

PTA meeting 9/18

1. Welcome from PTA President Liz Bartlett; great to see such a full room! Liz welcomed Kelly Booz, our school board rep; her kids go to MacArthur, she has lived through the swing space/new building shuffle. Thank you to our current volunteers and we need more volunteers!
2. Welcome from Principal Finan
  - a. His background - Boston College undergrad, Harvard education masters, middle school teacher in New Haven CT, principal in elementary schools in Lawrence MA and then Albuquerque NM; wife is from Alexandria (Mt Vernon), they are expecting their first child in a few weeks.
  - b. His North Star is what is best for the kids, which is what he wants to hold himself accountable for — students are his customers.
  - c. How he thinks about leadership:
    - i. Joy (this can be a tough job for staff, create a positive, joyful environment for the staff, this will transfer to the students);
    - ii. Collaboration (he likes to get input from everyone including families);
    - iii. Listening (prefers to listen before he talks, he wants to understand);
    - iv. Accountability (can be a scary word but it's important - we are a school & we are being paid to produce good outcome for students — it's our job to hold ourselves accountable to the work);
    - v. Feedback (always wants feedback, he believes in continuous growth)
  - d. Teamwork is important. For staff, focus on our teams, we don't want staff working in silos. View parents as part of the team and are equally as important in our success as a school. Instructional leadership team — rep from every grade level and department — focus is on strong instruction across content levels & engaging with school improvement plan (will share once finalized); equity team focus on welcoming all in school; PBIS team focused on promoting positive behaviors (greeting students at the door is one initiative) & SEAL; Community Outreach team focused on engaging w community partners and family (heritage night is coming back); attendance team meets weekly — **prioritizing attendance (every day in school and on time) this academic year.**
  - e. Priorities:
    - i. get to know GMES staff, students, families
    - ii. learn more about strengths and weaknesses
    - iii. maintaining high expectations for academics and social-emotional learning (focus onto professional learning, differentiated instructional support across spectrum of needs, attendance, continuous improvement)
    - iv. build school-home connection. E.g., Hispanic Heritage month - during morning announcements, give the kid Hispanic Heritage facts; small ways to celebrate cultures during school day, such as salsa dancing.
3. Intro to PTA — we are boosters for the school. Intro to Exec Board. Lots of new families here, which is so great!
4. Budget - \$80K spend proposed, \$56K proposed income — historically we don't spend what we budget for (e.g., teacher grants don't all get used) — trying to draw down on our \$70K bank balance — we might not sustain all spending in future years once that balance is drawn down.

Key highlights of the proposed budget:

  - a. FUNDRAISING key fundraisers are in the spring, Party on the Patio, Dragonfest; we need volunteers! Reach out to Brooke Johnson VP of Fundraising (brookemarra@gmail.com)

or to the PTA president email ([georgemasonpta@gmail.com](mailto:georgemasonpta@gmail.com)) to volunteer for fundraising events!

- b. ACTIVITIES - kids' enrichment opportunities – this year PTA will buy t-shirts for all kindergarteners; Jamestown trip for 4<sup>th</sup> graders will be covered for all families; additional funds for alternative learning experiences (additional opportunity for school for assemblies and field trips)
  - c. COMMUNITY - we try to be good stewards in the community, donations.
  - d. PROGRAMS - Barody after school, needs-blind admissions.
  - e. SCHOOL SUPPORT - grants to teachers, Principal fund, etc.
  - f. PTA general items — recess bags (each grade has balls, etc for recess, school directory etc.
  - g. Proposed budget was approved unanimously.
5. Audit committee report from Jerry Peacock. The Audit Committee looks at budget, budget amendments, and conducts deep dive into transactions out of the account. Last year there was a \$27K budget deficit proposed but we ended up achieving a \$20K budget surplus.
  6. General committee reports / questions –
    - a. Geoff Goode (Past President) presented on the recess shed, which currently is a hazard; proposed to be removed, no cost to PTA (Dan Jones, Treasurer, will see to removal). Shed removal was approved unanimously.
    - b. Catherine Estes (PTAC liaison) - PTAC is looking for committee members and Reflections competition, please reach out to [georgemasonpta@gmail.com](mailto:georgemasonpta@gmail.com) to volunteer!