



PTA Exec Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2020

7:00 pm via zoom

- I. Call-to-Order--Co-President Emily Fink called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm
 - a. Welcome to new members of executive committee
 - i. Niccole Burton-Parliamentarian
 - ii. Jim Pursley-Treasurer
 - iii. Carisa Quinn-VP Community
 - iv. Marla Johnson-VP Operations

- II. Emily highlights the agenda/discussion topics
 - a. How do we adjust to virtual school?
 - i. This is an opportunity to reshape the MES PTA and streamline what we do
 1. We are more than just a fundraising organization
 2. Our concentration on fundraising in the past doesn't directly align with Georgia PTA guidance
 - ii. We are looking for way to realign our efforts with current needs and PTA objectives
 - b. Ways we can lead:
 - i. Stay positive but don't sugar coat
 - ii. Realign our efforts to current parent, student and administration needs
 - iii. Ask parent to volunteer where they have skills
 1. Example: IT professionals can offer support/help to the teachers other families
 2. Motivate others with professional skills they'd be willing to offer
 - c. Message of we are in it together—roll up your sleeves and do your part

- III. Discussion: What are people hearing about the decision to go virtual for the first quarter and how can PTA assist in addressing those community concerns?
 - a. What are we hearing?
 - i. Parents are asking what's next and when will we know
 1. What's the same from spring? What's different?
 - ii. Parents of incoming k kids--especially those new to MES or APS--are nervous



- iii. How can the movement for learning pods be addressed by the administration/PTA
 - 1. Is this an appropriate PTA function?
 - 2. Will/can there be consideration of private arrangements in class placement?
 - iv. Have class placements already been made? When will parents know?
 - v. how will academic standards be kept high and the high achieving the teachers work to ensure that no
 - b. How do we as a PTA address these concerns?
 - i. Parent resources
 - ii. Focus on building the MES community when none of us can be together
 - iii. Identify social opportunities for kids that are safe and remote
 - 1. Morning announcements
 - 2. Beginning of school parade/drive-bys
- IV. Co-President Susan Mapen presents a potential realignment of priorities
- a. Initiatives/events that we know aren't happening in the fall or that we will put limited energy toward right now:
 - i. Boosterthon
 - 1. Current fall date is a no-go
 - 2. Reassess in the spring
 - ii. Halloween carnival/monster bash
 - iii. Casino night
 - 1. Venue booked as a leftover from the Bust a Move Bash
 - 2. Revisit when we are physically back in school
 - iv. Family science night
 - v. Variety show
 - vi. Visiting artist
 - vii. SWAG
 - viii. Scholarships
 - Discussion--Should we try to transform scholarships? Is there a way to repurpose these funds to assist kids/families in need? Past PTAs have preferred to spend money on items that help the school community rather than focusing on individuals.
 - ix. Dine-outs
 - Discussion--rather than table the dine outs, ask restaurants to give us a percentage (smaller) of take out orders during a specific timeframe. helps us minimally, but could help drive business to local take out restaurants



and build good-will with establishments that might not have participated/donated before

x. Yearbook and school pics

Discussion--should we get school and class pics taken via zoom and/or consider a slimmed down/modified yearbook?

xi. Discussion--Rather than skipping certain traditions such as halloween or family science night, maybe there is a way to turn these into community building events. a halloween virtual dance party or halloween parade where the kids dress up and the teachers throw candy. Family Science Night could be reimaged with partners like Fernbank to provide remote learning for kids and families--this could fall under family science night or a reimaging of field trips. One concern is the level of effort to coordinate reimaged events on top of everything else parents are being asked to do right now outside of PTA. PTA exec will establish a group to consider whether some of these events can be reimaged and used to boost school spirit and a sense of community as we move forward.

b. Initiatives/events we plan to keep:

i. Dolphin Donors

Discussion--Might be our main source of income for 2020-21

ii. Spirit wear

iii. PTA dues

iv. Grants

Discussion--Great opportunity for kids and teachers to be creative and to help us identify needs we haven't thought of

v. Book Fair

Discussion--with the option to purchase scholastic books at any time, is a dedicated virtual book fair needed? Some kids have read through their own collections and need new material. But some parents have concerns about the quality of the books from scholastic vs. follet. Perhaps a no pressure virtual book fair near the beginning of school.

vi. Teacher appreciation

Discussion--How do we provide meals and other traditional items when teachers are in multiple locations? Can we be more creative in finding ways to thank teachers in a virtual/remote world?

vii. Teacher supplies

Discussion--Teacher survey is out now and might help address questions as to supply needs and ways to show our appreciation

c. Initiatives/events/programs we might want to add:

i. Kits of supplies



PTA Morningside
Elementary
School

1. Vision is for each grade to come up with a list of supplies that would be helpful for every student as well as ideas/supplies for specific class/grade projects
2. We would then provide those supplies along with potentially MES@Inman t shirts or other gear to each student, hopefully before the first day of school on August 24
3. Other cluster elementaries are also interested, but it might be too much to coordinate the identical boxes across all elementary schools
 - a. We'd like to support this concept at other schools with less financial resources, if possible

Discussion--Brian will reach out to the company that was offering school supply kits for students to see if this is something they could help with. Exec agrees that this tactile piece will enhance learning and student involvement and the uniformity can help build a sense of community. If this can be made to work, we'd consider sending additional boxes throughout the year.

This model could also be a way to bring in partners and provide "virtual field trips." Fernbank and Zoo Atlanta both turned camps virtual this summer and used supply boxes of this nature.

- ii. Refocus social chairs/room parents to spearhead socialization
- iii. Book club

Discussion--Book club could take many forms. Some teachers foster small group book clubs based on reading ability. We could mirror that effort or set up voluntary grade wide book clubs. if we wanted to get ambitious, we could pick a theme and ask Mr. Rawls to help identify books on that theme for each grade and for parents.

- iv. Tech support

Discussion--envisioned as potentially help providing devices/hotspots and zoom accounts in addition to more traditional tech support. learned from Principal Sofianos that APS is buying zoom and they are committed to meeting tech needs for every student, so this will go on the back burner as Admin/APS efforts shape up

- v. Speakers

Discussion--Love and Logic program is on hold, but we should consider whether this is an avenue for parent education and support

- vi. Parent ed/parent resources

Discussion--parents seem to want information more than they want a tutorial on homeschooling. Principal Sofianos indicates that school will



kick off with something like a virtual back to school night where parents will be brought up to speed by their assigned teachers as to the technology they will be utilizing and how their class day will be structured. Admin is also planning bite size learning opportunities for parents/education on how to help your kids as frequently as weekly. This will also go on the back burner as Admin/APS effort shape up

vii. Covid-19 fund

Discussion--approved in the spring. we will hold on to see when we physically return to the building and what efforts APS?Admin make here

viii. Inman Fund

Discussion--same as above, but many aspects are on hold until we see a timeline for return to the physical building and APS?Admin efforts

V. Principal Sofianos--MES @Inman and virtual learning update

a. MES@Inman move nearly complete

- i. A lot of signage is in and installed thanks to PTA dollars
- ii. More signage and art coming
- iii. School is a masked facility for the moment

b. Virtual learning update:

i. Virtual school is different than the crisis learning we experienced in the spring

1. Teachers jumped in and learned a lot in a short period
2. Goal now is to recreate the school experience as much as possible
 - a. Teachers are setting up classrooms as if we are returning in person
 - b. As long as it is safe, teachers will be encouraged to teach from their physical classrooms

ii. MES goals are to increase

1. quality of the virtual education
2. time with teachers and
3. student self sufficiency
 - a. Student self sufficiency is the hard part and will depend on each student's level of attention and ability
 - b. The administration is open to help/ideas on this front

iii. MES is working to streamline and unify curriculum across each grade

Clarification—teachers within a grade should be on essentially the same pace to allow for pods or group learning regardless of which class/teacher is assigned. Teachers will be collaborating daily to ensure uniformity and will be communicating with teachers of the same grades at other cluster



schools. They are beefing up the review at the beginning of the year to catch up from crisis learning

iv. Class lists were created in may

Discussion--As always, MES started building classes by placing students with special/academics/medical/language needs first. current teacher input and parent input were also considered. The lists have been set and the administration won't be recreating classes based on parent preference/quarantine groupings, or involvement in a particular learning pod. The class lists will post on August 5--online and at the school.

v. 3 weeks of planning/training for teachers starts August 3rd

vi. APS priority that all kids will have a device and a hotspot (if needed)

1. Some families will need more than one device based on the number of students at home

2. Many MES families prefer to use their own devices, allowing us to stretch the ipads/chromebooks further than some other schools

Discussion--Not yet sure if we will need to turn in tech from last year. The answer might vary by grade and APS might use some of its awarded CARES Act (Federal) money to expand virtual capabilities

vii. The goal is to provide 4-5 hours a day of self-sufficient learning five days a week

1. Schedules should be the same every day

2. Trying to recreate the normal day with learning blocks broken up by specials/recess, etc.

viii. Teachers will also be getting bite size learning updates weekly

ix. Questions the administration is concentrating on include:

1. How do we assess the kids and ensure each student is getting what he or she needs and an appropriately challenging level of work?

2. How do we welcome new kindergarten kids/families?

a. Ms. Lowe is spearheading communication with new families

3. How do we plan when we are expecting a lot of changes in enrollment with some parents option for private school later than usual and other deciding to enroll in public school for the first time now?

c. Personnel Changes

i. Keisha Spruill, new assistant principal, starts monday

ii. 2 new pe teachers, one new k teacher (and a K para), and one new special ed teacher are starting August 3

VI. Budget discussion postponed and meeting adjourned by Co-President Emily Fink at 9:20 pm