretion about timing of posts and they try to space the posts out in a thoughtful way.

- Social media should not be text-heavy. They should be eye-catching and interesting. The text will be in the caption. Membership Toolkit and Instagram do not allow you to upload PDFs. Please only use JPEGs.
- Instagram allows you to post 10 photos per post. That is a lot and will only be needed for events such as the Global Diversity Fair, which has so much to highlight. For most events, please choose 1-3 photos that best represent your event.
- On the Google Form, please include the caption you would like the Communications team to post. They do not always have knowledge of or information about the different events so the more information that can be provided, the better. When people see these posts, we want them to know this is what their membership dues are supporting and feel good about it!

E. Use of Photos and Videos of Weston Public School Students

Federal and state laws allow schools to disclose student photographs. However, parents and eligible students have the right to "opt out" of this disclosure. Any opt-out forms received by the school are kept in the main office of a child's school.

To observe the privacy of all individuals – especially children – please ask for permission from a parent before posting or distributing their child's photo publicly or contact the child's school main office to check if an opt-out form was submitted for that child. **This confirmation must be done for each student in the photograph**. Once you have determined that no opt-out form is on file for the children in the photo, you may disclose the photograph publicly. Please always verify with the Communications team that you have obtained permission to publish photographs before asking for publication to any PTO social media channel.

This confirmation is not required for photos of four or more students, preferably from behind the group where children's faces are not the subject of the photograph. To learn more, see the Weston Public Schools Photo and Video Consent Notification and Waiver Form, which provides that:

> "If your child has not stepped out of a group photo with four or more people, we cannot guarantee the child's image will not be published. Please instruct your child to step out of photos to be certain your child's image will not inadvertently be published."

F. PTO Board Neutrality and Member Communications

The PTO Board is dedicated to serving all families enrolled in the Weston Public Schools and recognizes the existence of diverse opinions on various matters. The Board's role is to raise awareness about issues relevant to the school community while maintaining neutrality regarding political issues, parties, and candidates. We are committed to providing and pointing to factual information without adding personal opinions or subjective commentary, and reiterating where to direct any questions or comments.

We acknowledge the deep commitment of PTO Board Members to our schools, their well-informed perspectives, and their personal investment in matters affecting our school community. Holding a position on the PTO Board does not preclude you from possessing or expressing personal viewpoints on critical issues, supporting a political candidate, or running for office. The PTO Communication guidelines are not intended to limit your individual expression.

Nonetheless, as a PTO Board member, you are a community leader and your words may carry substantial influence when discussing topics closely connected to our schools. You should always be clear that when you are expressing your opinion in public, you are doing so as an individual and not as a member of the PTO Board. Your personal communication should be clearly distinguished from that of the PTO Board and should not imply (directly or indirectly) that you represent the PTO Board.

Before you engage in any public discourse touching upon our schools, please use your best judgment and think about the potential impact and any unintended consequences of your message. As PTO Board Members, we strive to serve as a valuable resource for all WPS families, and to foster a welcoming environment that respects diverse opinions and encourages inclusivity.

Board members may occasionally become aware of confidential information relating to personnel matters, student or family issues, nominations, contracts, or Board deliberations. Such information should be treated respectfully and should not be shared outside the Board unless disclosure has been authorized or is otherwise appropriate.

Membership Toolkit

- Membership Toolkit is used by the Weston PTO to communicate with families either district-wide or by school.
- Membership Toolkit is also the PTO directory platform.
- The family data in Membership Toolkit is provided to the Weston PTO from the District in August and uploaded into Membership Toolkit.
- Families must opt out through the District if they do not wish to have their information published in the PTO Directory.
- PowerSchool is the platform used by the District and the schools to communicate, and includes all WPS families.
- Each August, the District automatically enrolls all parents to the District's messaging system (PowerSchool). If information is incorrect in PowerSchool, families need to contact their school.
- Westword (the PTO newsletter) is distributed by the District using the PowerSchool database and is sent to all WPS families.
- All other PTO communications are sent via Membership Toolkit and are usually only received by families who are members of the PTO.
- Likewise, only PTO members have access to the PTO directory (via Membership Toolkit).

A. Data Corrections

- If there are errors with the data in Membership Toolkit, it is usually because the data is incorrect in the District's database (PowerSchool).
- To correct data, families should: a) contact their individual school to correct their data in PowerSchool; and b) then change/correct the data in Membership Toolkit.
- It is important to remember that a change made to the data in Membership Toolkit does NOT mean it will be corrected in the District's database.
- **What if a family joins the District after the initial "upload" of family data into Membership Toolkit? Will they receive PTO communications?** Yes, but only if they join the PTO.
- **I changed my email address. How do I update my Membership Toolkit login?** To update your email address, log in to Membership Toolkit and go to your Account Profile by clicking on your name in the login box. Select the Access tab, and complete the information in the Invite Others section to invite another email address to access your Account Profile. This is where you will put your new email address, but be sure to use your current password. Then, click "send invite" to receive an email at your new email address. Just click on the link in that email to confirm your new email address then you will be directed to select a password for your new email address. You can go back and delete your original email address by logging in with your new email address, going to your Account Profile once again, and removing the old login email address from the record.

- **I Signed Up to Join the PTO. How Can I Tell if My Membership Went Through?** For those who wonder if their membership/payment went through, here is how to direct the person making the inquiry:
    - Go to the Membership Toolkit website: https://westonpto.membershiptoolkit.com/home
    - Log into your account using your registered email address and password. If you are a new user, please "Create Account" first.
    - Once logged in, hover the mouse on "My Account" in the blue ribbon and a dropdown window will appear, then select "Previous Orders". If your membership purchase went through, you should see the order number, date placed, status and so on.
    - Click "View" on the right end, the receipt details including the membership through date will be displayed.

B. How to Send Communications via Membership Toolkit

To send email communications via Membership Toolkit (these will also post to your respective community/message boards), GO TO:
https://westonpto.membershiptoolkit.com/board/7981

CLICK ON: Communications
There is a drop-down menu of email distribution lists. Find the one you wish/have access to send to and click on it. For example, to send an email to the 10th grade, you would click on "Weston 10th Grade"

CLICK ON: "Add Message"
This button appears on the right side of your screen (you may need to scroll down just a tad, to where the most recent message to the class appears). Add your message title, body, and if you have a file to attach, such as a picture or a flyer, you can do that there.

IS YOUR MESSAGE READY TO GO? CLICK ON: "Save and Send Notifications"
Once your message is ready, you click "Save and Send Notifications" which will immediately send your message to the 10th grade distribution (or the list you choose), AND post on that page's message board.

C. Permissions to Communicate in Membership Toolkit

The Directory chair(s) will give PTO Board members access to communicate with their respective schools in Membership Toolkit and may, if requested, also provide permissions to class and grade parents. Please contact the Directory chair(s) with questions or to troubleshoot.

D. Ownership of PTO Records and Accounts

- PTO records belong to the PTO.

- Shared folders should remain in PTO-controlled Google Drives.
- Passwords should be transferred to successors.
- Canva, social media, Membership Toolkit, PayPal, shared email accounts, etc., should remain under PTO control.
- Outgoing chairs should transfer all electronic materials before completing their term.

PTO Budget Process

PTO budgets are developed with the President, the Vice President and school/committee chairs and approved by the PTO Board. The budget process serves as a mechanism by which school and committee chairs create a roadmap of activities and funds needed for the upcoming school year.

PTO committee and school funds do not rollover from one year to the next. Unused funds are transferred to the “main” PTO account.

In February 2027, Board members will receive budget spreadsheets via email. Spreadsheets will include columns for: 2026-2027 budget; 2026-2027 YTD spend; 2026-2027 Forecast; and 2027-2028 request. Each chair will be responsible for filling in their 2026-2027 forecast and 2027-2028 budget request. As necessary, the PTO President, Vice-President and Treasurer will schedule budget meetings with the chairs.

The below table is a partial example (subject to modifications) of how we plan to ask for 2027-2028 budget information. You will be provided with numbers for the first two columns (Budget Item, 2026-2027 Budget, 2026-2027 YTD Spend). You will be responsible for filling in the final two columns (2026-2027 Forecast, 2027-2028 Budget Request).

Budget Item	**2026-2027 Budget**	**2026-2027 YTD Spend**	**2026-2027 Forecast**	**2027-2028 Budget Request**
Faculty-Staff Appreciation	$900	$600	$900	$900
Beautification	$300	$0	$250	$300
Hospitality	$300	$200	$300	$300
Discretionary	$1,380	$380	$1,360	$1,380
Community Events	$400	$100	$350	$400

During our April 2027 Board meeting, the Board will vote on the 2027-2028 PTO budget. It is typically the case that budgets remain “flat” year over year. Nevertheless, there are occasions when the PTO Board members identify opportunities which benefit the District, and recommendations are made (and votes are taken) to make changes to the upcoming budget.

Expense Reimbursements

Before making purchases, Board members should ensure the expense falls within their approved budget. Expenses outside an approved budget or unusually large expenditures should receive prior approval from the President and Treasurer. Please visit the Weston PTO web page for information about expense reimbursements and for the expense reimbursement form. Please note that all expense reports for 2026-2027 must be submitted prior to June 30, 2027, or on a date determined by the PTO Treasurer. Below is a sample check request form which you will find by clicking on the above-referenced link.

PTO WESTON CHECK REQUEST

Mail to: Diana Jackson 781.373.2687
195 Boston Post Road, Weston, MA 02493 dianahjackson@yahoo.com

FROM: _____ DATE: _____

Please issue PTO check as follows:

Name of payee: _____

Mail to: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____

Description of expenses: _____

_____

Charge to specific school or committee below:

School (Please select both school & category for expense)

- ☐ Country School
- ☐ Woodland School
- ☐ Field School
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School

- ☐ Beautification
- ☐ Faculty-Staff Appreciation
- ☐ Hospitality
- ☐ Community Events
- ☐ Discretionary
- ☐ High School Graduation ☐ Freshman Class Support
- ☐ Other _____

Committee

- ☐ Calendar – Directory
- ☐ SEPAC
- ☐ Community Outreach
- ☐ Creative Arts
- ☐ Performers
- ☐ Family Engagement
- ☐ Other _____

- ☐ Membership
- ☐ Green
- ☐ Parent Ed
- ☐ President's Discretionary
- ☐ Science & Math
- ☐ Website

Chair Signature (if required) _____

DO NOT WRITE BELOW LINE – TO BE COMPLETED BY PTO TREASURER

Date Paid _____ Check no. _____

Revised June 2017

Collecting Money from Families

Nearly every school hosts one or more events that are funded through a parent collection and not through the annual PTO committee budget (e.g. some teacher appreciation events, 5th Grade Celebration Day, 8th grade year-end events). We need to be clear with parents in our communication about the purpose of the request and any rollover fund plans (see below for best practices). Ideally, all parent-collected funds are used in the academic year they are collected. The flow of these funds at year end is detailed below:

- Any unused family-collected funds for grades K-3 will be transferred to the general PTO account at the end of the academic year.
- Any unused family-collected funds for grades 4-5, EXCLUDING funds collected for the 5th Grade Celebration Day, will be transferred to the general PTO account at the end of the academic year.
- Any unused family-collected funds for 5th Grade Celebration Day will be transferred to the credit of that graduating class (i.e Class of 2033). Please send a check to Carolyn Langdon at the Weston Middle School, payable to “Town of Weston.”
- Any unused family-collected funds for grades 6-7 will be transferred to the credit of that graduating class (e.g., class of 2031 or 2032). Please send a check to Carolyn Langdon at the Weston Middle School, payable to “Town of Weston.”
- Any unused family-collected funds for grade 8 will be transferred to the credit of that class at Weston High School. Please send a check to Laura Skinner at the Weston High School, payable to “Town of Weston.”
- Any unused family-collected funds for grades 9-12 will be transferred to the general PTO account at the end of the academic year.
- WHS class parents, as well as the WHS faculty advisors, assist with events for the benefit of each high school class. Those funds are generally directly deposited or transferred into that class’s account.

A. Sources of Funding for School Chairs

	PTO Budget	**School Chair Eastern Bank Accounts** (five accounts: CS, WS, FS, MS, HS)	**Middle and High School Class Accounts** (organized by graduation year for each class)
Funding Source	Membership dues *Membership dues are used to create a budget for the year	**Parent "asks" using:** - PTO Paypal account/link. Money collected flows straight into your Eastern Bank class account. - PTO Treasurer will provide the PayPal link - funds received by cash or check should also be deposited to the Eastern Bank account - the use of Venmo or similar platforms is strongly discouraged	- Class fundraising - School store
What are the Funds used for?	PTO-sponsored activities throughout the year	Supplemental funds for PTO-sponsored events or activities (e.g., teacher appreciation, holiday gifts) **Parent asks should be**: -Limited in number throughout the year. Try to use your PTO budget first. -Specific about where the money will go -Include a suggested donation amount -Include a disclosure that donations collected in excess of what is needed will be transferred to the general PTO account at the end of the academic year	This money is used to fund big ticket activities like the 8th grade DC trip and graduation celebrations

Who Controls the Funds?	PTO Treasurer (Diana Jackson)	School Chairs *Must complete paperwork with Eastern Bank to gain access to the account. *PTO Treasurer monitors monthly account statements	Middle and High School finance contacts
How do I access the money?	Check Request	School Chairs can use cash, checks, or debit card from the Eastern Bank account	Contact Middle and High School finance contacts
What happens to unused funds at the end of the year?	Rollover to the main PTO account at the end of the academic year	Rollover to the main PTO account at the end of the academic year	Money follows the class

B. Bank Accounts

The PTO holds bank accounts at Eastern Bank. The PTO Treasurer has oversight and signing rights on these accounts.

"Main" PTO Account
All funds raised from PTO membership dues are housed in the "main" PTO bank account. This account is used as the primary source of funds to reimburse PTO chairs/committees members or vendors (via check request to the Treasurer).

School Chair Accounts
Bank accounts for each school have been set up at Eastern Bank to manage funds collected from "asks" from families. The Treasurer is the custodian of each account and school chairs should add their names as signers to individual accounts. As school chair roles change, the existing chair will have their name removed from the account and the incoming chair can have their name added. Incoming and outgoing chairs will need to visit the Eastern Bank Weston branch to have names added/removed as signers. The Treasurer will also serve as a signer on all accounts during their tenure in the Treasurer role.

C. Best Practices for Collecting Money from Families

- OUTREACH LANGUAGE: Initiatives funded by parent collections should be very specific in the use of the funds, the stated use of any excess funds, and,

where possible, a suggested amount. In any parent/guardian “ask”, please include:
    - The purpose of the ask (e.g., “Staff Appreciation” or “5th Grade Celebration Day”)
    - The specific use of the funds (e.g., “luncheon” or “holiday gift” or “games for a family game night”)
    - The plan for use of any excess funds (e.g., “any unused funds will rollover to a year-end appreciation event” or “any unused funds will be rolled into the general PTO fund at the end of the academic year”
    - A reminder that funds collected by the PTO are not tax deductible as we are incorporated as a 501(c)4
    - PTO strongly discourages the use of personal Venmo accounts to collect money from parent “asks”
- COLLECTION VIA PAYPAL: Each school account now has a Paypal account with an associated “Donate” link. The link allows a parent to use a credit card, Paypal account or bank account to participate in a school or class collection. Parents/guardians do not need to have a Paypal account to send funds through this button. (While we would prefer these were named “Collection” rather than “Donate” buttons, this is hard-coded by PayPal.)
- School Chairs, should they choose to, can guide room/class parents to collect via the PayPal link as well. There is a memo function that can help school chairs differentiate the collected funds. It is the responsibility of the school chair to work with class/room parents to hand off those funds to room/class parents as appropriate.
- Checks and Cash: If parents/guardians prefer to contribute via check or cash, these funds can be deposited in the Cambridge Trust (Eastern Bank) school account. Checks can be written to the “Weston PTO” with the memo line noting the school name.
- Square: PTO has a Square device available for in person collection for Membership sales only. Funds collected through a Square for membership will flow to our main PTO account.

D. Fundraising vs. “Asks”

Weston is fortunate to have two outstanding organizations dedicated to supporting our public schools: the Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee (WEEFC) and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). While they share a common commitment to enhancing the educational experience for Weston students, each serves a distinct role.

WEEFC is the fundraising arm of the school community. A subcommittee of the Weston School Committee, WEEFC raises tax-deductible donations from the community to fund enrichment opportunities across grades Pre-K–12.

The Weston PTO is focused on volunteerism, community connections, and the facilitation of strong relationships between home and school. More specifically, the PTO facilitates weekly communication, creates district directories, and hosts parent forums

with novel content. The PTO creates multiple school-level community and spirit events, organizes volunteers for many school initiatives, and puts on staff appreciation events. Although WEEFC and the PTO are separate organizations, they work closely together in many areas with the shared goal of supporting the Weston Public Schools. For example, the PTO's STEAM Committee identifies visiting artists, authors, scientists, and performers for students in grades Pre-K–12, and then submits those enrichment opportunities to WEEFC for grant funding. While WEEFC and the PTO support and collaborate, many WEEFC-funded grants and events are developed independently of the PTO, just as the PTO sponsors numerous community-building programs and activities supported solely through PTO membership dues.

As outlined prior, our PTO school chairs are likely to have collection events that fall outside of their budgets. We specifically request that these requests for funds be characterized as "asks" and not "fundraising." As well, we should be mindful about the pace, magnitude and timing of these asks to ensure that our WEEFC partners do not face confusion on the initiatives or donor fatigue.

E. Massachusetts State Ethics Commission Guidance on Gift Giving to Public School Teachers and Staff

The Massachusetts State Ethics Commission provides guidance on gift giving to public school teachers and staff. The full guidance is available here. All Weston PTO board members should refer to the guidance when considering faculty and staff appreciation.

PTO Special Projects (Surplus Funds)

At its meeting in January 2024, the PTO Board approved a motion that $56,000 be kept in the PTO Surplus line item as a reserve or emergency fund, which funds could be spent with approval by the Board. The Board further approved a process whereby the PTO President, in consultation with other PTO Board members and other District partners, could bring forward for the Board's review and approval initiatives that are aligned to the PTO's mission with the goal of allocating the remaining $60,000 in surplus funds.

At the Board's meeting in March 2024, the Board was presented with a form whereby requests for special funding requests outside of regular committee budgets could be described and brought forward for the Board's consideration. The proposed funding should align with the PTO's mission: to build connection and community, serve as a vital communications link, provide curriculum support, and champion the celebration of students, families, faculty, staff, and administration. The PTO aims to be nimble, creative, and enthusiastic in meeting our school community needs and we encourage the Board to be thoughtful about these opportunities as they arise. We hope that this structure will assist the PTO Board in considering how we can best serve our Weston school community.

Special project funding will not be approved until the proposal is presented to the Board and approved by a majority vote of the Board. Funding for special projects that are approved by the Board will be tracked by the Treasurer, who will prepare a periodic report to be presented to the Board about how these funds were allocated and used.

Weston PTO Board Position Summaries

President (Term: 1 year, following 1 year as Vice President)
1 position
The President coordinates the work of the PTO, and works closely with PTO school chairs, committee chairs, and Administration. Regular responsibilities include preparing for and leading the monthly PTO Board meetings; meeting with the Superintendent (typically one week prior to the monthly PTO Board meeting); communicate with school principals, attend PAAC, STEM Council, and WEEFC Board meetings as needed and able; review Westword weekly; and additional work as needed by the Board and District. The person in this role should possess strong leadership, communication, management, and organizational skills.

Vice President (Term: 2 consecutive years; 1 year as Vice President; following 1 year as President)
1 position
The Vice President's responsibilities include assisting the President as needed and actively engaging in Board discussions and decision-making processes. The Vice President, in partnership with the PTO President, meets with the Superintendent and attends School Committee meetings, WEEFC Board meetings, PAAC, and STEM Council meetings as needed. In addition, the Vice President oversees School Council elections for each school.

If the President is absent, the Vice President will perform the duties of the President. The person in this role should possess leadership, communication, management, and organizational skills. The Vice President will serve as President in the following academic year.

Treasurer (Term: Minimum 2 years)
1 position
The Treasurer oversees the cash flow, income, and expenses for the PTO. Responsibilities include writing checks, reimbursements and preparing the Treasurer's reports. The Treasurer leads the budgeting process, working alongside the President, Vice President, and Committee Chairs. A person with a financial background is desired.

Secretary (Term: Minimum 2 years)
1 position
In advance of PTO Board meetings, the Secretary compiles updates from the PTO chairs and committees and, working with the President, Vice President and Treasurer, distributes the agenda and reports in advance of the Board meeting. The Secretary attends PTO Board meetings, takes notes and prepares the meeting minutes. The Secretary retains and archives meeting minutes and Board reports.

Legal Counsel (Term: Minimum 2 Years)
1 position; potential for 1 additional position

Legal Counsel is responsible for completing and filing all corporate documents, including annual reports and IRS forms. In addition, Legal Counsel is called upon to provide advice and counsel to the PTO President and Board members, including review of contracts or other obligations. Legal Counsel is responsible for reviewing and updating the PTO by-laws (if necessary) and distributing and collecting Board members' acknowledgement of conflict of interest guidelines.

Communications (Term: 2 years)
3-4 positions
The Communications team manages PTO social media channels and assists with messaging and branding efforts. In conjunction with the District, they oversee the Westword newsletter and evaluate communication opportunities.

Country, Woodland, and Field School Chairs (Term: 2 years)
2 positions per school
Country, Woodland and Field School chairs coordinate PTO-sponsored school events, teacher appreciation events, and may attend School Council meetings. The school chairs serve as a liaison between the PTO, school administration, and families. Chair responsibilities include identifying, assigning, and managing room parents for each class, including providing an orientation meeting and regular meetings throughout the year. The chairs work with volunteers to coordinate and execute school-wide PTO efforts, including teacher and staff appreciation and student events including 3rd Grade Fun Day and 5th Grade Celebration Day. Chairs work closely with their respective school principals to support curriculum and act as a communications channel between the school and families.

Weston Middle School Chairs (Term: 2 years)
2 positions
Middle School chairs coordinate PTO-sponsored school events, teacher appreciation events, and may attend School Council meetings. The school chairs serve as a liaison between the PTO, school administration, and families. They coordinate volunteers for PTO events and school activities at the Middle School. The chairs communicate regularly with grade-level teacher heads related to class and grade activities. The chairs also meet regularly with the principal and assistant principal to support curriculum and act as a communications channel between the school and families.

Weston High School Chairs (Term: 2 years)
2 positions
The High School chairs serve as liaisons between the PTO, school principal, assistant principal, and the parent community. The chairs meet regularly with the principal and assistant principal to discuss school matters and coordinate school events such as teacher appreciation and monthly principal's coffees. The chairs host monthly class parent meetings with the director of student activities to assist with grade-level activities, fundraisers and events. Chairs also coordinate with faculty members to help with special projects as needed.

Family Engagement (Term: 2 Years)
3-4 positions
Family Engagement chairs welcome new families to the District and foster community connections through outreach and events. Responsibilities include contacting new families to Weston, recruiting current families to serve as “Welcome Ambassadors” to new families, and providing families with a comprehensive packet of current information about the Town of Weston, the Weston Public Schools, local sports and recreation, community activities and useful links/apps for school-related contacts.

Membership and Directory (Term: 2 Years)
3-4 positions
Membership and Directory chairs lead the PTO membership drive and manage the electronic directory. They coordinate promotion of PTO membership. They also track membership information/statistics and coordinate a schedule of PTO board members to attend events where new potential members are in attendance. The Membership and Directory chairs also lead the annual back to school ice cream social for the elementary schools.

The membership team is also responsible for the Membership Toolkit platform and creation and maintenance of the electronic directory. The chairs liaise with the District to update and maintain the PTO’s online directory. The chairs are also responsible for answering questions and troubleshooting any Membership Toolkit related issues for the PTO board members.

Community Outreach (Term: 2 years)
2-3 positions
The mission of the Community Outreach team is to provide resources and support to community organizations in need and to introduce our children to philanthropy and encourage compassion for others. Responsibilities include determining which charitable organizations and activities to support in a given year (typically 3-4) and outlining the scope of the programs; reviewing program details with relevant school administrators and fielding questions, as needed; staying abreast of local Programs/Drives outside of the PTO to limit overlap; devising and distributing appropriate communications and marketing materials relating to each charitable organization supported.

Parent Education (Term: 2 years)
2-3 positions
The Parent Education team works with school administrators, town organizations, as well as community and faculty leaders to identify relevant topics and issues that are of interest to the parent community across all grades. Parent Education then organizes educational events for parents.

STEAM (Term: 2 years)
3-4 positions
The STEAM Committee (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) promotes and coordinates enriching STEAM experiences for students across Weston

Public Schools. Working in partnership with district curriculum leaders, school administrators and WEEFC, the committee supports programming that enhances both the creative and STEM curricula for students in grades K–12.

The committee identifies programming needs, recommends and schedules performances, authors, speakers, workshops, and other enrichment opportunities, and prepares WEEFC grant requests to fund these initiatives. Throughout the year, members collaborate with curriculum leaders to bring high-quality educational and cultural experiences to each school.

The STEAM Committee is led by elementary and secondary chairs, who oversee communication among school representatives, lead monthly committee meetings, and serve as the liaison between committee members, PTO, WEEFC, and district staff. School representatives help identify programming needs, coordinate events for their respective schools, supervise programs as needed, and provide ongoing communication and support throughout the year.

Green Team (Term: 2 years)
2-3 positions
The Green Team supports the district in meeting, creating and implementing green goals for the schools. They work in collaboration with the Superintendent, Staff Green Team Leaders from each school, Facilities, Food Services and the Town Sustainability Committee and Sustainability Coordinator. They often collaborate with outside organizations such as SWAG and Land's Sake Farm. They assess and benchmark the district to create goals for current and future years. The Green Team works to educate the schools and PTO on best practices to reduce their environmental impact.

Vacancies
If a Board member resigns or is unable to complete their term, vacancies will be filled in accordance with the PTO Bylaws. The President, Executive Committee, or Board will communicate the process to members as appropriate.

Nominating Committee

The PTO President from the prior year serves as the Nominating Committee Chair. In January 2027, there will be communication to WPS families about available PTO Board roles for 2027-2028. Parents and guardians will be invited to send in statements indicating their interest in a position for the 2027-2028 academic year. The Nominating Committee will be formed in January 2027. The Nominating Committee is composed of: President, Vice President, Secretary, rising School Chairs, and 2-3 additional rising Board members.

During the January 2027 Board meeting, the Nominating Committee Chair will attend to formally kick-off the nominating and selection process for the 2027-2028 PTO Board and may attend additional Board meetings to provide updates. The deadline for individuals interested in joining the board will be no later than Friday, February 5, 2027. Interested individuals must submit a candidate statement of 1-2 paragraphs, which should include: their name, their child(ren)'s school and grade, prior volunteer experience, and their reasons why they are interested in a Board role. The Nominating Committee should expect to meet 5-6 times.

Interested candidates will be advised that they are not guaranteed their choice of Board position or any Board position at all, although every effort is made by the Nominating Committee to find preferred and appropriate roles for every nominee. Well in advance of the slate finalization, either the Nominating Committee Chair or the School Chair on the Nominating Committee will need to vet potential candidates with their building principal.

The Nominating Committee Chair will present the slate for the 2027-2028 PTO Board at the March 2027 meeting. If the slate is not approved as a whole, the Board will vote on each position individually. Any Board members who are up for a vote will be asked to leave the room during the discussion and vote.

Following the vote, the PTO President will send an email to all newly-elected Board members to welcome them to the Board. All co-chairs should follow up with their incoming Board colleagues/counterparts to welcome them to the Board.

School Council Elections and PTO Role

Every public school in the state is required by law, to have a School Council made up of various representatives, including elected parents. According to the Massachusetts Department of Education, School Councils are to assist principals in adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards, identifying the educational needs of students attending the school, reviewing the annual school building budget, and formulating a school improvement plan.

One of the first orders of business for the School Chairs is the School Council elections. The process for School Council election is led by the PTO Vice President, with support from the School Chairs. This action should begin during the first week of school.

1. School Chairs should confirm with your building principal the number of School Council seats available and the length of the term. Ideally, they should also determine the meeting dates for the School Council.
2. Prepare an email to families at your school and indicate the number of open School Council seats and the term length. Include other pertinent information (e.g., the meeting dates for School Council) if available.
3. Candidates need to submit a candidate statement by the deadline for nominations and the candidate statements will be made part of the voting form (ballot). As candidate statements are collected, they should be forwarded to the PTO Vice President.
4. Information about the School Council elections should be widely publicized using all PTO communications channels and the School/District channels.
5. The Director of Technology Services will set up a Google form that will be used for voting. The Google form (ballot) will be distributed after nominations close and before voting begins.
6. Once voting closes, the PTO Vice President will communicate the results to the School Chairs, who will then reach out to the successful and unsuccessful candidates.

SUGGESTED TEXT FOR COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES ABOUT SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS:

Help Shape the Future of [SCHOOL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME] has **[NUMBER] open seats** for parent/guardian representatives on the School Council. Each position has a **[XX]-year term**.

Serving on School Council is one of the most meaningful ways parents and guardians can contribute to the future of our school. School Council members work directly with the principal to discuss important school priorities, provide parent perspectives, and help shape the school's long-term direction.

As a School Council member, you will have the opportunity to:

- Build a strong working relationship with the principal and other school leaders.
- Learn more about how school decisions are made.
- Help identify priorities and opportunities to strengthen the educational experience for all students.
- Bring thoughtful parent perspectives to important school discussions.
- Work collaboratively with educators and fellow parents who are committed to helping the school thrive.

Under Massachusetts law, every public school has a School Council composed of school staff, parents/guardians, and the principal. School Councils assist principals in developing educational goals, identifying student needs, reviewing the annual school building budget, and preparing the school's improvement plan.

Most School Councils meet once a month or every other month.

If you are interested in serving, please submit a candidate statement to **[CONTACT INFORMATION]** by **4:00 p.m. ET on [DATE]**. Voting will take place from **[DATE]** to **[DATE]**.

There is no required format for candidate statements, but you may wish to include:

- Your name
- The grade(s) of your child(ren)
- Volunteer and community involvement
- Professional or other relevant experience
- Why you would like to serve on School Council
- What perspectives or strengths you would bring to the role

We encourage parents and guardians from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences to consider serving. Diverse perspectives help make School Council discussions stronger and better reflect our school community.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

SAMPLE CANDIDATE STATEMENT FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL:

My name is Jane Doe, and I am excited to be running for the XXX School Council. My family and I have been a part of the Weston School District since 2014, and we have three wonderful children attending Weston public schools: Jack (WHS), Susie (WMS), and Sam (Country).

I am passionate about fostering the continued success and development of our students as they progress through the Weston school system. I firmly believe that a strong education is not just about academics but also about nurturing well-rounded, thoughtful,

and responsible individuals. To achieve this, it requires the collaboration of involved parents and motivated educators.

In my professional life, I currently work part-time as the director of marketing and communications for a not-for-profit community theater. This role has honed my ability to work harmoniously with diverse groups of stakeholders, ensuring effective communication and collaboration.

Outside of work, I have been an active community volunteer with the Weston Community Children's Association (WCCA). Recently, I served as the co-chair of parent education, where I had the opportunity to contribute to the enrichment of parents and students alike. I have also been actively involved as a room parent at Country School, fostering a sense of community and support among students and parents.

Furthermore, my family and I volunteer regularly with the Weston Council on Aging (COA), recognizing the importance of intergenerational connections within our community.

With my deep commitment to our schools and community, I believe I can bring a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective to the School Council. I am dedicated to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to enhance the educational experience of our students, ensuring they have the resources and support they need to thrive.

If elected, I will be a proactive advocate for our students, parents, and educators. Together, we can continue to build a strong foundation for the education and character development of our students in the Weston Public Schools.

Thank you for your consideration, and I kindly ask for your support in this endeavor.

Green Event Guidelines

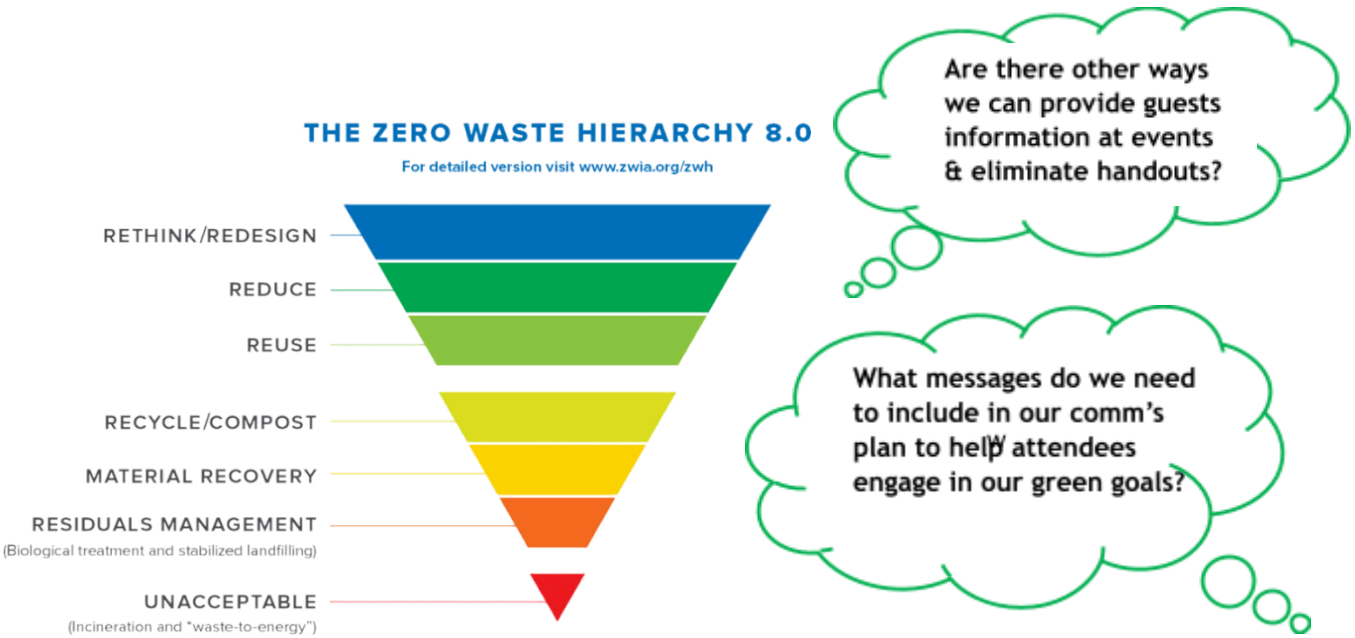
The Weston PTO is committed to promoting environmental responsibility and sustainability in our events, contributing to a more sustainable community while creating enjoyable and memorable experiences. We acknowledge that implementing changes may be challenging, as change is inherently difficult and may not always be well-received by everyone, but it remains a priority for our efforts.

Together, we can serve as models for making a positive impact!

Focus on Redesign & Reduction!	Plan ahead to maximize green options	Communicate clearly all green guidelines	Use onsite recycling and/ or composting

Focus on Redesign & Reduction

Remember the 3 R's? The industry has expanded its thinking as zero waste has become a goal for many organizations. When planning for a sustainable event, the biggest impact can be made at the top of the funnel with **RETHINK/REDESIGN, REDUCE & REUSE**.



A great example of RETHINKING & REDUCING that PTO should be proud of is around the **Principal Coffee Hours**.

Historically, at this event boxed coffee and tea with disposable cups and associated materials was purchased for attendees, much of which was not consumed. Now the event is advertised as a BYOB and parents bring their own reusable mug or bottle with their drink of preference, helping reduce waste throughout the year.

Tips for Reducing Waste – Reduce then Reuse!

- **Borrow Before Buying**. Borrow decorations, equipment, and supplies from other schools, the PTO storage (Middle School basement), or community organizations before purchasing new items. Check PTO storage first.
- **Right Size Orders.** Estimate attendance carefully to avoid over-purchasing food, supplies, and giveaways.
- **Bring Your Own**. Encourage attendees to bring reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, and bags.
- **Choose Sustainable Items**. Select environmentally preferable decorations, giveaways, and gifts. (see examples below)
- **Collect for Reuse**. Gather nametag holders and other reusable items at the end of the event for future use.
- **Store for Next Time**. After each event, clean, inventory, and properly store reusable decorations, signage, tablecloths, and other materials so they can be easily reused at future PTO events.

When in doubt, choose to reduce before recycling. The most sustainable item is the one that never has to be purchased or thrown away.

Foodware

- When possible, provide reusable ware, even if it's for just some items (e.g. serving trays and utensils). Every bit matters!
- Avoid buying plastic products but if needed, look for cups labeled with a #1 recycling symbol as they are most likely to be recycled.
- Paper products, although likely not recyclable when dirtied with food, are a more ecological option than plastic.
- Compostable ware with BPI, CMA or OK certification is the best option after reusables. Non-compostable certified products, including many advertised as

"biodegradable" tend to contain forever chemicals called PFAS that leach into any composting and cause more harm than good. Cost comparable options are available on Amazon but **look for these labels**!

- **Companies to check out**: Greenware, EcoProducts

Food Choices and Catering

- Serve beverages in bulk containers when possible.
- When purchasing catering or offsite food, choose food platters vs. individual items and ask if they will deliver in reusable ware that can be collected after the event.
- When communicating with catering vendors specify if utensils and individually packaged items (ex: creamers, sugars, butter) can be removed from the order. Alternatively, ask if condiments can be provided in bulk to reduce single serve packaging.
- Try to go meat free! A plant-based menu (vegan or vegetarian options) contributes much less carbon emissions.
- When feasible,choose locally produced and seasonal foods to reduce transportation-related emissions while supporting local businesses.

Plan Ahead

Planning in advance and understanding green responsibilities for events is key to delivering a sustainable event! Starting early can mean more sustainable product options are possible, recycling options onsite are not a last-minute thought, and you can communicate expectations to attendees well in advance.

Event Greening Responsibilities

The event planning team should designate at least one team member responsible for managing green responsibilities. The Green PTO Committee can be consulted early on for suggestions.

- Set realistic green goals (e.g. eliminate plastic items, use local vendors, etc).
- Communicate goals and expectations with key stakeholders (e.g. partners, school leadership, custodians, event volunteers) and reach out to the PTO Green Team for support.
- Plan for and manage waste effectively (see details below); for larger events, recruit volunteers (parents or students) to support proper sorting at the recycling, composting and trash stations.

Tips for Choosing Eco-friendly(ish) Supplies

We know kids love prizes and awards and making events special is important, but more sustainable decisions can be made without compromising the fun. Outlined below are

key considerations when selecting different products and more eco-friendly options for your events.

AVOID PLASTIC WASTE!

Giveaways

- Eco Supplies – Amazon sells a lot, but other company sites to consider: Sustainable Jungle & Earthly Goods
- Gift certificates
- Customizable recycled seed paper bookmarks
- Stamps or punch cards to earn a bigger prize at the end of the event (e.g. STEM night)
- T-shirts – consider organic/recycled cotton, support local print shops

Balloon & Glitter Alternatives

- Biodegradable glitter alternative
- Non-plastic bunting, banners, chains, garlands, etc. (Oriental Trading Post, Amazon, handmade)
- Paper flowers, paper stars, pompoms, pinwheels
- Japanese paper lanterns or balloons
- Bubbles or kites

Cleaning Supplies

- Avoid toxic chemicals & use products that have these labels. Hydrogen Peroxide based disinfectant is a great alternative to bleach.

Teacher/Staff Gifts

- Use reusable bags for a gift and packaging in one
- Potted plants vs. cut flowers are more sustainable
- Source awards/art designed by local students (Artist for Humanity Boston)

Outreach & Communications

- Communicate clearly and often about green expectations.
- Utilize electronic communication resources - QR codes are great!
- Reduce print size to make ½ or ¼ sheets & print double sided when possible.
- Design reusable print materials, avoiding one-time dates and slogans.
- Print banners and signage on sustainable materials and/or on materials that can be reused.

Example communications:

- ➢ **Don't forget your water bottle!** We are striving to reduce our event waste and Weston Schools have delicious tap water available for folks who bring their refillable bottles.
- ➢ **Why a vegetarian option?** Meatless meals are less energy intensive to produce.
- ➢ **Learn About Our Zero Waste Event Goals.** You can help PTO reduce its environmental impact by following these green event guidelines: use reusable tablecloths and banners, consider finger food that just requires a napkin and no plate/bowl, provide QR codes for people to scan instead of paper handouts, etc. (e.g. STEM, Multicultural night)
- ➢ **Reminder to teachers!** The much-anticipated Pie Extravaganza event is next week. Please consider the environment and bring in a reusable container to fill and bring home with you!

Use Onsite Recycling & Composting

PTO events should be organized to effectively recycle and compost as much as possible. **Any event hosted on Weston town property should have trash and recycling receptacles provided** (it's a state law that recyclables should not be put in the trash). Weston schools have multi-stream recycling collection and Field & Middle School have Black Earth compost collection onsite. Collaboration with school leadership and custodians, and/or the Department of Public Works (for Town Center events) is critical.

A few tips for effective waste management coordination at your event:

- **<u>Communicate Your Goals</u>:** Early on in planning, reach out to the school principal, vice principal, or relevant staff to share event date, timing, type of materials that will be generated (e.g. lots of pizza boxes) and waste management needs. Keep in mind that some events may impact custodians more significantly and the sooner those needs can be identified, the better.
- **<u>Coordinate with School Admin</u>:** As details are set, discuss a clear plan for type and location of waste sorting bins and signage needed.
- **<u>Provide Volunteer Training</u>:** Offer a brief training session for volunteers involved in event setup and cleanup. Ensure everyone

understands the proper procedures for sorting waste and utilizing recycling and/or composting bins effectively.

- **Create Waste Stations:** Recommend placing trash, recycling, and compost bins together in one clearly marked waste station, making it easier for attendees to sort materials correctly and reducing contamination.Work with custodians the day-of the event to ensure bins & signage are set up and any sorting or disposal instructions are shared with volunteers.
- **Use Picture-Based Signage:** Add clear, visual signage with photos or illustrations of actual event items (cups, napkins, chip bags, pizza boxes, utensils, etc.) to help both children and adults quickly identify the correct disposal bin.
- **Assess Success & Plan for Next Time**: Gather feedback from custodians, volunteers, attendees on what went well and where improvements could be made. Involve the PTO Green Committee to strategize about actiing on pain points and other ideas.

Bigger PTO Events

Lower Schools	Middle/HS
● Back to School Ice Cream Social ● Trunk or Treat ● Diversity Fair ● STEM Night ● 5th /3rd Grade Celebration ● Field Day(s) ● Teacher appreciation events ● Classroom teacher gifts	● Teacher appreciation events ● Back to School Nights ● Dances ● 8th /12th Grade Graduation **If you have questions about hosting a sustainable event, contact the PTO Green Committee at any time!**

Additional Resources

- Seven Generations Ahead - Zero Waste Schools Event Guide
- Sustainable(Ish) - Easy Plastic Free-Ish School Fundraiser Ideas
- Weston's commitment to sustainability – Weston Climate Action & Resilience Plan

Food Allergy Planning Checklist

The Weston Food Allergy Committee is a helpful resource to ensure school events with food are safe for all children and attendees. The WFAC has developed guidelines here. Please use these as a reference for all events. It is incredibly useful and an important resource put together by a few of our community members.

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Acknowledgement Form

Please refer to this link for the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Acknowledgement form, which must be completed by all PTO Board members and all volunteers with direct access to children.