



Garrett Park Elementary School PTA, Inc.

PTA General Meeting
October 17, 2016
GPES Media Center

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER. GPES PTA President Marc Silverman called the meeting to order at 6:35.

DISTRIBUTED:

- Key points from superintendent's recommendations to address overcrowding in the WJ cluster
- Minutes of previous PTA general meeting

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Minutes for the previous GPES PTA general meeting, held September 6, were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Treasurer Diane Cassidy reported that the PTA budget is doing well. The PTA was under budget for the ice cream social, start-of-year classroom support, and the book fair. Spirit Wear sales have done well. Jennifer Perry said the book fair had about \$18,000 in sales, about the same as last year. Profits will be used by the school to order from Scholastic.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT. Mr. Tucci reported two new hires: a new data systems analyst and a new lunch and recess aide who is also helping teach math.

A new shed was installed for Kids After Hours. Along the side of the school building, trees will be pruned soon.

Mr. Tucci thanked those involved in the book fair, the Read-Aloud night, and those who attended the first Donuts with Dads event. He highlighted upcoming events:

- Bus rear door evacuation drills on Thursday Oct 20
- A talent show for 5th graders on Monday Oct 24
- Portrait day on Thursday Oct 27
- Principal's coffee on the Friday Oct 28: will focus on gifted/talented instruction, highly gifted magnet programs, and middle school programs
- Halloween events on Monday Oct 31.
 - o Costumes should not have weapons or masks, or be gory.
 - o Parents are welcome to attend the parade at 2:30 and parties at 3:00. But be aware that Parkside and Holy Cross have warned against parking on their sites.
- No school November 7th or 8th (Mon-Tue) and parent-teacher conferences November 10th and 11th (Thu-Fri).

ROCKY FUND/MEMBERSHIP UPDATE. VP for Fundraising Christina Bradley said the Rocky Fund direct donation and membership campaign has collected \$12,926 so far, with an average donation of \$52. The PTA has 391 members so far this year, representing 34% of students, compared with 209 last year.

Marc Silverman noted that one can be a PTA member without having children in the school.

OPEN FORUM ON SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS. GPES Cluster Representatives Kate Fritz and Katie Mason and WJ Cluster Coordinator and GPES parent Jim Bradley led an extensive discussion by those present on the superintendent's recommendations for addressing overcrowding in the Walter Johnson HS cluster. Points included:

Overall issues and the WJ High School

- The recent growth in school populations largely represents turnover in existing neighborhoods. Further growth is anticipated from such demographic turnover and from the building of new homes.
- The superintendent's recommendations came in response to a WJHS cluster Roundtable that met for several months to brainstorm ways to address overcrowding.
- Cluster representatives will meet on Wednesday and decide if they want to respond collectively to the superintendent's recommendations. With nine schools represented in the WJ cluster, either a 9-0 or 8-1 vote is considered a "cluster position." The cluster can testify to the Board of Ed in November.
- The GPES PTA can also testify to the Board of Ed if it chooses or submit a letter saying that it supports the cluster position.
- The Roundtable had recommended re-opening Woodward as a high school, asking that all those currently in the WJ cluster be zoned to attend either WJ or Woodward, but potentially welcoming others from outside the cluster as well.
- The superintendent recommended convening a new Roundtable with WJHS and several high schools from the Downcounty Consortium to address how to create a new HS that eases overcrowding both at WJ and in the DCC.
- This process is intended to help decide the MCPS capital improvement (construction) plan for 2019-2024.
- If school boundaries are redrawn, that process won't be considered until about 18 months before a school is expected to open.
- At this point, parents can advocate for some constraints and expectations, but the new Roundtable is asked not to discuss boundary changes or choice programs, including probably magnet programs. Jim Bradley said he will try to get more information about what discussion *would* be permitted in the Roundtable and pass that information on to Kate and Katie. Expected discussion areas for the RT include: What are problems Woodward could solve? Does it make sense to reopen Woodward? What would we like Woodward to be?
- The earliest Woodward HS would open is estimated to be 2022. Building a HS costs an estimated \$115 million, i.e. two-thirds of the approximately \$175 million capital improvement project available to MCPS each year.

- Without opening Woodward, WJHS is expected to have a population as large as or exceeding that of the most populous HS in the county, Blair HS, fairly quickly.
- Jim shared that extending the discussion to other overcrowded HS clusters may be possible and is under investigation.
- Kate's understanding of the recommendation is that the roundtable discussion would be at the high level--what kinds of programs there could be at the new HS but not specific content, such as arts magnet, health IT training center.
- As to why Woodward would be reopened when it's so close to WJ: The land is there, and having two close-by high schools could help create a more even distribution of students.

Issues affecting the elementary school specifically

- The cluster will continue to recommend starting the process for building a 7th elementary school as soon as possible.
- The holding school on Grosvenor Lane is a large and well-situated parcel, but it is heavily used as a holding school for elementary schools that are being renovated or rebuilt.
- Clarification is needed on the options for GPES in the short term.
 - When is the lease to the MCCA building (the two-room red brick building in front of the school that is being used as a daycare center for preschool-age children) ending?
 - How many students could the MCCA building accommodate? What would it cost to convert the building to ES classrooms?
 - Portable classrooms don't count as increasing school capacity (thereby permitting future ES construction more quickly), but would converting the MCCA building count as increasing GPES capacity?
 - Where could portables go on the GPES site? How many could be accommodated?
- Open questions need to be answered before GPES can take a position on the superintendent's recommendation (to convert the current MCCA space to GPES use).
- Mr. Tucci and first-grade teacher Heather Down were not aware of a requirement to dismantle art and music rooms before putting in portables. Other schools have portables and such amenities.

Additional general issues

- Approximate ideal population numbers (in MD, in MCPS) for ES are considered to be 450-750; for MS, 900-1200; and for HS, 1500-2400.
- MCPS has gone over limits that the state gives and that MCPS recommends.
- Members of the community who are concerned about overcrowding of schools and the GPES PTA can take concerns about dense development to the county council.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. A head count noted 33 people present.

Respectfully submitted, Karine Jegalian, Recording Secretary