



Garrett Park Elementary School PTA, Inc.

PTA General Meeting
February 7, 2017
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 November 1 were approved.

NEWSLETTER. Marc noted that a hard copy PTA newsletter had been distributed at the end of the previous week.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Diane Cassidy distributed an updated copy of the budget. She noted that the PTA has run under budget for all events so far.

The second large fundraiser of the year, the Silent Auction, is coming up later this month.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE. Erin Rehman reported that the PTA now has 474 members, more than double the number last year.

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES. Erin said volunteers are needed to help organize upcoming events. Sign-up forms have been posted online. Volunteers are also needed for administrative tasks, including bylaws revisions and nominating a new PTA board.

Input was also sought for the inclusion and diversity position on the PTA board and its activities.

SILENT AUCTION. Christina Bradley said this fundraiser will be held February 25, 5-9 pm, along with a free family game night, where children can play board games, recess games and do crafts. Further information including a full list of items for sale has been posted on the gpspta.org site. There will be student volunteers to help supervise children as they play.

COMPUTER SCIENCE COMMITTEE. Christina encouraged PTA members to join a committee to address the comments, questions and concerns people have had about computer use at the school and to help organize a Spring Coding Night with the help of KIDS museum.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT. Mr. Dan Tucci said new STOP signs near the school are helping with traffic flow.

He noted that report cards would be coming out the next day. Bullying report forms will be distributed with report cards, a new county procedure.

He encouraged parents to park legally when coming to Valentines parties next week.

USE OF CHROMEBOOKS. Fifth grade teacher Noah Drill gave an overview of laptop use at the school.

He said students sign a Chromebook Contract that helps establish expectations for Chromebook use.

He described some ways the computers are used, e.g. sharing documents on Google Drive, using Google Translate, helping teachers convey faster feedback to students, promoting collaboration among kids on shared documents.

A question-answer session followed:

- Will children have access to the same folders throughout their years at MCPS? Mr. Drill said that depends on who the owners of the folders are.
- Can children and parents see their work and use their accounts in the future? The accounts are owned by MCPS, so the answer wasn't clear.
- What happens to deleted work? Sometimes children delete others' work, but files can be restored to past versions.
- Mr. Drill said he'd be happy to share his slides with parents.
- Are there guidelines limiting screen time for students? Students are never required to use electronics for homework, Mr. Drill said. In the classroom, Chromebooks are heavily used for writing, an average of 45 minutes to an hour per day, but there are no specific guidelines limiting their use.
 - o Mr. Tucci added that he doesn't think computers are overused at GPES and said that 45 minutes to 1 hour a day is probably close to typical use across grades; he agreed there are no set guidelines.
- Are there rules for using Chromebooks during recess? Mr. Drill said 5th graders are not allowed to use them at recess.
- Are their policies restricting the use of movies or TV? Mr. Tucci said movies are sometimes used for support, e.g. when two classes of kids must be combined into a single room at recess, but this isn't the norm and shouldn't be.
- Why don't children go to the gym during indoor recess? Mr. Tucci said the gym is occupied all the time for P.E.
- How is security ensured when kids use computers? Mr. Drill said MCPS determines security procedures. Some sites, such as Facebook, are banned. The county has a team that reports back to schools if kids use inappropriate sites. Mr. Tucci said this school hasn't had such an investigation while he's been here. Mr. Drill said students are guided in how to do research so they are less likely to stumble on inappropriate sites.
- Are kids taught how to filter out reliable information when doing Google searches? Mr. Drill said 4th and 5th grade teachers pay a lot of attention to how to tell if information is legitimate. Mr. Tucci said media specialists also talk about how to do research.
- Kids may have online access to what they have at school at home as well.
- To learn keyboarding, Type to Learn is a program used at school.

Mr. Tucci said since the computer lab was dismantled (to add classroom space), the dual purpose room is used for computer labs. There is a mobile lab with one set of 30 computers that is in heavy demand.

There is especially high demand for computers during testing periods.

OPEN FORUM. Sherri Stevens noted that there will be a Black History Month celebration on the evening of February 17, with a speaker, a fashion show, and a dance group performing.

There will also be a Black History Month art showcase. Art submissions can be left at the PTA box in the school office until next Wednesday.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. A head count noted ~30 people present.

Respectfully submitted, Karine Jegalian, Recording Secretary