

## PTA meeting 2/28 7 pm

Update from Principal Oliver

1. COVID test will be provided if a student is sent home with symptoms
2. New social worker is Elizabeth (Liz) Mallon
3. Interviewing is continuing for a music teacher. At this point, the goal is a long-term stub. Somebody has been picked for the next school year.
4. School psychologist's last day is 3/2/28
5. Interviews for a new psychologist will begin soon.
6. There is an ACPS job fair coming up
7. Masking will be optional starting tomorrow
8. All SEAL lessons this week will be about respecting differences including wearing or not wearing a mask

Presentation for rising 5th graders from Joy Pochatilla:

1. Every year has been different for the past 3 years so no clear timeline is available for when things will occur.
2. Many typical procedures have changed (ex: cannot go in to pick up your student)
3. Slide show about GWMS: 3-4 x the size of the elementary school
4. Each grade stays on one floor (6th, 7th, 8th) all have their own floor) with occasional overlapping
5. 7 different classes with 7 different teachers
6. Lunch is all together per grade in the cafeteria, classrooms, or outside (this year)
7. Modified block schedule this year. There is an elective every day but other classes may alternate days.
8. 4 academic teams in 6th grade
9. Each team has language arts, science, social studies, math
10. Each team has 125 students
11. There are not enough spaces for every parent to attend parent teacher conferences but DO NOT PANIC and reach out to teachers
12. It is helpful to prepare with juggling 7 classes. The advice of a current 7th grader is "Don't procrastinate"
13. Parent advice: "Download the powerschool app" to see grades and assignments
14. GWMS Parents: <https://www.facebook.com/gwmspta> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/10166547867573>
15. @GWMSPrexies (Prexies is short for Presidents)
16. Town crier info once/week at <https://gwmspta.digitalpto.com/>

17. 3 separate boosters for band, orchestra, and chorus
18. GWMS PTA website with Quicklinks to contact staff, get to powerschool, etc
19. What does GWMS PTA do: student support, teacher appreciation, parent support. Examples include funding positive behavior and support, awards for competitions, grade socials, end of year parties, teacher mini-grants, welcome back breakfast for staff, monthly staff coffee and breakfast, teacher appreciation week

#### Presentation from Mr. Forbes

1. Recent programs include: 2 open houses, program for rising 6th graders
2. Spanish only open house this Friday
3. Counselor will discuss course options with each student
4. An official letter with requested letter comes at the end of academic advisement. The timing for the meeting is not significant (ex: earlier meeting does not mean better classes)
5. Don't miss the back to school program. It's for students only and the student will get to walk their schedule and are paired with an 8th grader. The 6th graders spend most of the day on the 3rd floor
6. 6th graders have core classes in the beginning of the day and the first lunch then electives
7. There was a recent elective fair but some zoom links did not work
8. Tips: buy a lock over the summer to practice
9. Practice using a paper agenda or google calendar
10. Discuss getting work from home back to school and returning work to the teacher
11. Don't worry about school supplies- teachers will tell this to kids on the first day. Show up with a binder, pencils, and paper on the first day
12. Clubs (numerous options) will take a few weeks to get started- ex include mindfulness, Star Wars, student council
13. Teachers stay after school to help students with assignments from 3:15-4:15. There is a 4:15 activity bus
14. Be in the area the week before the first day of school.

#### Q&A

1. Biggest surprise as a parent: "I was surprised about how adaptive these kids are." The kids get everything figured out by day 4. The variety of clubs and chances to build a cohort was a pleasant surprise
2. Very little mingling between grades but a lot of mingling within a grade
3. There are opportunities for kids to connect with elementary school friends at lunch
4. There is an academic team that moves with each grade

5. Academic advisors start in 6th and move through the 3 years