



PTA General Meeting Minutes

August 21, 2019

6:30 pm

- I. Call-to-Order--President Emily Fink called the meeting to order at 6:35
 - a. Welcome from the president
 - b. Reminder to join PTA and sign in
- II. 6:36 Review of minutes from the last general PTA meeting on May 15, 2019
 - a. Secretary Matt Fox notes two corrections
 - i. The end date of the fiscal year was mistated and has been corrected
 - ii. It has been noted that a statement that hiring an outside auditor is not in compliance with PTA by-laws was incorrect. We are not out of compliance by hiring an auditor rather than having a parent auditor.
 - b. Emily Fink seeks a motion to approve
 - i. Motion made by Kathleen McDavid Harrison
 - ii. Motion seconded
 - c. Motion passes
 - d. Corrected minutes adopted
- III. 6:39 Audit update--Emily Fink notes that the audit is in progress
 - a. No red flags so far.
 - b. Final audit will be certified by CPA.
 - c. Updates will be posted when the audit is complete
- IV. 6:40 MES PTA-Who Are we?--Emily Fink outlines the PTA structure
 - a. Executive Board
 - i. President Emily Fink
 - ii. VP Communication Jana Kovac
 - iii. VP Enrichment Katherine Collins
 - iv. VP Operations Kerry Weinheimer
 - v. VP SWAG Joanna Kobylivker
 - vi. VP Fundraising Sally Carroll
 - vii. Secretary Matt Fox
 - viii. Treasurer Susan Mapen
 - ix. Parliamentarian Amy Hartman
 - x. MES Principal Audrey Sofianos
 - b. Board of directors made up of committee heads



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V. MES PTA-What do we do?

a. 6:42 Katherine Collins—VP Enrichment

- i. Every committee enriches all lives at Morningside--Enrichment is what makes MES special. Our goal is to complement and enhance what our teachers are doing in the classroom.
- ii. Media center
 1. Mr. Rawls has transformed the media center in one year. MES PTA gives time and money in the media center. The students want to be there. He has added hundreds of new titles, including engineering/stem related.
 2. He is enhancing both campuses by taking books to k center every Friday.
- iii. Visiting authors series--childrens' authors and local authors who talk about inspiration and process.
- iv. SWAG--Sustainability Wellness And Garden.
 1. SWAG has been at MES for 6-8 years and started as a labor of love from parents and PTA.
 2. They maintain the garden at MES and at k center. Wylde center partnership provides a garden paraprofessional and build lessons around the garden.
 3. Other SWAG highlights include:
 - a. Smoothie tastings
 - b. Walk to school days with muffins for walkers
 - c. Sustainability—earth week composting (Hoping to make it permanent and year round)
 4. Jr SWAG—student volunteers who encourage sustainability, participate in No place for hate. They encourage a culture of kindness through initiatives such as the buddy benches.
- v. Highlights of the upcoming year include flamenco dancers, a performance of Anne Frank, and an opera all coming to campus. we will also continue the visiting artists program.

b. 6:50 Kerry Weinheimer--VP Operations

- i. Operations focuses on supporting the school and school groups, the school facilities, administration and teachers.
- ii. We supplement class supply costs, supporting teachers before school even starts. Teachers outfit their rooms with their own money and a small APS stipend that we match.
- iii. We encourage innovation. We've asked for specific ideas form the specials teachers to support rather than just give cash. Those asks include:



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1. Mr. Rawls wants 400 new books
 2. Art classes needed supplies and technology
 3. Music instructors want instruments/keypads. They also want iPads for videos and editing.
 4. PE wants cross fit equipment.
- iv. We value the teacher's time. This allows the teachers to stay in the classroom. The best example is the laminating committee does that task for them. It takes ten people to do all the laminating
 - v. We show appreciation. PTA provides lunches and breakfasts throughout the year, usually once monthly. Our goal is to make the teachers feel loved and appreciated.
 - vi. We offer help in the classroom and everyone is encouraged to volunteer. volunteer. Membership toolkit has volunteer portal.
- c. 6:58 Jana Kovac--VP communications
- i. Membership toolkit is replacing MySchoolAnywhere as the MES family directory. Parents have to sign up to get the digital dolphin. Membership toolkit is different from infinite campus--please join both.
 1. The new platform went live over the summer. Additional functionality includes a new volunteer signup capability and functionality we haven't engaged yet to sell gear and PTA memberships. About 1/2 of our families have already joined and over 140 have already shown an interest in volunteering. Room level volunteering will go live here Friday 8.16.19.
 2. The app is very smart and will show you the volunteer opportunities for your grade. Many people don't know that the PTA provides grade level support and grade level social chairs/room parents, etc.
 - ii. Facebook evolution--PTA is planning to move to 1 public facebook page, 1 private facebook page for k-5, and one page for 5th grade with a goal of removing silos. Right now, the same basic information is being posted in 7 places.
 1. Streamlining will reduce duplicative sites, encourages a "one school" mentality and will be a central source for communication as we transition.
 2. Tony Moore and Stephanie Stallman are moderators.
 3. The plan is for the same announcements to come through, but we want to enrich the content to focus on behind the scenes at the school, bringing what's happening at the school to the parents who can't be here. But even after the transition, the Digital dolphin will always be your main source



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4. The grade level pages live for a period and we will monitor how they are being used. During the transition, we will encourage posting in the main page—so many questions aren't grade specific--and then reassess how the legacy sites are being used
- d. 7:06 Emily Fink speaks to parent involvement.
 - i. Use membership toolkit.
 - ii. If you want to take a leadership role, we will elect a nominating committee in the spring. They will vet potential exec members.
 - iii. In March, the committee chairs will begin rolling off for next year. If you think you might want to run an activity, volunteer for it this year.
 - iv. Thanks for the generosity of previous PTAs and parents. Emily encourages attendees to continue to support the PTA and the school through the boosterthon —September 17-27--and to plan for the silent auction in the spring.
- VI. 7:08 Treasurer report from Susan Mapen
 - a. PTA is a non-profit and is governed by state and local PTA bylaws. The goal is to fund activities, not make money, but we may need to carry money forward for certain needs such as the field of dreams.
 - b. PTA has cash now, but we have a lot of needs coming up.
 - i. Current reserves total \$177,500. This is a healthy amount, but a lot of unquantified expenses/considerations in the next few years, including:
 1. Turf will be destroyed in the construction
 2. We want gardens at both schools
 3. New playground at Inman
 4. Potentially seed money for the new Inman PTA
 5. Plus a 40k reserve for each year's PTA ahead of any fundraisers
 - c. while keeping an eye on the reserved, the PTA's goal is to enrich the experience at MES **this year.**
 - d. PTA Exec has proposed a balanced budget, though the revenues are set low and should be fairly easily exceeded
 - e. Questions
 - i. Halloween carnival costs exceed revenue. Why?
 1. The PTA Exec feels strongly that the carnival should be a "friendraiser" no a "fundraiser" and should be viewed as a community event. we have a goal of making this event more accessible to all students and want to lower the costs of wristbands.
 2. the revenue numbers in the proposed budget are conservative.



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- ii. What is the purpose of the \$1000 line item for new families?
 - 1. This item is to cover the cost of paperwork/folders for new families who come on campus tours or who enter school later in the year. It is designed to allow all information related to school, school communications, volunteer opportunities and the apps we use at the school to be provided in one place.
- iii. Is there funding in the budget for IEP (individual education plans) or the like?
 - 1. No—PTA guidelines prohibit us from funding salaries. But the Foundation does not have those restrictions and provides tutors and other support personnel. As to IEP, that is an APS funded initiative, while additional tutors are covered by the Foundation.
- iv. Does the line item related to scholarships include blue ridge or school supplies?
 - 1. assistance for 5th grade students to attend Blue Ridge is separate.
 - 2. This item is for after school and extracurricular activities for those children with an interest but whose family can't afford the activity. We are working with MAS aftercare on a way to identify these students and on pricing for the extra they offer.
 - 3. As to school supplies, Principal Sofianos stated that MES has an adequate supply of school supplies from past years and that this is the year to use them so we don't have to move them to Inman.
 - 4. Emily Fink clarifies that the PTA Exec wants every student to be able to participate in every event/activity in which they have an interest. This is the logic behind lowering the cost to participate in the Halloween carnival. We are trying to level the playing field for these kids however we can.
- VII. 7:23 Approval of the 2019-2020 budget
 - a. **Emily Fink seeks a motion to approve**
 - i. **Motion to approve made by Heidi Muller**
 - ii. **Motion is seconded**
 - b. **Emily Fink calls the vote**
 - c. **Passes unanimously**
- VIII. 7:25 Principal Audrey Sofianos-The future of MES
 - a. MES really is moving and we will take everything here to "Morningside at Inman." 3rd and 4th graders will be involved with the planning and all decisions related to the move will be centered on the students.
 - b. One step in the process will be a furniture inventory. Inman will get some new furniture and supplies at Howard. APS will compare what we could bring against what Inman



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- leaves and we will get whichever is the better product. The rest is stored and available for future use--Brian Baron can shop at the warehouse to meet campus needs.
- c. Principal Sofianos talks from a flyer from the Go Team website (attached) and reminds us that lots of reference docs related to the cluster are available online.
 - d. Main question MES parents ask is what's going to happen with Inman long term?
 - i. The cluster is changing. Grady is building more on their site. Howard is on schedule and has room to grow. The Inman web site has a comprehensive update on the construction at Howard.
 - ii. Details of construction will be discussed at the Sept 5 cluster conversation scheduled to take place at Grady at 6 pm.
 - iii. Cluster advisory group along with our Go Team of elected parents and teachers have been working since march 2018 to discuss what will happen with Inman. The real input period for the community is about to begin. All meetings will be open to the public and are expected to begin in late September or early October.
 - e. Timeline for the renovation of the existing MES campus
 - i. Our architect is out for bid and work is expected to begin in February 2021.
 - ii. We have a total renovation budget of \$21 million. The current budget/plans do not call for adding wings or finishing out new portions of the building. What's planned is a true renovation. The work probably won't take the whole two years, but we will be gone for two years.
 - iii. Principal Sofianos would like all portables removed, but we do use them currently. The bottom line is that we still won't fit in the renovated space with an enrollment of over 900 kids. One solution would be to add more classroom space to our campus, but that would take more money than currently allocated.
 - iv. MES is undertaking an assessment of all facilities, but will take 18 more months
 - v. Previous efforts to reduce the population at MES have included:
 - 1. minor rezoning, primarily along the cheshire bridge corridor
 - 2. addition of the k center, which houses 177 kids this year. APS has a 2 year lease at k center, but with an option for another year. No firm decision has been made, but the plans call for all grades to go to Morningside at Inman. It is possible that the k center will stay in place longer.
 - vi. Without portables, current MES main campus capacity is about 650. We have 970 kids enrolled across the two campuses. Inman's capacity, without portables, is around 800.
 - vii. All the information is available on the MES and APS websites and will be updated as more becomes available, including dates of upcoming community meetings.



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- f. General Notes from the Principal:
- i. There is a Principal's Coffee on Friday 8.23.19. These are very casual events where you can ask the administration anything you'd like. The first of the year was held at the k center last week and was a great success. K parents are very engaged
 - ii. Student studio moved to the back of the auditorium. MES added a new counselor this year and she took the old studio space. The timing of her addition was great as a k teacher lost her husband at the beginning of the year.
 - iii. Thanks for all the PTA does for the school. The PTA's focus on the staff and showing appreciation of the community is part of the reason MES can maintain a our high retention rate of educators.
- g. Question—will we keep the portables at Inman?
- i. Yes, it looks like we will need them to meet capacity needs. APS will build a playground, but we do expect that the PTA will contribute to enhance the playground and potentially other aspects of the Inman campus.
- h. Question—after the renovation, is it more likely that Inman will become a 4-5 academy or a third elementary school for virginia-highland/midtown/morningside?
- i. Most likely at this point appears to be a new elementary, but this means rezoning, potentially of all of the elementary schools within the cluster to some extent. Rezoning is the simplest way to deal with growth and changing patterns
 - ii. In the end, this is what the community input forums are all about--APS wants this to be in large part a community decision.
 1. If it is is it important to have "community schools" we can walk to with smaller districts , which lens towards rezoning, or do we focus those schools on the younger kids, which leans toward creation of a 4-5 academy with kids from all 4 existng elementary schools in the cluster.
 2. Next couple of meetings will gather community input on these questions. Public participation is key and we are encouraged to make our voices heard.
- i. Question—the September 5 meeting will be our opportunity to give input on the future of Inman?
- i. No. That meeting is apart of the cluster conversation. Construction updates will be provided, but no input on potential changes at Inman. More curriculum based questions and updates. the community meetings are being scheduled for late september/early october. Dates will be pushed across all communication platforms once they have been set.



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- ii. In the meantime, talks to your friends who live in Decatur--they have a 4-5 Academy. There are legitimate transportation concerns with a 4-5 campus for families with more than one child and regarding the supply and timing of buses.
- IX. 7:48 Emily Fink thanks all attendees, presenters and Principal Sofianos, encourages everyone to volunteer as their time allows, and adjourns the meeting.

Approved by general
membership on 1-21-2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Fox", with a stylized flourish at the end.

MATT FOX - SECRETARY
MES PTA