



Meeting Minutes

Minutes of
George Mason Elementary School
General PTA
February 22, 2021
7:00 – 8:15 pm

1. Call Online Meeting to Order at 7:04 pm
2. Approve minutes from the January 25th, 2021 meeting
 1. Approved at 7:04 pm
3. Administrative Notes:
 - A. Meeting will be recorded
 - B. Ask questions via chat box, raise hand icon, or email
4. PTA updates
 - A. Dragon Storytime on Thursday at 7 pm
 1. English and Spanish readings by teachers and staff
 2. Log on one device per family if possible
5. Committee Reports
 - A. Treasurer (Lea Poggi)
 1. Balance sheet posted on PTA website
 - i. Updates include:
 - a. Pending checks
 - b. Music reserves have stayed the same
 - c. No budget changes; remain conservative
 - B. PTAC (Tasha Hensley) - Highlights from last meeting
 1. Dr. Hutchings and Cindy Anderson participate every month and group reviews city-wide PTA updates
 2. Dr. Hutchings
 - a. ACPS focused on school opening
 - b. Cannot currently address virtual to hybrid requests, maybe later on
 - c. 50% of full-time staff are returning overall
 - d. Try to provide your own transportation to hybrid
 - e. March/April – ACPS will plan summer
 - f. April/May – ACPS will plan fall
 - g. Playgrounds won't be used during hybrid school days because they can't follow hygiene protocols
 - h. PTA camp directory site is live

6. Principal Update (Dr. Seazante Oliver, GMES Principal)
 - A. Story time on Thursday, February 25th at 7pm via zoom
 1. These will be regularly scheduled but more of a webinar format for future times
 - B. School Spirit Day this Friday, February 26th
 - C. March 2nd Hybrid reopening for SPED students
 - D. March 16th Hybrid reopening for all students returning
 1. Cohort A Tues/Wed
 2. Cohort B Thurs/Fri
 - E. Spring Break is March 29th
 - F. Helpful hints re: School reopening:
 1. Meetings schedule for orientation to be coming
 - G. All meals will be free for students (breakfast, lunch, and a snack) and students are welcome to bring food from home
 1. Expectations for safety: 3 Ws (wear mask, wash hands, and watch your distance)
 2. Supply list will be distributed via Mason Messenger
 - i. No new items but what students will need
 - ii. Students need to bring what they need for the day (bring in and bring out each day)
 - iii. Students must use ACPS device in school buildings (bring in device and charger and try to remember to fully charge device)
 - iv. Buses will arrive at 7:30, all else arrive at 7:50 am
 - a. K-3 enter through front cafeteria doors 16
 - b. 4-5 enter through the main entrance door 1
 - v. Campagna will be using 2 rooms upstairs and half of the cafeteria
 - vi. Unprecedented year so please be patient and understanding
 - vii. Q about cohorts:
 - a. Grouped by last name so siblings will be on the same scheduled (A-L and M-Z) for the most part
7. Update from School Board Member Cindy Anderson
 - A. Budget approved by city managers and includes step increase for employees
 - B. High school community pool or underground parking have budget issues and they might not be able to be funded
 - C. March 8th meeting about the design aspects of the high school project
 - D. Looking for volunteer for the School Board advisory committee (ideally parents with children with IEPs or 504s)
8. Middle School Presentation
 - A. Ms. Alston-Harrison
 1. 5th Grade Academic Advising
 - i. Students learn about reqs
 - ii. Student survey, teacher recs, data review
 - iii. Family event and info
 - iv. One-on-one meetings starting March 8th to talk about schedules and courses
 - v. Family confirmation/Parent meetings
 2. Required courses and TAG choices
 3. Electives – student choice
 - i. ACPS site to find electives fair
 - ii. GW site – elective videos

4. Calendar – March 26th confirm course selection
- B. Mr. Forbes
1. Director of Counseling at GW Middle (previous at TC)
 2. Electives
 - i. World Languages
 - a. If you don't take 6th grade language then in 7th you can only take French or Spanish
 - b. Honors vs GE for all core areas
 - c. Math 6 as a 5th grader than automatically enrolled in Honors 7 Math
 - d. Electives are year-long or semester-long
 3. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
 - i. College and career exploration
 - ii. How to study, how to organize, how to take notes, and other skills related to executive function
 - iii. 4-year program and all go to 4-year colleges
 - iv. Student: Arlesh
 - a. AVID teaches you how to improve your grades
 - b. Teaches you about yourself
 - c. AVID prepares you for the future (i.e. college) even at a young age (begins at 6th grade)
 4. March 17th is the last open house
 - i. Meet your team
 - ii. Including assigned student counselor that stays with students all three years
 5. School within a school concept: 120-130 students per team, 4 teams, all core classes on the 3rd floor, all electives on the 2nd floor
 6. March 3rd Spanish speaking program
- C. Student perspective (Arlesh, Maddie, Trudy)
1. Clubs and sports
 - i. Sports are intermural
 - a. Can participate up to 4 days a week
 - b. Fall, Winter, Spring
 - c. No tryouts, it's time to explore
 - ii. Clubs
 - a. Multitude of options
 - b. Find a sponsor if you want to start one (example coding club for girls)
 - iii. Class size
 - a. Depends but 25-30
 - b. Honors might be 28
 - c. GE 25 or so
 - d. Some over 30 but it's rare
 - iv. Special electives
 - a. Drama (improve, scene work, etc.)
 - b. Art (theory, hands-on)
 - c. Technology (coding, egg drop project, drones, 3D printer, etc.)
 - d. Technological Systems (woodshop hands-on)
 - e. Make it your business
 - v. Popular questions
 - a. Cell phone? Last year they enforced no technology rule (you can bring your phone but must leave it in your locker or it can be confiscated)

- b. Lunch time – per grade and you sit where you want (but teachers often offer during lunch)
 - c. What's the transition like from small elementary to a large middle school? – benefit is exposure to different cultures though you can get lost (physically) when you get started! But there are a lot of people to help you navigate.
 - d. Will GW students be switching classes in March? What about the fall? Don't know about the fall but for hybrid still figuring out bell schedule to make alterations to allow for transitions.
 - e. Band/music/orchestra? Beginning level offered or if you have experience you can choose a higher level (includes tryouts).
 - f. 6th grade teachers are experienced in the transition! Having teams really helped with transition. You can find your people! And you can find your classes!
- vi. NOTE: 6th grade program around Sept 2 for new students to come into and get comfortable. TIP – practice with a lock over the summer!

9. Adjourn 8:09 pm