

Meeting called to order at 6:33 PM
88 people in attendance

Welcome by Heather McAndrews, PTA President

Agenda overview

Executive Board Updates

Upcoming events, Riziki Okton, PTA Vice President

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Student Picture Day | 12/7/22 |
| Teacher appreciation Lunch | TBD |
| Bus Driver Appreciation Gesture | TBD in Dec |
| Chipotle Fundraiser | Tues 1/10/23 |
| PTA General Body Meeting #3 | Tues 1/17/23, 6:30 (no meeting in Dec) |
| Life as a TAG Middle Schooler | Wed 1/18, 6,30 (Info will be in Class Dojo) |

Fall Festival Update, Riziki Okton, PTA Vice President

300+ attendees

40+ volunteers

~\$1,500 raised

Thank you to all of the volunteers and those who helped with planning and execution

We still need PTA volunteers for various committees and chairperson positions

Brittany Moore offered thanks to all of the new volunteers on the communications, events and fundraising committees

Class Liaison, Nadia Tyme, Chairperson

Still have some openings for class liaisons and events

Committee and Finance Updates, Brittany Moore, Treasurer

Site Improvement Committee

Still need 2 chairs and 5 members

Committee work will start in the new year

Those interested in joining can send an email to pta.gwes@gmail.com

Fundraising committee

Still need 2 chairs and 2 members

Those interested in joining can send an email to pta.gwes@gmail.com

Treasurers Update and Fundraisers

Amazon Smiles is an ongoing fundraising opportunity. GWES gets a portion of the purchase when you purchase items through Amazon

GWES tshirts and spirit gear are now available for purchase through the gwespta.org page

Recent fundraising results and upcoming initiatives:

Hyattsville Zombie Run, raised \$685

Fall festival, raised \$1,500

Chipotle Fundraiser Tues 1/10

Candy Grams for Students Tues 2/14

Any additional fundraising ideas can be emailed to the PTA pta.gwes@gmail.com

Treasurer detailed report:

Membership, currently 66 paid members

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Nov. starting balance | \$9,800 |
| Nov. expenses | \$4,100 |
| Nov. income | \$5,800 |
| Nov. ending balance | \$11,500 |
| Dec planned expenses | \$750 |

Mr. B Town Hall, including Mrs. Soto (tag coordinator) and Ms. Gilroy (testing coordinator)

Opening Remarks, Mr. B, Principal

- Expressed his thanks for the efforts of the PTA and parent involvement
- Recap of the first quarter
- It was the first time in three years with all students back to start the year
- Success of the book fair and the vocabulary parade
- Red Ribbon week was held recently
- The next student of the month ceremony is coming up with date TBA
- This past week students had an opportunity to write letters to appreciate teachers
- SGA elections are going on right now, campaigns have been creative and students are very engaged
- Fall festival was an awesome event with all of the activities and smiling faces
- There is a high number of teachers retiring within PGCPSS; while many schools are still understaffed GWES has been 100% staffed since the start of the year
- GWES has been challenged this year without a secretary with temporary people have been filling in. Mrs. Lambert will be returning as the Principal Secretary and Ms. Belle will be joining as the school secretary
- There is a nationwide bus driver shortage with over a 200 person shortage in PGCPSS. The county transports over 90k children every day

- Parents communicating with the school about bus issues is helpful as the school communicates to the transportation department

Testing Update, Ms. Guilroy, Testing Coordinator

1st county assessment given this year was iReady. It is a Reading/Language (RELA) test given twice a year to grades 2-5. Teachers will be reminded tomorrow (11/16) to send home results with children. This test helps teachers to see students individual skill levels.

Dibbles 8th edition is a new test that will be administered to grades 2 and 3. It is a universal screener for RELA given three times a year. Scores assessments will be sent home and helps to identify students who may be at risk for developing reading challenges, The first set of results should be coming home next week. Students who score below level will get assistance and they'll use alternative tools instead of iReady.

Benchmark makeups are currently going on. These tests include math (grades 2-5), reading (grades 3-5) and science (grade 5). It is administered twice a year to assess the skills taught and learned in the classroom. It identifies students strong skills and those needing additional work. Score results will be available after thanksgiving.

MCAT scores from spring 2022 still aren't available. PGCPs is still working on the banding and levels. The test has been changed so they need more time score tests and provide reports. Results are anticipated to be released should be sent home with students in December.

Testing Question and Answer Session

Q: How do we accommodate students we don't test well?

A: Testing is not the only tool teachers use to gauge the students performance/skills. Teachers also use assignments, class participation, etc to get a well rounded view of the child. Unfortunately testing administration accommodations are often very specific and mandated at the district, state or even federal level. Accommodations are only available for students with IEPs, 504 and ELL plans

Q: What about kids who excel in testing? How are those skills nurtured?

A: Teachers have multiple resources (literature circles, independent studies, etc) to lean into students strong skills. Assessments can help teachers determine if kids can move to higher levels of instruction. There is math acceleration available in the classroom for kids at higher levels. Students are also often grouped with other students at their learning level to work at the same pace. Mrs. Soto has lots of resources on the TAG website for parents to utilize at home.

Any further testing questions can be sent to Ms. Guilroy.

Question and Answer Session with Mr. B

Q: How are education recovery dollars being spent at GWES?

A: In PGCPs/Maryland these funds do not trickle down to the school level. They are spent at the county or state level to use at their discretion. GWES administration has no influence on how these funds are spent.

Q: Why are students still unable to use water fountains?

A: GWES is following PGCPs policies. Even though other schools may be using theirs we continue to follow county policies and guidelines. The current county guidance is warning signs are to be placed on all fountains and fountains are not to be used. PGCPs is still supplying bottled water for students and we have plenty of supply. While GWES is a newer building there may be pipe issues leading to the school. Fountains are unavailable until testing confirms their use is safe for students and staff.

Q: Why does the TAG school have iCal vs. an introductory language option?

A: As a TAG center we follow the PGCPs curriculum. TAG schools are mandated to teach an iCal curriculum, it's not a GWES choice. It's intended to give exposure to various cultures and very basic language skills.

Q: Why aren't we doing field trips? Are they still not allowed?

A: There is no rule against it. Field trips are planned at the teachers discretion and they have to make the request. So far there has only been one request this year. Those requests go to Mr. B and then need to be approved at the PGCPs level. Field trips also need to be paid for through the school bookkeeper and GWES hasn't had one since July. This has been a road block to trips being planned. would prevent ince we haven't had a bookkeeper since July there has been little access to the schools funds for things like field trips. Mrs. Lambert should be able to help get this process going. Mr. B will remind teachers that they are free to request trips.

Q: Can parents go into the building?

A: Post Covid there has been limits on parents in the building. Mr. B has made several exceptions for things such as the book fair. Recently PGCPs has lifted a ban on parents in the school. However, parents should only come to school for a specific reason. Per PGCPs policy, parent requests to visitat the classroom need to be made 24 hrs in advance through Mr. B.

Q: What is the expectation for teacher responses to parent?

A: PGCPs policy is 24-48 hours. If you do not receive a response within that time frame please try them again. If you still do not receive a response contact Mr. B.

Q: Will 5th graders go on the camping trip to Camp Schmidt this year?

A: PGCPS camping trips to Camp Schmidt have resumed. This is an exciting annual overnight camping trip for 5th graders. No date has been set yet but it will be sometime in the spring.

Q: Could we have a College t-shirt day?

A: Yes! Mrs. Soto coordinates activities such as thins. It could possibly be incorporated into the next spirit week.

Q: Will there be honor roll assemblies this year in the school?

A: Report cards should come home the last day before Thanksgiving break. The assembly will like be after the break. However, school administration is working on a final date.

Q: How is the school encouraging character skills in addition to academic skills?

A: This is done on an ongoing basis. Each month the school focus on a character trait of the month. Students have the opportunity to participate in lunch bunches and the trait is reinforced during the morning announcements. There are many opportunities for kids to show their unique skills.

Q: When will extracurricular clubs return:

A: Clubs will be returning starting in the second quarter. Mrs. Romero has already gotten some teachers to sign up. Most will be before school at 8:30am. So far some of the prospective clubs are:

24 Club (3rd grade)

Math Games, Puzzles and Challenges (4th and 5th grades)

Gardening (Spring)

Drama (3rd and 4th grades, Room 304)

Multicultural Art and Crafts (3rd and 4th grades)

Art

Green Team (5th grade)

Talent Show

Enrichment/Tutor

Book club

PTA and parents is happy to support clubs

Q: How can we advocate for changes with bus transportation?

A: Our standing in county as a TAG school has no influence. Mr. B continues to advocate for GWES but the transportation dept doesn't agree with prioritizing TAG schools despite the wider geographic footprint of students. Mrs. Soto shared that the staff that works the afternoon is constantly on the phone to get information to provide parents with updates and communicating via class dojo.

Given that some students end up staying at school way after dismissal waiting on busses, Mrs. Guilroy suggested that the PTA sponsor some snacks/drinks for those kids who end up staying late waiting on their buses. They often get hungry and thirsty while waiting. First Baptist Church of Glenarden has a partnership with the school that provides some snacks. However, with the frequency of late busses and number of children waiting they are in low supply.

The PTA agreed to support by purchasing snacks.

Q: Why does 2nd grade have so much homework?

A: Mr. B said he has spoken with teachers about only giving homework that is necessary. Teachers are working to improve the process. This is a conversation happening at all grade levels on a consistent basis.

Q: Are rolling backpacks still prohibited?

A: Mr. B is lifting the ban since students are so often carrying heavy bags (especially with Chromebooks) and there no lockers.

Q: How are 2nd graders being transitioned into the TAG environment?

A: Children are being coached to advocate for themselves when they don't get it. There are conversations about making all kids feel equal even though they may have different spelling or reading lists.

Q: Why aren't kids having enough time to eat?

A: Lunches are done by grade level and ovent includes 150 kids. Lunch is 30 min long and sometimes everyone doesn't get food until half way. There are several strategies being explored to figure out how kids can have more time to eat or that the same kids aren't getting less time. Ideas include not calling the same tables first.

Adjourn 7:48