

Westford Elementary
Parents Teachers Organization (PTO)
By-Laws

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ARTICLE I: **NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Westford Elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

ARTICLE II: **MEMBERSHIP AND DUES**

1. Membership shall be open to all parents and/or guardians of children in all Westford Public Elementary Schools, specifically grades K-5. However, any and all parents and/or guardians of students in any other grade who may be housed in any Westford Elementary School shall also be considered members of this PTO. Membership shall also be open to all teachers, staff, and volunteers in the Westford Elementary Schools. Membership in this PTO shall be made available without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin.

No dues shall be charged to the members of this PTO.

Amended May 5, 2010

ARTICLE III: **MISSION**

The Westford Elementary PTO is organized exclusively for the charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

The mission of the Westford Elementary Parent Teacher Organization is:

1. **Arts & Education Programming:** To sponsor a variety of enrichment programs for the elementary students that will augment the curriculum as established by the Westford Public Schools.
2. **Community Involvement:** To sponsor family oriented activities and/or programs that support and enhance parental involvement in the schools. **Events should be designed to serve the needs of the school community** and attract new parents and/or guardians to the PTO, keeping the organization energized and open to new ideas.
3. **Communication:** To inform parents and/or guardians of the issues, programs, and activities of the Westford Elementary Schools, and of the Westford Public Schools in general. To keep communication lines open between the Westford Elementary Schools, the Westford School Committee, and the community at large.
4. **Fundraising:** To raise funds for our elementary schools in the most productive and unobtrusive way possible in order to support **activities and spending that**

enhances the student bodies' learning experiences, the school staff and school community as a whole.

5. **Collaboration:** To provide input as a parent resource group to help school administration make decisions as they relate to issues, programs, and activities at the six elementary schools.

Amended August 18, 2004.

ARTICLE IV **MEETINGS**

Section 1: *Executive Board Meetings*

- a. The Executive Board (See Article V below) of the Westford Elementary PTO shall meet at its discretion. The board, at its first meeting of the year, shall fix the dates. A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Non-board members shall be permitted to attend Executive Board meetings only by requesting permission from the president(s) prior to the meeting.

Section 2: *General Meetings*

- a. The PTO will be required to hold general meetings during the school year. Time will be set aside prior to all Executive Board meetings for an open forum. Notice will be given to the general public via the newsletter. Any non-board members wishing to speak will notify the presidents.

Amended February 11, 2005.

Section 3: *Site-Based Coordinator Meetings*

- a. Each site-based or school coordinator (See Article VI below) shall hold meetings as deemed necessary by each school's coordinator(s). All board members of that team shall have voting privileges. There shall be one vote per school (for excess funds and other related school wide votes).

Section 4: *Special Meetings*

- a. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called by the president(s) or by a majority of the Executive Board, with no notice given. The board is authorized to vote by telephone or by e-mail or any combination thereof, if deemed necessary. The same voting requirements as present in a meeting shall govern any such vote.

- b. Special meetings of the PTO may be called by the president(s) or by a majority of the Executive Board, with seven (7) days notice having been given.
- c. Special meetings of the site-based or school teams may be called by the school coordinator(s) or by a majority of that board, with no notice given.
- d. The site-based coordinator is authorized to vote by telephone or by e-mail or any combination thereof, if deemed necessary. One vote per school. The same voting requirements as present in a meeting shall govern any such vote.

Section 5: *Open Forum*

- a. Before the scheduled beginning of Executive Board meetings and general meetings, any member of the Westford Elementary PTO may address the group in an open forum. The purpose of this open forum is to allow members to voice their ideas and opinions. The open forum period shall last for no more than 10 minutes. At this time there will not be any new issues raised by the board. After the 10-minute period, the meeting will resume according to the published agenda. If there is an unresolved issue, another meeting will be scheduled.

ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THEIR ELECTIONS

Section 1:

The Executive Board shall consist of the officers of the Westford Elementary PTO (See section 3 below), the site-based coordinators, enrichment leader(s), the principals and assistant principals of the Westford Elementary Schools, and a Westford Parent Connection liaison.

Section 2:

The duties of the Executive Board shall be:

- a. To transact necessary business in the intervals between general meetings, and such other business as may be referred to it by its members.
- b. To create standing and special committees.
- c. To approve the plans of work of the standing committees.
- d. To select an auditor or an auditing committee to audit the treasurer's accounts.

- e. To prepare and submit to its members for adoption a budget for the year.
- f. To approve routine bills within the limits of the budget.
- g. Executive Board members will conduct business during the summer months as needed.
- h. Robert's Rules of Order shall apply except where bylaws supersede.

Section 3: (Amended January, 2009)

- a. The Executive Board officers of this Westford Elementary PTO shall consist of a president or co-presidents, vice president/school team leader, secretary, publicity leader, newsletter editor, and treasurer. Each position can be served by no more than 2 people at one time. If two people serve in the same position, the duties must be equally shared.

Section 4:

Election and Terms

- b. The Executive Board shall be elected by ballot in the month of April. However, if there is but one nominee for any office, election for that office may be by voice vote. If the election is by ballot, the results of said election shall be posted at each elementary school.
- c. The Executive Board shall assume their official duties following the close of the changeover meeting (See Article IX, Section 2 below) and shall serve for a term of one (1) year.
- d. Any Executive Board officer who does not perform the duties of that office may be relieved of the position by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Board (either by email, in person, or written submission).

Section 5:

Vacancies

- a. A vacancy occurring in any office shall be filled for the unexpired term by a person elected by a majority vote of the Executive Board, notice of such election having been given. In the event of the resignation of the president, if there is a co-president, he or she shall serve alone for the duration of the term. If there is no co-president, the vice president shall succeed the president for the duration of the term.

Section 6:

Nominating Committee

- a. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of one member of each elementary school. A chairperson will be selected within the group.
- b. The Nominating Committee, in conjunction with the publicity and newsletter editor or designee, shall create a flier directed toward all parents/guardians of current fourth, third, second, first grade, and kindergartner students in all six elementary schools. Additionally, the flier will solicit names of those parents/guardians who want to volunteer on subcommittees or in other capacities but not serve on the Executive Board. The committee shall distribute the fliers after the February Executive Board meeting.
- c. Any parent/guardian who is interested in running for positions of president must have served as an SBC in the previous year on the Westford Elementary PTO.
- d. In the event there are no candidates *considered* for nomination for any position, the position will remain open and the Nominating Committee may continue to recruit and fill these positions until the June changeover meeting. This meeting will open as a Westford Elementary PTO general meeting and the Nominating Committee will present a candidate for each open position for approval by the general membership present at this meeting. The floor at this meeting as outlined above can also make nominations.
- e. In the case that a nominee does not receive a simple majority of votes by those in attendance at the Executive Board meeting, the floor will accept nominations for open positions. In order for a floor-nominated candidate to be considered for a position, she or he must be approved by simple majority by those in attendance at the meeting by a voice/hand vote.
- f. All Executive Board positions have terms of one year. There is no limit to the number of times a member may serve on the Executive Board.
- g. Installation of officers shall take place at the June changeover meeting (see Article IX). New officers shall assume their responsibilities at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Executive Board

1. Co-President(s) (Amended January, 2009)

- a. Chief Executive Officers of the organization.
- b. Preside at all board and general meetings.

- c. Announce meetings to all board members and distribute meeting agenda the week prior via e-mail or phone.
- d. Attend Superintendent Roundtable meeting. Maintain a copy of minutes for permanent record.
- e. Budget Responsibilities: In July, assist treasurer and fundraising leader/asst. treasurer in preparation of budget.
- f. Review bylaws annually. Propose modifications and amend as per procedure outlined in bylaws.
- g. Audit: appoint two people to audit all financial records. This must take place before the books are closed in June.
- h. Responsible for organizing a changeover meeting in June, for outgoing and incoming boards.
- i. Submit articles for the newsletter, review draft copy, and provide input as needed.
- j. Seek ways to share ideas and resources, and implement them effectively and efficiently across the entire organization. Facilitate, coordinate, and mediate.
- k. Verify that all parents are eligible to serve in position and fill any vacancy.

2. Vice President

- a. Attend all board meetings.
- b. Responsible for all co-president activities if office becomes vacant.
- c. Team Leader: school coordinators work closely with this position.
- d. Coordinate activities that fall beyond fundraising and enrichment at the school level. Build consensus and determine school-level activities and PTO-wide activities, and surrounding details. Report these decisions back to Executive Board. If absent from any board meeting, must get a school coordinator to speak on his or her behalf.

Amended: June 2, 2008

3. Treasurer

- a. Attend all board meetings.
- b. In charge of all funds. Collect and deposit money from school coordinators and/or fundraising leader from all fundraising events. Issue receipts for all transactions. Enter deposits in general ledger.
- c. Responsible for paying bills in a timely fashion, organizing receipts with check numbers noted. Reimburse members who have receipts for approved expenses. Issue checks for enrichment programs.
- d. Maintain monthly income statement and balance sheet in journal. Balance checkbook to bank statement and treasurer's journal balance.
- e. Facilitate end-of-year audit with up-to-date books and arrange audit date (date TBD, before July 1) (see Article IX, Executive Board Changeover).

- f. Records: keep an accurate record of income and expenditures, and provide board with actual vs. budget report on a monthly basis. If using software, always maintain a hardcopy and back up file. If hand-written, need second copy as back up.
- g. Presides at budget planning meeting(s).
- h. Responsible for finalizing budgets before September.
- i. Keep a clean copy of budget, mid-year report, and year-end report in permanent record. Report out at Executive Board meetings, with copies to each board member.
- j. Keeping track of the Bond Insurance making sure it is current and up to date.

4. *Secretary*

- a. Attend all board meetings.
- b. Record and distribute minutes at board meetings. Maintain copy for permanent record.
- c. Notify all board members, in advance, of special meetings called by the board.
- d. Handle correspondence of organization. Maintain a copy of all correspondence, including handouts to parents, students, and teachers, for permanent record.
- e. Reserve facility for board and general meetings.
- f. Maintain the PTO HANDBOOK OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. Update it as needed and distribute to all board members. Keep official copy, and any appropriate documentation related to its management.
- g. Maintain Calendar of Events and distribute to Executive Board members and publicity for inclusion in newsletter and bulletin boards.
- h. Maintain contact lists (full name, phone, email, title) for board, members, teachers, and any other sub groupings related to the organization.

Amended: June 2, 2008

5. *Arts & Education Programming Chair*

- a. Attend all board meetings.
- b. Plan a balanced assortment of programs, maintaining a priority focus on arts and science education. Balance programs by grade level and category (music, drama, dance, art, storytelling, and so on).
- c. Coordinate all enrichment activities and schedule them on the calendar of events maintained by the secretary. Act as team leader for each school's enrichment chair(s).
- d. In charge of seeking and applying for grants to subsidize the enrichment expenses.
- e. Maintain school district's membership in the West Suburban Creative Arts Council (WSCAC).

- f. With enrichment chair(s) from each school, brainstorm potential enrichment activities for each grade level.
- g. Annually present projected budget to board for enrichment expenses. Ensure that the total amount spent on programs during the school year does not exceed budgeted amount. As programs are booked, contact treasurer, in writing (email acceptable) with contract information including cost, set-up fees and requirements, so that there are no unforeseen expenses. Maintain original contract and feedback evaluation for each enrichment activity for permanent record.
- h. Coordinate submission of information to publicity with the enrichment chairs at each school regarding enrichment activities. All details of the contract need to be written out specifically, including logistics, contact information, set up requirements and special requests, and this needs to be approved by the school, before contract is signed.
- i. Must get approval from school pertaining to performers' logistics, needs and wants.

6. *School Coordinators* (See below for their roles and responsibilities.)

7. *School Principals & Asst. Principals*

- a. Attend all board meetings. Partner with school coordinator as a team.
- b. Provide expertise, guidance, and decisions as necessary.
- c. Act as conduit for teachers' issues for PTO board.
- d. Attend SBT meetings. Work with school coordinators to develop agenda.
- e. Submit material for PTO newsletter, and/or receive input from SBT members for principal's newsletter.

8. *Publicity*

- a. Educate and communicate to parents and teachers about any issue pertaining to PTO via newsletter.
- b. Liaison for Westford Eagle, Cable Channel 8, Westford town website.
- c. Work closely with the newsletter chair from each school's site-based team.
- d. Provide postings for each school's PTO bulletin boards to maintain consistent information dissemination.
- e. Maintain and update the website.

9. *Newsletter Editor*

- a. Establish publication deadlines for the group's monthly newsletter, and send that information to the SBCs.
- b. Gather information submissions from the SBCs and co- presidents and create the newsletter.

- c. Submit the document to the SBCs and the co-presidents for review.
- d. Make necessary changes and obtain final approval from the co-presidents.
- e. Send the newsletter to the SBCs for distribution at all six elementary schools, and to the publicity chairperson so that the document can be housed on the group's website.

Article VII: Site-Based Teams (SBT):

1. *School Coordinators* (**Amended January, 2009**)

- a. To be eligible for school coordinator, nominee must have a child attending the specific elementary school during school calendar year.
- b. An SBC can serve no more than 2 consecutive years at current school. If needed may stay for a third year.
- c. Attend all board meetings.
- d. Work closely with VP/school coordinator leader.
- e. Preside at all SBC meetings with principal and teacher representatives on a monthly basis.
- f. Create agenda with input from principal and committee head. Send out agenda in advance.
- g. Assign one person to take minutes at meeting and distribute to SBC members. Keep for permanent record.
- h. Coordinate events (if necessary) with other site-based coordinators.
- i. Act as champion for school-based requests, ideas, and concerns at board meetings.
- j. Submit information to publicity for the newsletter, web site, local newspaper, and cable channel. This role may be assigned to a newsletter chair.
- k. Oversee updating of PTO bulletin board. This role may be assigned to another volunteer.
- l. SBC is responsible for recruiting volunteers for events scheduled.

2. *Nominating Committee*

- a. Responsible for conducting elections for next year's PTO board.
- b. Communicate, describe, and market PTO positions to potential leaders.

3. *Arts & Education Programming School Leader:*

- a. Work closely with Arts & Education Programming Chair.
- b. Attend enrichment committee planning sessions to choose events for all grade levels. Negotiate price and audience size.
- c. Coordinate dates and schedule with principal (which classes attend when, and so on).

- d. Become familiar with local resources by previewing programs at other schools, attending West Suburban Creative Arts Council (WSCAC) meetings, and performer showcases.
- e. Serve as liaison with principal and grade-level team leaders to determine curriculum links and scheduling concerns particular to the school.
- f. Organize performance events at own school.
- g. Coordinate with principal, including performers' technical requirements.
- h. Complete paperwork on events: obtain contract or letter of confirmation and forward to enrichment leader(s). Send performer school directions and performance schedule. Obtain check from PTO treasurer. Update school newsletter (before and after event). Send thank you note to performer. Distribute, collect, and review feedback evaluation forms, fill out WSCAC evaluation card. Forward to enrichment leaders for permanent record.
- i. Submit material for the newsletter, to newsletter editor prior to each event.

4. *Town-Wide Chair* **(Added January, 2009)**

- a. Acts as a Chairperson for a specific task, event or fundraiser.
- b. No person can serve as a town-wide chair and school specific chair for a specific task, event or fundraiser.
- c. Prior to taking any action regarding the specific project, town-wide chair must receive approval from current Presidents. Any action taking without Presidents approval will result in immediate removal from event.

5. *Site-based or School Chairs*: **(Amended January, 2009)**

- a. Coordinate a specific task, event, or fundraiser at the school.
- b. Submit budgetary requests to school coordinator for Executive Board review/approval.
- c. Coordinate events within allotted budget. Document each event including how it is managed and conducted for the PTO handbook.
- d. Attend (all) SBC meetings relevant to job.
- e. Submit material for newsletter/publicity as necessary.
- f. No person can serve as a site-based chair for more than one school.
- g. No person can serve as a site-based chair and town-wide chair for any committee or event.
- h. In the event a site-based coordinator or school chair acts on their on behalf and not the recommendations of the PTO or school committee, will result in removal from PTO and School Chair by two thirds vote.

6. *Parents*

- a. Attend general meetings and SBC meetings.

- b. To get on the agenda at SBC meetings, submit proposal to school coordinator for approval and inclusion in the schedule.
- c. Submit all ideas and proposals to the school coordinator. The school coordinator serves as the parents' conduit to the Executive Board.
- d. Read newsletter and all other WEPTO-related mail sent home with students in order to stay informed and be able to act on the information in a timely manner.

ARTICLE VII: **TEACHER/STAFF REPRESENTATIVES**

- a. There shall be a minimum of two teacher/staff representatives on the site-based team at each school. The site-based coordinator shall send out a request for two volunteers at the beginning of the school year. Based on the number of responses, the site-based coordinator and the principal shall select the representatives.

Amended May 5, 2010

ARTICLE VIII: **FINANCES**

Section 1: *Fundraisers*

- a. The Executive Board shall determine at the beginning of the school year the specific town-wide fundraisers for that year. A town-wide fundraiser, in general, is to benefit all Westford elementary public schools. A shared fundraiser is also considered to be in the same class as town-wide; however, the funds are split between the schools sharing the fundraiser.
- b. Any school specific fundraiser must be approved by the Executive Board, and must not take away from a town wide fundraiser.
- c. Fundraising is an opportunity to generate revenue for the PTO as a group, not individuals. Therefore, revenues should be recorded in a group account where all schools or students have the same opportunity to benefit from the revenues.

Section 2: *Budget*

- a. At the beginning of the school year, the Executive Board shall establish a budget, and include the projected revenues from the town-wide fundraisers. The budget committee will consist of the Westford Elementary PTO Executive Board.

- b. The treasurer solicits budget inputs (revenue/expenses) from the executive board and committee chairs.
- c. An overall Westford Elementary PTO line item budget is prepared containing both projected income and proposed spending.
- d. The treasurer presents current budget, starting balance, and any items requiring carry over from the previous budget.
- e. The budget will follow the laws regulating non-profit organizations, giving a detailed accounting of where raised money will be allocated, and keeping a record of all financial transactions including all documentation required by the IRS.
- f. The fiscal year will begin on July 1 and end on June 30.
- g. The budget will be submitted to the first general meeting annually of the Westford Elementary PTO for approval.
- h. The treasurer shall balance the over/under variance to budget allocation in January and again in April (as needed). If the town-wide actuals are significantly different from the budget, an adjusted budget shall be established with a new allocated amount determined for each budget category.
- i. Any excess funds from prior year's operations will be allocated for use by the Westford Elementary PTO Executive Board and must be voted in by a simple majority of at least two-thirds of the Executive Board (either by email, in person, or written submission). If excess funds are allocated generally to schools or principals' funds, the principals must submit in writing a proposal for the use of this money and it must be approved by a simple majority of at least two-thirds of the Executive Board (either by email, in person, or written submission).
- j. A minimum of \$2,000 balance will be left at the end of each school year for start-up costs at the beginning of the next school year.
- k. All chairpersons are responsible for managing spending to their approved allocation of funds according to the annual budget.

Section 3: *Disbursement of Funds*

- a. The Westford Elementary PTO shall maintain a tax-exempt status as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code.

- a. As such, all PTO funds should be spent to benefit all or a significant portion of the general student body, teachers, staff and community unless specifically budgeted for otherwise.
 - b. Funds must not be spent on an individual student unless approved by the executive board.
- b. Receipts should accompany all requests for disbursement of funds and an explanation of what the money will be / has been used for should accompany each request.
 - c. The Westford Elementary PTO will not issue any blank checks.
 - d. All checks written by the Westford Elementary PTO exceeding \$500 will require the signature of the treasurer and president.
 - e. The treasurer may authorize, along with the president, any Westford Elementary PTO expenditure up to a maximum of \$100/month, not authorized in the current budget.

ARTICLE IX: **EXECUTIVE BOARD CHANGEOVER**

Section 1: *Transitioning Boards*

- a. The Executive Board's fiscal year shall run for 12 months, starting July 1, following the changeover meeting (see below).
- b. The treasurer's financial records and reports will be audited by the incoming treasurer at the end of the fiscal year and no later than July 31. The period covered will include from the previous July 1 through June 30 of the current year (12 months).
- c. In the event that the current treasurer plans to stay in the position for an additional year, the Executive Board will seek a parent/guardian to audit the records and reports. The audit will span the same time period.
- d. The audit results shall be presented to the co-presidents. Upon completion of the audit, the Executive Board will notify parents/guardians via PTO newsletter or email that the financial reports and records have been reviewed. Any findings must be immediately documented and reported to the Executive Board.

Section 2: *Changeover Meeting*

- a. The Executive Board shall have a changeover meeting in June for the new board members to obtain information from the prior year's board members. The outgoing co-presidents are responsible for organizing the meeting. All records, files, and documents must be transferred to the new board members at this time.
- b. The Nominating Committee will also compile a list of volunteer names and submit said list to the incoming board at the changeover meeting.

ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION

- a. In the event that the Westford Elementary PTO dissolves, any remaining funds will be distributed equally to the elementary schools, to be used at the discretion of the school principals.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

- a. These bylaws can be amended at any Westford Elementary PTO general meeting by a two-thirds vote of the general membership present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing or via email to the Executive Board at least two weeks prior to the general meeting. The Executive Board must provide written notification of the amendment (via flier, newsletter, or email) to the general membership at least one week prior to the voting.

These bylaws shall be reviewed annually.

Westford Elementary PTO By-Laws Revision	November 7, 2007
Westford Elementary PTO By-Laws Revision	January 19, 2009
Westford Elementary PTO By-Laws Revision	May 5, 2010

