

WHPA Meeting: 9/18/2025-7pm

Dr. Corinna Crafton (00:02:04-00:05:03):

- Update on the gymnasium repairs (Laidlaw and Plumeri), they are on track to be ready for the winter athletic season after suffering damage on July 14th.
- Thanked those involved in the repair efforts and for finding alternative space solutions.
- Encouraged everyone to read the weekly electronic newsletter for school updates.
- Highlighted successful athletic teams (volleyball, cross-country, soccer, girls tennis).
- Mentioned Parents Association reminders: 10 days of raffles, Fall Fair, and the Ram Shop for uniform pieces.
- Announced the next year's enrollment cycle kickoff event this Saturday at 9 AM, including a campus tour, meetings with teachers, administrators, and current students.

Ms. Cerminaro (Upper School) (00:05:15-00:07:59):

- Shared updates from Ms. Nolan: Mom's Diaper Drive in September, socks, hats, and gloves drive in October, Food Drive in November, and more information on global experiences in mid-October.
- Discussed Fall Fair fundraisers: 12th graders for breakfast, 11th graders for games, and 9th and 10th graders collaborating on popcorn and snow cones.
- Announced Upper School Spirit Week themes: Monday (dress down) - 12th grade Rap, 11th grade Pop, 10th grade Country, 9th grade Rock; Tuesday - Rhyme Without Reason; Wednesday - Pajama Day; Friday - Green and Gold.
- Reminded parents about safe drop-off and pick-up procedures, asking Upper School families to use the back entrance, not by the kitchen where middle school is.
- Introduced "Grade Guardian," a new bi-weekly academic progress report system for all grades (9-12) starting next Friday, summarizing grades and providing direct links to assignments. This will culminate in a report card with narratives from each teacher.
- Invited parents to "Upper School Connections" on Friday, the 26th, from 8-8:30 AM to discuss Grade Guardian and other topics.

Ms. Kirstin Rogers (Middle School) (00:08:14-00:13:21):

- Announced the rollout of bi-weekly academic progress reports using "Grade Guardian" for middle school (6-8) as well, starting next Friday. This will simplify checking grades compared to individual class portals.
- Encouraged parents to contact their student's advisor or Ms. Menero if they have questions about Grade Guardian.
- Updated on Captain's Council elections: congratulated the 8th-grade captains (Sheena, Sasha, Tessa) and 7th-grade co-captains (Advik, Elysee, Samai).

- Discussed the Student Government Association (SGA) application process, with representatives from each homeroom. SGA selections will be announced mid-next week.
- Confirmed that middle school Spirit Week themes will be decided and announced by the SGA mid-next week.
- Reported that 6th graders are enjoying their overnight camping trip to Frost Valley.
- Reminded parents to sign up for the Homeroom app for updates on middle school activities.
- Announced a dress-down day for 7th and 8th graders tomorrow for their exemplary conduct during the first days of free seating advisory and recess.

Jayson Daniels (Development Department) (00:14:01-00:17:45):

- **Fall Fair (October 4th, 10 AM - 4 PM):** Excited about partnering with the Booster Club and Parents Association. Many alumni will be on campus for reunions. Encouraged everyone to stay for the 4 PM awards ceremony for distinguished alumni and faculty, and the Athletics Hall of Fame's 25th anniversary.
- **Annual Fund:** Emphasized the importance of the annual fund in providing flexibility and additional funding for unexpected critical needs (like gymnasium repairs) and enriching student experiences (field trips, service learning, equipment, uniforms, musical instruments, costumes). Encouraged support via the Wardlaw website or at back-to-school nights.

Parents Association (Jackie Oladeji) (00:18:07-00:19:02):

- Thanked school representatives for joining.
- Highlighted the PA's role in fundraising and community building, with three big events: Fall Fair, International Family Fun Night, and Food Truck Vendor Event.

Cindy Williams (WHPA Upper School) (00:19:24-00:20:37):

- Will schedule an Upper School parent social on campus soon; details to follow.
- Urged parents to join class chats for important updates on raffles, Fall Fair, volunteering, and school/college counseling information.

Sara Lee (WHPA Lower School) (00:20:56-00:24:58):

- Announced Lower School morning assemblies every Friday (starting September 19th, 8:30 AM), open to all parents. 1st graders will present this week.
- Lower School Back to School Night is Thursday, September 25th. Childcare will be provided free of charge from 5:30-8 PM, but RSVP is required.
- Lower School Spirit Week is September 29th to October 3rd; themes were emailed this morning.
- Stressed the importance of new families joining classroom chats and to reach out if not yet added.

- Mentioned individual class social events are being planned by class parents before Thanksgiving. A larger Lower School social event is planned after winter break.

Cindy Williams (Additional Update) (00:25:09-00:25:54):

- Plugged the Upper School play, "Night of the Living Dead and 10 Ways to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse," on Friday, October 31st (7:30 PM) and Saturday, November 1st (3 PM). Tickets available via the weekly newsletter. Middle School play will also be in November.

Parents Association (Jackie Oladeji) (00:25:57-00:30:30):

- **Fall Fair (October 4th, 10 AM - 4 PM):** Details on activities (food, crafts, rides, petting zoo, games, sports, DJ, photo booth, raffle, student-led activities). Bracelets for activities/games are \$35, entry is free. Encouraged volunteer sign-ups via Signup Genius. Shared a map of the event layout.
- **Raffle:** Tickets are due back with money by October 4th. Drawings will occur weekly for 10 weeks, with prizes from \$250-\$750, live-streamed/posted on the events chat each Tuesday morning.
- **Ram Shop:** Open every Friday (7:45-9:15 AM) and one hour before each back-to-school night. All items are \$5. Donations of gently used uniform items are welcome.
- **Upcoming Dates:** School closed (Sept 23 for Rosh Hashanah, Oct 2); Lower School Back to School Night (Sept 25); Lower School Spirit Week (Sept 29 - Oct 3); Middle School Back to School Night (Sept 29); New Parent Reception (Sept 30); Last day for raffle tickets (Oct 4); First raffle drawing (Oct 7); Upper School Back to School Night (Oct 9). All WHPA school year events are listed on a circulating flyer.

Booster Club (Kerry O'Neill) (00:30:43-00:32:37):

- Confirmed sports activities will happen all day at the Fall Fair: 3rd/4th grade soccer game, middle school cross country/soccer/girls tennis, girls varsity soccer (11:30 AM), boys varsity soccer (1 PM), and alumni soccer (1 PM).
- Announced that boys varsity soccer clinched their division and will go into playoffs.
- Booster Club will be grilling and selling spirit wear at the Fall Fair.
- Introduced guest speakers Mike Romeo (Athletic Director) and John Gardner (Varsity Girls Soccer Coach).

John Gardner (Varsity Girls Soccer Coach) (00:33:13-00:36:05):

- Expressed appreciation for the school's high standards and the benefits students receive.
- Stated that the current generation faces a "war on electronics" that takes away valuable learning time.
- Emphasized that Booster Club and other organizations provide programs that foster teamwork, enthusiasm, and industriousness, which lead to "leveling up" in sports, acting, music, and debate clubs, unlike video games.

- Thanked parents for their vital support, highlighting that they are "powering thinkers" and preventing a future of "gold medalists in video games, not swimming or soccer."

Mike Romeo (Athletic Director) (00:37:21-00:48:10):

- **GMC Explanation:** Wardlaw-Hartridge is part of the Greater Middlesex Conference (GMC) because other local conferences (like Union County) were not an option. The GMC is a large conference of Middlesex County teams (and some Somerset).
- **Division Classification:** WHPA is one of the smaller schools ("small by design") and is automatically placed in the lowest division (Gold Division) for most sports. However, many teams "punch above their weight" and compete in higher divisions (e.g., tennis team has reached the White Division, against schools with 1,500-2,000 students).
- **Program Success:** Highlighted recent successes: boys soccer won their first divisional championship since 2014, girls soccer and volleyball have done well, and tennis and golf are perennial champions.
- **History:** Before 2010, WHPA played in the Prep Conference against other prep schools. These schools later joined their local public school conferences, leaving WHPA with no one to play. This led to WHPA joining the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) and then the GMC in 2010.
- **Challenges:** Acknowledged that the independent school model sometimes doesn't perfectly align with public school athletic programs, but competitive success and commitment levels are improving.
- **Middle School Sports:** Clarified that middle school is not part of the GMC. They play GMC opponents due to existing relationships.
- **Fifth Graders in Middle School Sports:** Currently, 5th graders are not included in middle school sports (6th grade and up) due to safety concerns (playing against 8th graders) and sufficient numbers at the time of the decision. This is being reconsidered if a team needs players, but not for this year's girls soccer.
- **Travel Soccer:** Explained that WHPA teams are interscholastic and sanctioned by NJSIAA, meaning they play other schools within designated seasons. Many players do play travel soccer at different levels, which complements their high school experience. High school season takes precedence, and club play typically slows down during those times.
- **Fencing Team:** A fencing team is being considered for middle school, offered as a winter sport (following state recommendations). There's strong interest (10-15 kids). Facilities are a challenge, but alternative spaces are being explored. More details to come in a few weeks.
- **Girls Golf Team for Middle School:** Discussed this with the varsity coach. It's being looked into for next year, but the main challenge is student numbers, as adding a sport could hurt existing ones. A high demand from parents could encourage further investigation.
- **Lacrosse Team:** Mike believes the school *should* have a lacrosse team but it requires significant numbers. He suggests building from the ground up by partnering with a local organization to bring in student-athletes and an enthusiastic coach. A previous attempt in 2014-15 failed due to lack of groundwork and sustainability.

- **Baseball Participation:** Noted a decline in baseball participation, with no varsity team for the first time in 100 years. This has led to a stronger push for boys volleyball at the varsity level than lacrosse.
- **Gauging Student Interest:** Suggested conducting polls or discussions with the Booster Club/Athletics to gauge student interest in new sports like golf and lacrosse. He emphasized that strong interest and numbers are crucial for adding new programs without harming existing ones.

Booster Club (Kerry) and Parents Association (Jackie) (00:50:43-00:51:41):

- Opened the floor for any final questions or topics for future meetings.
- Encouraged attendees to reach out to Kerry, Jackie, class parents, or send emails to parents@whschool.org or boosterclub@whchool.org with suggestions for future guest speakers or topics.