

## DeWitt Middle School PTA Meeting, September 24, 2012

Minutes by PTA secretary Tonya Engst

### **INTRODUCTION**

Note: If you'd like to join the DeWitt PTA, it's not too late. You can download the form from [www.dewittpta.org](http://www.dewittpta.org). (At the moment, the link is near the lower right of the page.)

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 2012 MEETING**

Tonya Engst motions to approve the minutes from June. Sarah Vanlooy seconds. A vote is taken and the minutes are approved.

### **CO-PRESIDENT'S REPORT, VANESSA WAGNER**

The Welcome Back to School picnic, held earlier this year in Stewart Park, had more people than last year, maybe 250–300 people.

The Open House/Bring Your Family to School Night is this Thursday.

International Night will be on November 2nd. (In the PDF version of these minutes, look ahead a few pages for the two-page flyer.)

Our primary goal with fundraising for this school year is to fund all-school events, especially those that support the entire school and that get families together. For clubs and individual classes, we want to be helpful and serve as a resource, but not actually run the fundraising.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Shivaun proposes a budget for this year. (The spreadsheet showing the proposed budget is appended in the PDF version of these minutes.)

It is mentioned that for any PTA, including ours, a goal is to use up the money that we receive. That way, money contributed is used for the students who are in the school at that time.

Tonya Engst motions to approve the budget. Esther Racoosin seconds the motion. The motion is approved.

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

So far this school year, the PTA has received \$247 in dues and \$250 in additional donations. We will have a table for more people to join at the Open House this week.

Esther suggests that a flyer be developed and placed in teacher's mailboxes to remind them to join. A few suggestions are made for how to efficiently generate this flyer and Meadow says she can take on this project.

## **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT, MR. KNIGHT**

We have six new staff members this year. Adding staff members has made it possible to have two separate teams at each grade level. Each student is on one of the two teams for his or her grade. Each teacher is on only one team. That makes it possible for the teachers to meet together and talk about all the kids on a team—or a specific kid who needs special attention—and to coordinate what happens within a team, so the curriculums can be more coordinated within a team. Overall, each team within a grade is meant to be the same in terms of the different types of students and the curriculum, and the major activities. However, not all activities will occur at the same time.

Note: an exception is in 8th grade, where Mr. McGrath, DeWitt's only Honors Algebra teacher teaches both of the two Honors Algebra classes offered, so in effect he is on two teams. His algebra students are otherwise split between the two teams.

Team Grades and Names:

- Grade 6: Blue and Silver.
- Grade 7: Sea Turtles and Fire Ants.
- Grade 8: No names right now, just "the 8th grade teams." The students are divided into two groups, but the teachers meet together, not in two groups.

Mr. Knight is developing a list/chart that shows all the different groups on a chart, because there are still-more teams and groups at DeWitt.

Bell schedules are different this year. The reason for trying a different schedule is an effort to:

- For 6th graders, to maximize instructional time with a schedule that is more similar to what it was in elementary school than what the 7th graders have. This should to allow 6th graders to make a slower and less traumatic transition to middle school.
- 7th/8th graders have advisory [also called "home room" or "home base"] only one day per week now, instead of each day. The reason for this is to maximize instructional time.
- A goal for the future is to let 7th/8th graders generate a schedule of their choice instead of having it be computer generated. And, more electives.

On Wednesday there will be an assembly program with a focus on reducing bullying and harassment. On Thursday morning, students will be asked to fill out a survey with reactions to the assembly.

This year's Student Handbook has a planner in the back. Notice the planner, because that is a good place for students to keep track of their homework.

Last year, Mr. Knight was aware that a lot of fundraisers were happening, but he didn't always know in advance. He would like to create a process where fundraising being done by any group related to the school is approved by him and there is a fundraising calendar. This will create more coordination and less overlap.

On Friday, the 8th grade is going to Taughannock, and 7th graders are doing team-building activities in the school. 6th graders are going to Sapsucker Woods in October.

He is hoping that the 8th grade promotion committee could get started earlier this year and figure out a good date.

Also, some music events this year might be at Kulp Auditorium, which is located in Ithaca High School.

Esther Racoosin asks how the ICSD's new Chief Secondary Officer inter-relates with Mr. Knight's job. Mr. Knight replies that the Chief Secondary Officer is responsible for discipline, parental concerns, code of conduct. He collaborates a lot with Mr. Knight on these issues.

What about the printers? Several people share technical and operational know-how to put together an answer. [As best as I understood it,] currently, most of the school's printers are smaller, "desktop" or "personal" style printers. These printers get more use than they were designed for and thus are subject to breakdowns and running out of ink/toner. The state won't fund those printers, but they will fund larger printers that are more suited for heavy use. The plan is to get rid of the smaller printers—which appear to be mostly non-operational—and to instead use a few larger, more sturdy, and more centralized printers. (These printers could—or will—also provide photocopying functionality; combo photocopying and printing units are common in large organizations.) Students will be able to print over the network to these central devices.

Also, generally, some teachers are encouraging online submission of work. The librarian can help a specific student who really needs help with printer access, perhaps because there isn't one at home.

This year the school has a guest wi-fi network. Anyone in the building can log in as a guest, without a password. [this worked on my smartphone and laptop: tell your computer to show the list of available networks and choose the one called guest]

## **NUTRITION IN OUR SCHOOLS, RACHEL GREEN FROM CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Rachel is a dietetic intern at Cooperative Extension.

Handouts show the dietary guidelines that the new school food guidelines are based on. They come from the The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. The goal is to promote better nutrition and reduce obesity. (I believe that the related handouts will be on the PTA website, but they are not included in the PDF version of these minutes. Or, to find the info, visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>.)

Has anyone noticed a difference here in the DeWitt cafeteria? Various people speak out to say that the bagels are smaller. There is more yogurt, and fruit and vegetable options.

Rachel summarizes: The size of a “grain” serving is now a smaller amount than before. Less processed food, less salt and sugar, more raw food. No whole milk.

This is just lunch, but probably coming to breakfast in a few years.

## **TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING, BOB WALTERS**

### **--Background Information on Technology at DeWitt--**

“Technology” today is what used to be called “shop,” but it is now like shop from long ago, but with a computer component. They have a CNC router and a laser engraver. The emphasis isn’t on getting a future factory job, but on creating future problem solvers. And on preparing students to work with whatever tools might be available - they need to know how to process materials on older equipment but they also need to be able to think flexibly about how to make something on whatever tool they have access to, regardless of whether that tool is a hundred years old or brand new.

Mr. Buchner is the other technology teacher at DeWitt. A great thing about the schedule this year is that they have lunch together, so they can collaborate during that time.

There is a state mandate saying that all students must have a certain number of weeks of technology education in middle school.

Because the technology program is no longer just an 8th grader program [I think that relates to the state mandate, which, I think, wants more hours than before. -Tonya], there have been some adjustments this year to the program, and it now includes 7th graders. This year’s 8th graders haven’t had a chance to experience the 7th grade program, so they have nothing to build on. 7th graders get this year as a starting year and can build on it next year.

## **--Technology Units This School Year Will Include--**

7th and 8th graders are working on a package design project. Each student makes a package out of paper that protects a raw egg. That paper package goes in a metal coffee container that gets rolled off the table.

- Digital photography.
- 7th grade marble maze. The purpose is to learn to use tools to fasten things together. Students make a frame, and then they attach ramps made out of different materials such as wood, metal, paper, and plastic. The goal is to have the marble get down as slowly as possible. The marble starts with a computer-controlled Lego system. Students begin by taking apart the models from last year, and then they identify the fasteners used last year. (The PDF version of these minutes shows a photo of Mr. Walters at right, demonstrating a marble maze.)



- 8th graders are doing Junior Solar Sprint. These are little solar vehicles. There is a competition in the spring with other schools that they can participate in with their vehicles, too.

## **--Technology Students Association (TSA)--**

Boynton has a competitive team called the Science Olympiad, but what we've done at DeWitt since about 1986 is the Technology Student Association (TSA). Mr. Walters is the co-advisor with Mr. Buchner. There is a state and a national meet. Competition events include problem-solving, debate, robotics, junior solar sprint, etc. TSA begins by meeting 1 day per week, goes to 2 days per week, then when close to competition it can be every day. Parents sign up to provide dinner for the team. It often goes until 8pm at night.

To join, the kids have to apply because they can't take everybody. 6th through 8th grade. The deadline for submitting application materials for TSA is the last Friday in October; until then, look for boxed information on the DeWitt PTA website ([www.dewittpta.org](http://www.dewittpta.org)) for application info and note that preparing the application materials will take a number of hours as it is far more than just filling out a form.

A brochure about all STEM opportunities in the school district is appended to the PDF version of this document. (STEM = science, technology, engineering, math; you may also hear of STEAM, which is science, technology, engineering, arts, and math.)

## RESOURCES IN THE DEWITT LIBRARY, JOANNE CHURCH

Mrs. Church distributed a handout whose text is mostly reproduced below. Her remarks closely paralleled the handout.

DeWitt Middle School Library, 607-882-9858, <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/dewitt/library/>

### **\*\*What Parents Should Know about DeWitt Library\*\***

You are an integral part of our students' reading and literacy development life, and we hope that you stop by any time and make yourself at home in our library.

You can purchase books for the library. In partnership with Buffalo Street Books (BSB), we offer the community an opportunity to participate in enriching their school library collections. Stop by at Buffalo Street Books in downtown's DeWitt Mall and ask to see the file of suggested books to choose from, purchase a book, and tell them what you would like to have written on the bookplate—BSB does the rest.

In middle school, the library is a great place to volunteer if you want to get a sense of your student's day-to-day life without "hovering." Set up a time each week when you will come, or stop by and get 20 minutes of training, and then come whenever you have a few extra minutes.

Although we don't charge late fees for overdue books, we do expect students to pay \$5.00 for any book that is lost or damaged while they have it checked out. Their library checkouts follow them from elementary school to middle school, and then on to the high school. We don't prohibit students from checking books out if they have overdues, but we don't borrow books from other libraries for students with poor return records.

We have a Bright Red Young Adult Bookshelf in the cafeteria and supported by the Family Reading Partnership. If you have books geared to teen readers that you no longer want to keep, you can send them to the library with your student. We'll put them on the BRBS for students to browse, and eventually the leftovers will make their way to the Friends of the Library Book Sale. We often put magazines there too, so remind your student to check the shelf for reading possibilities before school breaks!

### **\*\*When Your Student Can Come to the Library\*\***

Besides the times teachers bring in full classes for research projects, there are several times that your student can come to the library to read and work quietly with library resources including computers or to return and check out reading material:

Before school, 8:30-9:00: Students sign out on a clipboard in main lobby, come directly to the library and stay until students are released to go to lockers and 1st period/Advisory.

- For Sixth graders, each of the five Enrichment classes is signed up to be held in the library one day of the week.

- Students may get passes from their Study Hall teacher to come to the library, either for a short time or for the entire period.
- If Mrs. Church does not have other commitments, students may stay in the library until 4:30, on the following conditions:
- They check with Mrs. Church during the day to see if she will be staying (NOT at the end of the day).
  - They come directly to the library at 3:30, and stay until released by Mrs. Church.
  - They contact parent or guardian to make arrangements for arriving home late.
  - If they ride a bus home, Mrs. Church will give students a pass to ride the 4:30 bus.

THE 4:30 BUS RUNS ONLY ON MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND THURSDAY.

Please let Mrs. Church know if your student is finding it difficult to get his/her work done because they don't have enough time in the library. She will work with teachers to make sure he/she gets sufficient access.

## **PENNY BOYNTON**

There are several flyers here about programs in the community that kids can participate in, and people can look for them at the Open House on Thursday. Or, they can contact Penny directly (call the main office and ask to be connected).

Several school clubs are forming: anti-bullying, chess (Mr. Knight is running this club and looking for donations of chess sets ideally with all pieces), writer's cafe, jewelry, sketching, ski and snowboard (Mr. Walters), 8th-grade social studies homework, TSA, yearbook. And more. Homework club will start on October 15th with seven teachers. Kids must register and sign up for particular days, choices are Mon, Tues, and Thurs.

Student Supply closet: Thank you for donations. She got 45 backpacks in total. 20 of those backpacks, fully loaded, have been given away. Also, 100 spiral notebooks and at least 70 3-ring binders have been given away. Remember, when you can, give something back. An article about this was in the PTA Newsletter that was mailed during the summer.

*NEXT MEETING IS MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19*



*Dear Dewitt Families,*

**Mark you Calendar!!!**

**Dewitt's International Night will be held on Friday, Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 -8:30 pm.**

**This event celebrates the families of Dewitt and we need your involvement.**

**Cultural Displays:**

Set up a booth and share your country and rich culture - bring objects, clothing, food, pictures, postcards, brochures, books, games or anything else that would represent your country or region (*please do not bring expensive things*).

**International Pot-Luck Dinner:**

Prepare a traditional dish to share at our big and delicious dinner table! Sushi, Dim Sum, Mac and Cheese, Pizza, salads, breads, dips, cakes and sweets- anything you like making!

Families who have a restaurant or business that would like to provide food for International Night would also be much appreciated, or if you like to prepare big quantities. *Please remember to bring your plates and utensils to cut down on waste and help us be Green...!*

**Show:** Last year we had:

We have an exciting show planned with Cornell's Hangovers (part of Cornell Glee Club), Absolute Zero (Cornell's amazing break dancers), Yamatai -the breathtaking Japanese Drummers, Cornell's Base Production and more.

*We have some spots available for Dewitt Families- if you want to organize a group from your region and share your culture through singing, dancing or other forms of arts, let us know!*

*The success of this evening depends on all of us. Come, participate and get involved.*

International Night will start at 6:00pm Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> with an international potluck dinner, to which families are asked to bring a dish from their country or region, to share with 12 -15 people, if possible. The show will start around 7:15 pm.

Let us know how you like to be involved in International Night- there are sign up sheets in some of your children's classes, and also in Penny Boynton's office next to the cafeteria. You can also fill out the form on the back and turned it in to the Dewitt main office, to Penny Boynton's mailbox.

*Please come and be involved.*

If you have any questions or ideas please feel free to contact us at:

Tal Cohen [taloroco@gmail.com](mailto:taloroco@gmail.com) ,

, Iwona Rybus [idr1@mac.com](mailto:idr1@mac.com)

International Night Co-organizers, Dewitt PTA

***We want to take part in Dewitt's International Night!  
Our family would like to (check ALL that apply):***

***Name:*** \_\_\_\_\_ ***Phone:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Country:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Email:*** \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Be in the costume parade wearing traditional clothes from \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prepare a traditional recipe for the dining room (12-15 servings, please)
- ☐ Bring an item or items from \_\_\_\_\_ (name of country) for display
- ☐ Donate Money to help buy utensils and food (please enclose): \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Help setup ~~3:30-5:30~~
- ☐ Help in the dining room from 5:30-6:00 pm
- ☐ Help in the dining room from 6:00-6:30 pm
- ☐ Provide minivan transportation for a performance group, if needed
- ☐ Help clean up from 7:00pm
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***Thank You!***

# 09/24/12 Proposed DeWitt PTA budget

		Check book Balance 25th		\$3,730.89	
PAST BUDGET 2011-12		DEWITT PTA DRAFT BUDGET 2012-13		Aug' 12	Sept' 12
			2012		
INCOME	ACTUAL	INCOME	BUDGET		
Membership dues	522	Membership dues	\$ 400.00		216
		Membership addition	\$ 50.00		31
Donations-additional membership con	453	Donations with membership	\$ 400.00		215
Fall Fundraiser - Donations-Direct App	1815	Fall Fundraiser - Direct Appeal	\$ 1,500.00		
Advertising-Directory	353	Advertising - Directory and Newsletter	\$ 500.00	266	
International Night donations	149	International Night Donations	\$ 120.00		
Donations-staff appreciaton luncheon	375	Donations for staff appreciation lunch	\$ 300.00		
Donations and fundraiser-8th grade p	440	Donations for 8th grade promotion	\$ 400.00		
On going fund raiser - Tops gift cards,	148.09	On going fundraiser - iGive, tops gift cards	\$ 50.00		
8th grade trip fundraiser	254				
Petty Cash (from cash donations) - no	25				
T-shirt Fundraiser	2075				
Spring Fundraiser-Raffle/Dinner & Mo	451.05				
Interest	0.03				
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>7060.17</b>	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 3,720.00</b>		
Expenses		EXPENSES			
ADMIN		ADMIN			
NYS PTA membership dues	480	Membership dues to NYSPTA	\$ 400.00		
Supplies, office, incidentals, stamps	48.98	Supplies, office, incidentals, stamps	\$ 50.00		
Website	47.28	Website	\$ 50.00		
Mailing Permit/Postage (6 bi-monthly	826.68	Mailing Permit/Postage (4 newsletters)	\$ 600.00		151.33
returned newsletter to school surchar	29.5	returned newsletter to school surcharge (\$0.50 ea	\$ 30.00		21.5
PTA Council dues (101-150 member le	90	PTA Council dues (101-150 member level)	\$ 45.00		
Insurance 2010-2011 (paid by June 1)	235	Insurance 2010-2011 (paid by June 1)	\$ 250.00		
Directory-printing	243.9	Directory-printing	\$ 250.00		
Bank fees	21.75				
PROJECTS		PROJECTS			
Welcome Picnic	356.7	Welcome Picnic	\$ 400.00		122.53
Bring your family to School Open Hou	97.36	Bring your family to School Open House	\$ 100.00		
		Donation to district for approved DW activitie	400		
International night --food	132.95	International night expenses	\$ 150.00		
Student Supply Cabinet	150	Student Supply Cabinet	\$ 175.00		
Hospitality/Refreshments (meetings)	0	Hospitality/Refreshments (meetings)	\$ 50.00		
Staff appreciation luncheon	334.4	Staff appreciation luncheon	\$ 300.00		
8th grade promotion reception	455.97	8th grade promotion reception	\$ 450.00		
8th grade trip -DeWitt Activities	1000	Miscellaneous	\$ 20.00		18.5
T-shirt/sweatshirt Cost	1584.3				
Retiring teachers honor	21.9				
Spring Fundraiser - Movie expenses	213.2				
Teacher requests: fall and spring	150				
Miscellaneous	20				
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>6539.87</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 3,720.00</b>		
Difference	520.3	Difference	\$ -		

## **STEM Based Teams**

The Ithaca City School District Technology Engineering Department is proud to offer a variety of (STEM), science, technology, engineering, and math based competitive teams. These offer students the chance to learn about new technologies by solving real world problems, working together in teams and exploring the high tech world that we live in.

Students learn foundation technology engineering skills such as design, technical sketching, Computer Aided Design(CAD), problem solving, materials processing, informational processing and many more. Students can also apply for leadership positions and guide the team at the local, state and international levels.

These teams began with the TSA Middle School team in 1986. ICSD TSA students have consistently performed extraordinary well bringing home hundreds of awards and gaining international recognition. TSA is also about community service. Each year our team performs a service for the community such as planting trees in along Fall creek or building stairs for the Caroline Town Hall.

## Contact Information:

### Middle School Science Olympiad and FLL

Mr. Peters

[mpeters@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:mpeters@icsd.k12.ny.us)

Mr. Kirsch

[skirsch@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:skirsch@icsd.k12.ny.us)

### High School TSA

Mr. Sauve

[wsauve@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:wsauve@icsd.k12.ny.us)

Mr. Cowell

[ccowell@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:ccowell@icsd.k12.ny.us)

### Middle School TSA, and JSS

Mr. Walters

[bwalters@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:bwalters@icsd.k12.ny.us)

Mr. Buchner

[dbuchner@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:dbuchner@icsd.k12.ny.us)

### High School Code Red Robotics

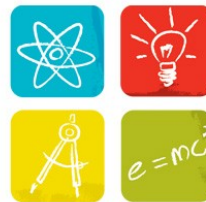
Mr. Krywe

[ikrywe@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:ikrywe@icsd.k12.ny.us)

### High School Electrathon Car

Mr. Breigle

[sbreigle@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:sbreigle@icsd.k12.ny.us)



# STEM

science • technology  
engineering • math

# icsd

# STEM

# COMPETITIVE TEAMS

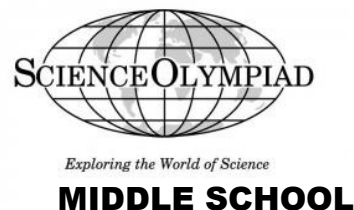
# BASED.....:



## MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL

Imagine an activity so captivating that students spend hours working on it after school for weeks at a time. That's what happens when TSA members engage in TSA's competitions. TSA members have the opportunity to compete at exciting state conferences and then at the annual National Conference. Expert judging by technology educators and industry representatives inspires the best from participants. Members are rewarded not only with medals or trophies, but also with memories of the camaraderie and the challenge of a TSA Conference.

The ICSD middle school TSA chapter was launched in 1986. In 2011 the Ithaca middle school team, once again, earned Chapter of the Year honors at the state level. At the international competition, in Dallas, the Ithaca middle and high school teams had finalists (top ten in the world) in thirteen events, including two first and two third place awards.



Boynton Middle School offers its students the opportunity to participate on our Science Olympiad Team in preparation for the New York State Mid-State Regional Competition, one of eleven state regional events. The competition is held the first Saturday in March and is made up of about 24 STEM based events, representing a cross-section of science disciplines, including biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, as well as technology and engineering. Successful teams will need to demonstrate knowledge of science concepts, process skills and science applications. While all events require rigorous research, study and understanding by the students, the "build events" additionally require design, fabrication and calibration.

Additional information about Science Olympiad can be found on both the national web site <[www.soinc.org](http://www.soinc.org)> and on our state web site <[www.newyorkscioly.org](http://www.newyorkscioly.org)>

## Other Competitions

### Electrathon Car



The Ithaca High Schools Electrathon car was built by seniors as final Project Lead the Way Course. The car has raced at Watkins Glen.

### Junior Solar Sprint

ICSD students in both Boynton and DeWitt participate in the Southern Finger Lakes Area Final of the Junior Solar Sprint. The competition has included 5th—8th grade students from area schools since 2000.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL

### Code Red Robotics

Team 639, is the Ithaca High School FIRST robotics team. Code Red is made up of students, and numerous parent and community volunteers. 1,500 teams from 10 countries compete at the high school level in regional and national events. The program creates an exciting and highly educational environment where the students work collaboratively with professional engineering mentors in the spirit of "Gracious Professionalism." Every year, in just six short weeks, the students design and build a complex, computer controlled machine to play a new game. Major funding comes from the generous donations of local and regional companies and individuals.

### FLL

#### (FIRST LEGO League)

New team as of 2011. This is the middle school version of FIRST Robotics. The program has two components. The Robot Game and the Project. Students design and build a LEGO robot which they program to solve a simulation. The Project is a real world problem to which students design a solution. The 2011 project was the Food Factor Challenge. Information is available at <<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/fl>>