

PTA General Meeting in March  
4/24/23

Call the Meeting to Order/Welcome at 7:34 pm.

1. Welcome (Geoff)
  1. We have a wonderful presentation ahead of us.
2. Ms. Heckel (academic coach): Getting Ready for the SOLs (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grade)
  1. SOL = Standard of Learning
  2. Ms. H is new in this role, as Testing Coordinator. Has other roles, like Reading Specialist.
  3. Schedule
    1. Taking place on different days in May
    2. 3<sup>rd</sup>: math and reading
    3. 4<sup>th</sup>: math, reading, VA studies
    4. 5<sup>th</sup>: math, reading, science
  4. SOL 101
    1. Passing score of 400; 600 is highest you can get
    2. Expedited retakes if they score 375-399; letter comes home in Thursday folder
      1. Teacher will contact you about it.
    3. Measure the success of VA Board of Ed's expectations for learning and achievement
    4. Each test is administered in one day and it's untimed
      1. Encore at end of day
    5. Test is on the computer
    6. GMES students have been practicing using the platform since September
    7. We call it "show off learning"
    8. How long will it likely take them?
      1. Probably 3 hours for math
      2. Probably longer for reading; it used to be a two-day test
    9. It's not Common Core; it's VA's set of tests
    10. These test are administered through 11<sup>th</sup> grade
    11. Need to HS SOLs to earn credits and graduate.
    12. The scores aren't considered in college admissions
      1. **Parent Q: What about for VA state schools?** I don't think so. I'm not aware of that.
      2. **Parent Q: Is there a growth score?** GMES tracks the growth to see if there's improvement across the years.
5. Reading & Math
  1. Computer adaptive; customized for every students based on how they respond to the questions
    1. High, medium, low range Qs
  2. Reading passages w/multiple choice, hot spot, and drag and drop (5-7 Qs per passage)
  3. At home test-taking tips

1. Practice in TestNav – see QR code to access
2. Read directions and passages, then each Q
3. Take a “body break” if necessary (bathroom, water, etc.)
4. RAPS: Read, Annotate (highlight), Prove it (look back in passage for evidence), Solve it



6. Math
  1. Computer adaptive; customized for every students based on how they respond to the questions
    1. High, medium, low range Qs
  2. Multiple choice, hot spot, fill in the blank, in line, and drag and drop
  3. Scratch paper
  4. Sometimes calculator Qs pop up, and there's a calculator icon that kids have been taught to look for.
    1. Desmos calculator that's on the computer; the kids have practiced using it. 4 function, not graphing.
    2. There's also a calculator on the computer we've taught them how to use.
7. Science
  1. Only 5<sup>th</sup> grade
  2. Computer adaptive; customized for every students based on how they respond to the questions
  3. Multiple choice, hot spot, fill in the blank, in line, and drag and drop
  4. Scratch paper
8. Social Studies
  1. Only 4<sup>th</sup> grade
  2. Computer adaptive; customized for every students based on how they respond to the questions
  3. Multiple choice, hot spot, fill in the blank, in line, and drag and drop
  4. Scratch paper
9. **Parent Q: What are the implications for the school?** It's how accreditation is determined. We don't know how growth will play into it.
10. **Parent Q: What's GMES' average pass rate?** We are fully accredited. In 2022, 97% pass rate for reading. Science: 86%. SS: Didn't test last year Math: 92%
11. Contact Ms. Heckel with any questions or feedback.  
[Andrea.Heckel@acps.k12.VA.us](mailto:Andrea.Heckel@acps.k12.VA.us)
3. Minutes from March PTA meeting – *approved*
4. Appointment of Nominating Committee for next year– *approved*
  1. *Rachel Peacock, Katie Good, Katie Hanafin, Kate Eltrich, Catherine Estes*
5. Principal's Updates

1. Thank you for your amazing support last Thursday for Science Night!  
Teamwork makes the dreamwork!
    1. Thanks to Ms. Heckel, Ms. O'Grady, and Ms. Robinson, who were the leads on this.
  2. Administrative Assistants Appreciation Day is this Wed.
  3. Kindergarten Open House in person was great. 11 new kindergartners so far, and I'm aware of 5 more families that need to register. We're on par w/other nearby schools.
  4. 2<sup>nd</sup> K Open House is on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, after school.
  5. K-2 phonological screening
  6. Staff updates
    1. Ms. O'Grady will stay home with the baby next year so she will not be returning.
    2. Vacancy for K-2 interventionist. May be filled in-house, which could be an opportunity for the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who will need to leave. (Ms. Pawlenko was the last hired.)
    3. Ms. Jansen will be retiring. She's a paraprofessional. We will backfill this role.
    4. Ms. Rollins will be retained.
6. Chair Updates
1. Programs (Julie)
    1. Conducting a survey to get feedback on the programs this past year
    2. Looking at Baroody or City of Alexandria for next year
    3. Girls on the Run? Make this a volunteer position next year.
  2. Fundraising (Brooke and Liz)
    1. Dragon Fest on May 12<sup>th</sup>
    2. Party on the Patio on May 20<sup>th</sup>
      1. If you can't attend, you can donate on the GMES PTA website.
      2. You can still bid on the online auction if you can't attend.
  3. Spring2Action (Leigh)
    1. Supports costs of field trips and other alternative learning experiences next year
    2. Day after tomorrow (4/26), but you can also donate now
    3. Power hours on Wed.
  4. Outreach/Modernization (Crystal and Geoff)
    1. Geoff spoke w/Capital Improvement Plan folks to see if they can come to the final meeting. They will have someone here virtually and they'll have someone set up a smartboard in advance. People from CIP will be on Zoom and present to us.
    2. A few weeks before, they will have a district-wide presentation on the swing space. It will be virtual, date TBD. We'll keep you posted on the date. Cora Kelly and Ferdinand T. Day communities will be interested in this, too, so there will be a good turnout.
    3. District-wide playground assessment coming up.

4. We haven't had any HVAC upgrades.
  5. PTA Updates (Geoff)
    1. Tell your friends/neighbors to enroll for Kindergarten.
    2. K playdate volunteers needed
    3. Update from garden coordinator. Unfortunately, the plants she had in mind didn't materialize. She's a PT person for the whole district. We have open garden beds for people to plant in.
      1. Dr. Oliver will follow up.
    4. We will need volunteers for Dragon Week.
    5. Teacher Appreciation Week is the first full week in May (5/8 to 5/12)
      1. We will do something special everyday
      2. A call will go out for help w/this
  6. Treasurer (Lisa)
    1. We need two auditors...we found them!
  7. Future PTA Meetings
    1. May (6/5) PTA Meeting – Final meeting of the year is when the new officers will be approved
1. Meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.