



Garrett Park Elementary School PTA, Inc.

PTA General Meeting
September 6, 2016
GPES Media Center

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER. GPES PTA President Marc Silverman called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. He reintroduced himself and previously elected board members Christina Bradley (Fundraising) and Rachel Weinstein (Communications).

DISTRIBUTED:

- Agenda
- List of those who attended
- Proposed budget for 2016-2017 school year
- PTA Calendar 2016-2017 (Tentative)
- Quick Start Guide to GPES PTA
- The WJ Cluster

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Minutes for the previous GPES PTA general meeting, held June 7, were distributed and approved without amendment.

NAACP PARENTS' COUNCIL. Marc Silverman introduced Sherri Stevens, who rose to say she is the NAACP Parents' Council Representative for GPES. The NAACP Parents' Council is a county-wide initiative to help support parents of color by helping them share information and provide feedback. The Council tries to promote an inclusive environment that encourages greater participation by parents of color. Sherri will have a table at Back to School Night to engage further with GPES families.

Marc Silverman suggested creating a Board position on diversity or cultural inclusiveness. Such a position could help the PTA be more helpful and welcoming to new families in the school.

Parents present asked what the new position would ensure. Sherri said the mission of the Parents' Council is to promote academic excellence and to help close achievement gaps by creating an inclusive environment.

NEW BOARD POSITION. Marc Silverman made a motion to add a PTA Board position on diversity. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote. He said he will circulate a definition of the Board position on the PTA listserv.

Marc Silverman moved to elect Sherri Stevens to the newly created Board position. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

ELECTION OF BOARD POSITIONS. Marc introduced volunteers for Board positions who introduced themselves and were elected by voice vote. (Marc introduced Erin Rehman.)

- a. Diane Cassidy - Treasurer
- b. Adriana Cutler - VP of Programs
- c. Erin Rehman - Executive VP, Membership
- d. Karine Jegalian - Secretary

BUDGET. Marc provided a line-by-line explanation of the proposed budget for the 2016-2017 school year. The Rocky Fund is a new approach to fundraising this year.

There was discussion about the reduced budget for in-school cultural arts assemblies (\$800 vs. \$5000 allocation last year). Adriana Cutler said she is confident that arts programs can be prepared in line with the curriculum and at lower cost.

Marc noted that the fall and spring Book Fairs had served as PTA fundraisers in the past but have been used more recently to earn donations for the school, with Scholastic dollars going toward a weekly *Scholastic News* subscription for each student and new books for the library. This appears to be more cost-effective than allocating Book Fair proceeds to the PTA.

The budget doesn't include the Valentine's Day Dance or Science Fair because the GPES Foundation supports these events.

Christina Bradley said the Rocky Fund campaign, which collects direct donations and membership dues, has in its first week raised approximately \$7500 from approximately 100 households. After October 31, she will assess the success of the program and evaluate how to continue. The budget estimate of \$20,000 for how much the Rocky Fund campaign will collect assumes that half of all families will participate and contribute an average of \$50 per child.

The budget was approved without amendment by voice vote.

CLUSTER UPDATE. Cluster Rep Kate Fritz said the Walter Johnson cluster representatives (the cluster includes six elementary schools and two middle schools) focus on strategic development issues and the effects on the number of children per classroom. GPES is over capacity, and WJHS is on track to having the largest population of any HS in the county, she said.

The cluster has most power with MCPS when the WJ cluster representatives agree unanimously and when parents or, even better, students provide testimony.

On October 13, the new MCPS superintendent will release recommendations for how to address cluster issues and overcrowding.

Cluster Rep Katie Mason said information about cluster issues is on the PTA website (gpspta.org), and updates should be posted in October.

Kate Fritz encouraged people to comment to the MCPS about the school calendar and its proposal on school year start dates.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT & TOWN HALL. Principal Dan Tucci noted that this was the most well attended PTA meeting he'd seen. He thanked parents for the support he's received in his first few weeks at GPES.

This year, GPES is expected to have approximately 820-830 students, growing from ~800 last year.

He reminded volunteers to take a newly required online training. Volunteers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Mr. Tucci reviewed arrival and dismissal procedures. The new arrival process has students lining up outside their classrooms instead of in the APR before the first bell; this has been going well. A new dismissal procedure allows students to see that their buses are arriving on the classroom Promethean boards. In the first week of the school year, buses have sometimes been arriving late at GPES in the afternoon.

Construction in late August went well to expand two small instructional rooms into classrooms. Cubbies for the new kindergarten classroom will arrive in 8 weeks, completing the construction process.

Mr. Tucci reminded everyone to honor the Visitor Management System in which adults sign in at the school front office with their drivers' licenses.

The inaugural kindergarten "Switcheroo" went well.

Initial drills for fire, shelter-in-place, etc. have been done or will be done shortly.

Back to School Night will be on September 15, at 6 p.m. for grades K-2, at 7:15 for grades 3-5. Parents are encouraged to walk or carpool if possible.

A parent raised concern about how lockdown drills are explained to young students. Mr. Tucci said there is extensive discussion about procedures before the drills, and extra adults are helping. The reason for the drills is explained to the children as either danger in the building or danger outside the building. First grade teacher Ms. Down encouraged parents to contact teachers if they perceive anxiety in their children about the drills.

A parent asked whether there had been discussion about having a salad bar in the cafeteria. There was discussion about how to pursue the possibility.

A parent raised concern about bus delays in the afternoon. The MCPS transportation manager can help address specific concerns. It's expected that buses will become more reliable over the next few weeks.

A parent asked if results from the cluster representatives' online survey from last spring were published. Jim Bradley, representative to the county PTA, said the results weren't published in

detail because the survey methodology was not scientific, but there was broad approval among GPES parents to reopen the old Woodward HS as long as there is no redistricting.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m. A head count noted 71 people present.

Respectfully submitted, Karine Jegalian, Recording Secretary