

Ward Melville PTSA budget, security, events, and fundraisers

Oct 15, 2025 • 48 minutes, 28 seconds

***Mrs. Zeidman was there in place of Principal John Holownia**

Overview

PTSA meeting covering school photo schedules, guidance and college admissions updates, Board of Education highlights (bond, security, policy), homecoming recap, upcoming events (Trick or Treat Street), fundraisers (restaurant nights, 5K), membership and scholarship funding, communications, and approvals of the budget and minutes.

Administrative and Budget Items

- Budget copies were not printed; Yuming shared the budget on his phone for review (environmentally friendly approach).
- Budget for the year was approved (motion: Trish first approval Andrea DeLuca second approval)
- Scholarships: plan to award ~6–8 students at \$250 each (\$2,000).
- Minutes from the prior meeting were circulated and approved (first approval Trish second noted as Jenny Fung).

Student Services and Academics

- Guidance push-ins to 9th and 10th grade seminars: counselors met students informally; students then interviewed Mr. Halonia. APs filled in when needed. Reported strong student engagement.
- SUNY free week, 10/20 for seniors: seniors can apply to SUNY for free during that week.

School Photos and Key Dates

- Last call next week for photos: club photos, undergrad photos, and senior photos.
- Senior photos (appointments required): 10/22.
- Underclass retakes: 10/23.
- Club photos: 10/30.
- Note: Senior pictures are taken in 11th grade (initially in May); current 12th graders' last-call retakes are now.

College Visits and Application Logistics

- Many college reps visit on campus (conference room). Students can meet 1:1 or in small

groups (often 5–6 students), sometimes receiving application fee waiver codes.

- Example: Geneseo rep met the student who would review the application and encouraged an application afterward.
- On-site application decisions: Suffolk did on-site previously; Stony Brook uses the Common App. SUNY fee waiver can be used through the Common App.

Homecoming and Student Government

- Homecoming carnival and game were successful; “little hiccups” with food timing and movement to the field house led to a delayed opening and limited water availability before kickoff. Timing/logistics to be improved.
- Pep rally ran well; some planned games were cut for time.
- Trick or Treat Street (Tots): clubs will host themed rooms with activities and candy; Student Government theme: Monsters Inc. Students will create doors, help kids make masks, and “teach the kids how to scare.”
- Trick or Treat Street date: 10/30.
- Student Government fundraiser via supportmyschool.org; each member to sell five items. A date of 10/22 was referenced in discussion.

Board of Education Highlights

- Public participation: Board meetings are on YouTube with agendas and jump-to items. Public session begins 7:30 pm (executive session precedes). To comment: attend and speak for 3 minutes, or email district clerk Inger with “public comments” in the subject to be read aloud (3 minutes). You can also email the Board directly.
- Bond presentation (9/17): District exploring a bond in the \$100–\$125 million range for capital projects (bathrooms, ceilings, sports facilities, parking lots). Public vote likely in December or January; the Board will set the exact date. State covers ~66% of eligible project costs and interest; example: at a 4.5% borrowing rate, effective cost ~1.5%. The 9/17 meeting included a ~45-minute presentation by Jeffrey Carlson (Business Services Superintendent).
- Armed security: ongoing discussion at 9/17 and 10/8. Opinions mixed in public comments. Security Director Jeff Blum advised against metal detectors (coverage at all entrances, delays, and security risks without armed presence). Process to add armed guards would require notice, a public hearing, and a Board vote (7 members; 4 votes needed). Estimated cost discussed: ~\$200,000/year for some armed presence in every school (details pending discussions).
- Volunteer firefighter tax exemption: discussion on lowering required service from five years to approximately two years.
- Regionalization: cautious stance due to strong in-district programs; support for limited items like shared teacher recruitment, contingent on state funding (district does not intend to spend local funds for this).
- NISBA (New York State School Boards Association) resolutions: items included whether “whole Milk” should be allowed in lunches and reducing lockdown drills from four to two annually. The Board opposed the committee’s recommendation on sharing of resources among districts, consistent with the regionalization concerns.

Safety and Wellbeing

- Safe schools hotline: available to students and parents to report concerns or seek help.
- Surveys on armed guards: staff and parents each showed results in the 50s support vs. 40s oppose (approximate), indicating slight overall support.

Membership and Scholarships

- Membership status: 121 staff members joined (strong staff participation); only 42 parents and 6 students so far (well below typical ~300 parents by this time). Membership is required for eligibility for PTSA scholarships.
- Goal: grow parent/student membership to maximize scholarship awards.

Fundraising and Communications

- Restaurant nights: Luigi's raised \$100. Chipotle fundraiser set for 10/30 (same day as Trick or Treat Street); mention "Ward Melville" at purchase for proceeds to count.
- 5K/Turkey Trot: major fundraiser around Thanksgiving;. Proceeds support scholarships.
- Suggestion raised: explore vendors sending food to school right after classes so students can purchase before clubs/activities. Note: food sales are restricted during the school day but allowed after school; many clubs sell pizza after school.
- Communications challenges: the "Ward Melville High School" Facebook page is parent-run and may limit fundraising posts. Consider creating a Ward Melville PTSA Instagram (and/or Facebook) for official announcements, membership drives, and event promotion (with comments off). Coordinate with Heather; district PR contact: Denise Nash. Corinne Keane was cited as a principal who actively shared PTA items in prior schools. The "GOAT shirts" fundraiser was said to support all PTAs; verification with Adam demel was suggested.

Bylaws and Meeting Protocol

- PTA bylaws should be available at meetings (as advised at council) ensure a copy is on hand.
- PTSA mailbox: confirm location in the school; historically minimal mail, but Heather typically retrieves items.

Open Discussion on Security (Perspectives Shared)

- Opinions varied: some members prefer no armed guards; others (including retired law enforcement) supported a discreet, properly trained armed presence ("better safe than sorry").
- Clarifications provided: if implemented, security would be discreet; students would not be told who is armed; staff would know. The timeline, hearings, and vote process mean any change would take months.

Upcoming Steps and Actions

- Promote and staff Trick or Treat Street (10/30) and coordinate tie-in with the Chipotle fundraiser.

- Amplify membership drive (parents and students), emphasizing scholarship eligibility.
- Public engagement: watch Board meetings on YouTube; submit public comments via email or in person, especially on armed security and bond topics.
- Prepare bylaws copy for PTSA meetings.
- Advance Turkey Trot/5K planning and sponsorship outreach.
- Explore setting up an official PTSA Instagram/Facebook for announcements; coordinate with Heather and district PR
- Confirm PTA mailbox location and pick-up process.