

GES PTA Meeting, March 3, 2009

1. President's Report – Anne Gardner

Reverb—all male, African American group presented half hour singing/ storytelling show to grades.

Ice skating—50 people present, making around \$118

Chevy's fundraising night—well-attended!

Box Tops--\$120 collected so far; bring them in any time!

Kalani—Music guest in drumming performed with each grade this past week.

Arts integration—applications have been distributed to teachers, but need still to be sent in for this training program for our teachers. April is the deadline, but it is highly suggested to send it in early. (Last year we submitted it on time, but did not receive this training.)

Mural project—The art facilitator will solicit designs from classes; tiles will then be affixed through the hallway; hopefully this will all be completed by the Multicultural dinner. Anne has pictures of the Berwyn Heights Elem mural if anyone is interested in viewing their project.

Picnic Tables—We need people to sign up to help with this project (people with building interest and/ or with trucks to transport).

Ms. Case thanks the PTA for funding the Kalani Music Presenter, who visited our school recently.

2. Principal's Report and MSA presentation

Lunch Recess monitors love having the equipment storage unit provided by the PTA.

2nd grade is travelling to the White House tomorrow (March 4)—thanks to the teachers for collecting money efficiently (in one day!); this has been planned since Sept; A t-shirt and books about Greenbelt is being prepared for Pres. Obama

Before- and After-Care: We are contacting those on the waitlist, as this program is expanding (by about 15 slots). The youth Center may be reconsidering opening a program at their facility.

Thank you to Tina Clark, one of our recess monitors, for purchasing necessary recess games.

MSA Presentation

GES always has made AYP, each subgroup (consisting of 5 or more students, includes ESOL, free lunch, etc) testing in 70/80th percentile; students in grades 3-6 are tested; attendance is a factor and these numbers are looked at through the year; Three categories of scored judgment: basic, proficient and advanced; results return over summer and are not part of the child's GPA, though the information is used to help group students for the following year; our AMO number, the expectation for our school, rises each year

MSA (Maryland School Assessment): 2 days each of reading and math in March—paper test (science test online in May); make-up testing the following week; 90 minutes per day of tests; ESOL and special ed students also take this test; Ours is a Criterion-Referenced test, comparing achievement to standards;

Reading: comprehension components are 1) literal, 2) inferential, 3) critical thinking, 4) reading strategies; Question types: multiple choice type and brief constructed response (few sentences); students are prepared by practicing these each day at GES; writing is not tested, for example spelling errors are not judged;

Math test: like reading test, there are "selected response" (Multi-choice) questions and BCR's; extended constructed response (grades 5 and 6) require more writing in answer; calculators used for some portions on test (some students have calculator use as part of their accommodation)

Top Ten ways to prepare for the MSA!

10—good night's sleep

9-Wake up on time

8-Healthy breakfast

7-Arrive on-time (incentives will be provided!)

6-Instructions followed closely

- 5-Budget time wisely
 - 4-Write neatly
 - 3-Support every answer with evidence
 - 2-Courteous behavior to other testers
 - 1-Take a great attitude
- GES has a "Spirit Week" the week prior to testing to get ready!

3. Treasurer's Report – Susan Breon

Activity in the account for this month: Arts Integration Training and Kalani guest donation and payment. (Our arts budget has been increased by vote from last meeting.)

a. Motion passed for request for \$400 for buses to take 25 students to the mentoring program to UMD for a leadership program (April 30). The cost is for buses only. The program is complimentary to our students. This programming came out of the planning for students exhibiting consistent problems in discipline or academic concerns. Mentors meet for about 1 hour per week with the students.

b. Motion passes for \$300 (Three Brothers fundraiser included in this) to provide items for the PBIS school store. Students are excited about this store and this program of encouraging positive behavior. The budget originally set aside, including a Target and other business donations, as well as individual donations from parents, has dwindled. This money would provide a base amount for purchasing supplies. One challenge is finding a variety of encouragements for the upper grades. Alternative ideas include homework passes, extra recess, drumming time in Ms. Case's room (ie, things kids can do rather than just get). Concern: Will this become another PTA-funded component, when we already are supporting the Scholastic News and the arts funding. The store may open less frequently in following years, or find less worker- or cash-intensive ways of operating, but this year is important as the initial push. Referrals and suspensions have drastically decreased this year, due most likely to this program.

4. Nominations committee— Melissa Sites

We need a slate of Board members by April 14th for the May meeting vote: positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, VP for Legislation, all with term limits of two years.

5. Room parent orientation – Jacob Novick

School Volunteer handbook brochure and Room Parent Info Sheet distributed.

There are Commitment, Conduct and Confidentiality Standards that should be followed.

The information sheets are completed by those wishing to volunteer. The volunteers and teachers are then paired up. The end-of-year time can be busy for teachers, so we are trying to get this program off the ground.

If you appreciate the parent liason work that Mr. Novick provides, please write in support of this kind of position. Letters and e-mails can be sent to Ms. Seidel.

Motion passes that PTA write a joint letter in support of Mr. Novick's role and work in our school

6. Upcoming events:

- a. March 12—Three brothers fundraising dinner, all evening
- b. Spring Fair/picnic table building – March 28
- c. PTA meeting/ board nominations – April 14
- d. New Deal Café fundraiser: Open Mic night for – April 21
- e. May 3—School Band Music Festival, 3 pm – local elem/ middle school bands
- f. PTA board election and approval of budget – May 5

- g. Teacher Appreciation Week – May 4-8
- h. Multicultural Dinner - May 13
- i. Spring Band Concert – June 2, with brief PTA meeting beforehand