



## Garrett Park Elementary School PTA, Inc.

PTA General Meeting  
November 1, 2016  
GPES Media Center

### Minutes

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Minutes for the general meeting on October 18 were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT. With Diane Cassidy out of town, Marc reported that the budget is doing well, with most events under budget. The Box Tops for Education program has collected more than \$410 so far.

Later in the year, a budgetary committee may be created as a forum for making plans for next year.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT. Mr. Tucci thanked those who participated in the previous day's Halloween events and volunteers. In staffing news, the school has allocated more time to special education programs, hiring an aide already working in the school for additional work.

Upcoming events include:

- Parent-teacher conferences next week
- Interview testing for gifted/talented programs December 8-9 for all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who are being rescreened. Also, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are new to the county will be tested.
- Hearing and vision screening
- Field trips for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders

INCLUSION/DIVERSITY. Sherri Stevens is the NAACP Parents Council representative for GPES as well as the PTA's VP for Inclusion and Diversity, a new PTA board position.

She welcomed thoughts on D&I initiatives and stressed the need for volunteers to engage.

Sherri suggested the following mission for D&I initiatives at GPES:

To engage all families throughout the school; promote cross cultural awareness; embrace diverse thinking, styles, interests and needs of our school community; promote inclusive parent advocacy and participation.

As a framework, Sherri suggested having resource or affinity groups:

The ALLIES volunteer community has the goal of expanding diversity and inclusion efforts at GPES through identifying and including affinity groups to champion and build a culture of inclusion across our school community. This will be done by promoting awareness of the formed groups and fostering group-specific community building, information sharing, outreach and initiatives that will then be shared more broadly across the larger school community.

**ALLIES** stands for...

**Acknowledge** – Respecting differences and accepting uniqueness of individuals.

**Learn** – Consider diverse perspectives. Gain awareness.

**Listen** – Give your attention and seek to understand. Openness and receptive others experiences.

**Include** – Embrace others. Unite and collaborate. Share experiences.

**Engage** – Speak up. Pledge support. Get involved. Connect with others.

**Support** – Strengthen community. Serve as a foundation. Provide assistance and guidance.

Sherri suggested following up this conversation on the PTA listserv. The NAACP Parents Council is an example of an affinity group that has had good discussions. Sherri welcomes additional suggestions or thoughts on groups that others would be interested in creating or would want to participate in.

Parent suggestions:

- Reach out to and include ESL/ELL families
- Have events where people could exchange cultural knowledge, such as cooking or other basic knowledge

**ROCKY FUND/MEMBERSHIP UPDATE.** VP for Fundraising Christina Bradley said the Rocky Fund direct donation and membership campaign ended on October 31 and collected \$15,224. Exec VP Erin Rehman said the total number of members is 469, compared to 209 last year. Christina and Marc suggested that the increase in membership can serve as a talking point when representing the school in advocacy efforts.

**RESPONSE TO SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATIONS.** GPES Cluster Representatives Kate Fritz and Katie Mason provided an update on Walter Johnson Cluster discussions. The cluster has taken consensus positions in response to last month’s recommendations from MCPS Superintendent Jack Smith for alleviating overcrowding in WJ Cluster schools.

At the high school level, the cluster is planning to agree to further conversation but requesting a more defined scope for the superintendent’s proposed Roundtable with DCC high schools. In addition, the cluster would like to promote equity between WJ and Woodward, continuity for students, and an 1800-2000 limit on the size of Woodward (with core space for up to 2400). The cluster would welcome including representatives from other overcrowded high schools at the new Roundtable. The cluster plans to support the superintendent’s statement that 3500 is too large for a high school.

At the middle school level, the cluster plans to accept what the superintendent said but say that 1500 would be too large for middle schools and to urge that space be sought for an additional

MS. Regarding Tilden, the cluster plans to thank the school system for the planned new building (goal to open in August 2020).

At the elementary school level, the superintendent suggested placing Farmland overflow at Luxmanor. The cluster supports allowing GPES to also request space at Luxmanor if necessary. Luxmanor is expected to be rebuilt in 2020.

The cluster will ask again as forcefully as it can for land for a 7<sup>th</sup> ES.

The cluster has agreed to defer to GPES on how to respond to the idea of using the MCCA building as an annex.

For GPES, many questions seem unanswerable at this point, such as how many students the MCCA building could accommodate and where exactly portables could be placed. It would only be clear in the spring semester if an annex or portables would be necessary, and architectural questions would likely only be addressed in the summer before new classrooms opened. Portables can be placed on blacktop, but that would cut down on space for kids to play. The grassy fields behind the school are owned by parks, and negotiation would be required to build on that land.

It appears not to be a required policy that art and music rooms be converted to classrooms before portables or annexes are used.

In testimony to the Board of Education, Kate Fritz suggested that GPES say that it appreciates the superintendent's efforts to find additional capacity but requests an ongoing discussion about options. She noted that the staff in the MCCA building were unaware of the superintendent's recommendations and would like to continue operating their nonprofit daycare. The center provides care for the younger children of GPES parents and teachers and, because of subsidies, serves as a resource for low-income families.

Marc Silverman suggested thinking outside of the box about allies in the community who can help advocate for a 7<sup>th</sup> ES. For example, Friends of White Flint has pushed for a 7<sup>th</sup> ES. Kate Fritz agreed that parents can do better to provide feedback whenever there is an opportunity, e.g. at planning meetings for the construction of new apartments and condos near the metro.

Cluster testimony to the Board of Ed will happen on November 14. It would be helpful to have people there in spirit wear, with signs; Kate Fritz said she'll make suggestions about that later.

Katie Mason made a MOTION for the GPES PTA to support the cluster's position on the superintendent's recommendation. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

OPEN FORUM. The floor was opened to parents to raise issues of concern, among them:

- The number of front office staff has remained at two despite a doubling of the ES population. Mr. Tucci said he wasn't aware of any ES having more than two front office staff but welcomed parent volunteers.
- How to manage the large volume of paper that some students bring home. Not having as many textbooks or bound planners may be exacerbating the problem.

- Garbage collects on the playground. Perhaps kids should be told to help with clean-up. Also, a large amount of school supplies ends up on floors and in the trash. There are complaints about bathroom cleanliness.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. A head count noted 19 people present.

Respectfully submitted, Karine Jegalian, Recording Secretary