

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
MAURICE HAWK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA

Thursday, January 21st, 2021 - 7:00pm

Call to Order: Sejal Pandya called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Attendees: Trish Buell, Jack Colella Sejal Pandya, and Padma Katapalli as panelists. PTA board members and some general members. 23 participants in total.

Secretary's Report: Minutes from the Oct 2020 meeting were presented. No corrections/additions were recorded Sejal put forward a motion to approve the minutes. Padma seconded the motion. Minutes are approved.

Executive Board Reports & Recommendations:

1. Financial Report
Sejal presented the current financial report.
2. Nominating Committee Announcement
Padma, Guave, Mamta, and Gina are on the Nomination Committee, which is formed by 3 members and 1 alternate, for 21/22 PTA.

Committee Report(s):

1. JWAC
Sejal introduced the program
2. Upcoming events- Family Paint Night and Bingo Night
 - a. Paint Night: On 2/19 and 2/26 for separate groups, grade K&1 and grade 2&3. An email will be sent with details. Pre-K can also join. Anybody in the household is welcome.
 - b. Bingo Night: Planning in process. Expected in March.

Principal's Report: N/A

Call for new Business:

1. If not interested in being a nominee at the PTA board, please consider joining committees.
2. Any suggestions on virtual events are welcome.

Q&A:

1. Has all constructions been completed?

Yes. The third grade and preschool have moved in. But contractors are still working on finishing touches. Some additional things may need to be addressed. Installation of solar panels, which is not part of the construction, will begin soon and will not interfere with daily routine.

2. Will there be preschool the next year?

Yes. There will be.

3. What is the limit on the number of preschool students?

Two classrooms are added for preschool. The school district follows state guidelines for class size and CDC guidelines for covid control. Any preschool questions can be addressed by Jack Colella.

4. Are there any plans for hybrid students to attend full day at school?

School leadership is focused on staff safety. Scheduling is designed to meet demand and maintain safety of staff. At present, no plan in the district to open cafeteria and implement a full day of school.

5. Are there options for students to be all in rather than alternating virtual/in-school?

We'd like to offer the option but are not prepared to do so at this point of time. Many changes need to be included, e.g. increase in staff, review of current bussing and transportation, cleaning protocols etc.

6. Concerns on screen time

School is trying its best to monitor screen time. Although there are parents asking for removing screen free afternoons, our decisions are based on what is best for students.

7. Students are kicked out of Zoom

There are concerns with Zoom kicking students out, mostly with chromebook. Devices and Zoom software need to be up to date. Wifi upload/download speed need to be sufficient. (Tips: 1) Verizon has an app to take certain devices off the wifi if necessary. 2) Google "speed test". One can know his/her wifi speed). If it still does not work, the device may be the issue. Fill a ticket online and drop off the old device for a new one on Tue and Thu 12:45pm-3:15pm at High School South. Can send an email to teachers and Jack Colella. The school can contact a technician to help.

8. Touch screen chromebooks

Preschoolers will have touch screen chromebooks. Parents will receive information soon. An email to kindergarten parents for touch screen devices will be sent next week.

9. Students in the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program have difficulties in keeping up.

Virtual environment posted whole new challenges to DLI students. teachers are doing the best they can.

10. Standard testing

NISLA: NJ has not applied for waiver for NJSLA. Hawk is proceeding as if it will take place. Rosters have been submitted to the state platform. No info on how the test will happen. Should the waiver be applied, school will share the information.

MAP: All grade 1, 2, and 3 students took MAP.

MAP Fluency for grade 1: will come in spring.

Access test: comes later in spring.

11. Encourage students reading paper books vs ebooks at school reading time.

Trying to set up a routine to pick books from the library. Problem is having students reading the same book while there is insufficient number of books in reserve. Will send out an email about the routine to reserve books, which is also on Mrs. Furgerson's webpage.

12. How to get information on what students are learning?

Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents on e.g. weekly basis. Ms. Buell will remind teachers. Parents are encouraged to reach out to teachers. District curriculum is on the district website.

13. How to motivate your child if they feel disconnected?

School wants to be a resource for parents to solve this challenging issue. In general, make sure to build routines for them, give them nice work space, and talk to them about what happened at school (very motivating for them). Organization is important. Make sure they have things ready. A to-do list can be helpful. Encourage them to take breaks from the screen. Try to be creative.

14. Challenges to teachers in virtual learning

Teachers reflect on their practices and instruction on a yearly basis. They are taking time for careful reflections, based on data such as verbal participation, reading/writing work, and posting. These data are collected and used in driving introductions.

15. How did the teachers divide their time among students?

Teachers are starting to think about creating smaller groups to match skills. At the beginning of the school year it was hard to send students into breakout rooms.

16. Are there tours planned for future students to elementary school? Will virtual class continue for 2021/22?

We don't know. Currently there are no large group events planned. No tour is planned. The kindergarten administrators asked to book a date for kindergarten orientation. School is thinking about creating a video again. School discussed with the PTA executive board to potentially arrange one in-person event this school year. But we don't know whether that will happen or not.

17. Can screen-free afternoons move to Friday?

School tries to stay away from Friday and Monday for screen-free afternoons due to holidays falling on Monday/Friday and also have to work out a consistent date for all.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Thanks,
Gina Zhang
(Secretary).