

PTA General Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2017, 7:00 pm

Approximately 30 participants

Introduction

PTA President Marquisha Powell opened the final PTA meeting of the year. Parents and teachers introduced themselves.

Talented and Gifted program (TAG)

- President Powell introduced Mary Ricci, PGCPs Supervisor of Advanced and Enriched Instruction. She is in charge of the TAG, IB, and AVID programs for the county. She has held this position for two years. Ricci led a discussion about the TAG program.
- PGCPs uses three TAG models:
 - TAG centers—separate schools where all students have tested into the TAG program (e.g. Glenarden Woods Elementary School)
 - TAG in the classroom—teachers give differentiated instruction to a cluster of TAG identified students in their regular classroom setting
 - TAG pull-out—TAG identified students are pulled out of regular classroom instruction to participate in a separate TAG curriculum
- TAG identification testing occurs in first grade. HES had been doing the testing in October, but this year the tests were moved to January. The TAG identification process looks for cognitive reasoning skills, not achievement. There is also a teacher checklist for TAG identification (but it will be revised soon, and will be completed before the teacher sees any test scores). Ricci indicated her belief that first grade is too young for this kind of test, as students' development varies considerably at this age. Additional TAG identification testing occurs in third grade. This usually identifies about an additional 1% of students. No students are dropped from the program once they have been identified.
- PGCPs will be moving to a different TAG identification test that provides more than just yes/no results for entry into the TAG program. It will provide instructional implications based on the test results, so that teachers can know details about how each student learns and can adapt instruction accordingly.
- Maryland does not recognize TAG certification for teachers, although it does provide professional development training on TAG curriculum programs.
- What are the differences between TAG Centers and in-school TAG programs?
 - No difference in science and social studies
 - Math—some students move at a different pace
 - Centers use the College of William and Mary curriculum
 - Centers have a full time TAG coordinator
 - Centers take a course called ICAL about different cultures
 - Achievement scores in PGCPs are not different between TAG centers and in-class TAG or pull-out programs.
 - Ricci said that TAG centers are good for outliers—e.g., kids who are reading at age 3.
- HES has been using the in-classroom TAG model. Next year HES will also add TAG pull-out sessions using a Maker Space curriculum.
 - TAG students will be clustered by grades to be with about five other TAG students. They will still do the TAG activities that they've been doing in the classroom, but they will also participate in pull-out instruction.

- Pull-out instruction times:
Grades 2/3= 1.5 hours a week
Grades 4/5= 2 hours a week
 - Ms. Bey said that the Maker Space pull-out sessions will take place in the Library.
- Ricci said she is adding the Maker Space pull-out program to upgrade the rigor of the TAG curriculum. The Maker Space curriculum allows students to solve problems by manipulating stuff such as circuits, textiles, structures, microprocessors, etc., and to develop critical thinking skills.
- Principal Bey discussed some strategies HES teachers use to ensure that TAG identified students are challenged in the classroom, including grouping students by reading level, professional development programs on best practices, and the use of professional development lead teachers, who attend conferences and trainings and then return to school to train other teachers.
- Next year all PGCPs second graders will have access to Junior Great Books, regardless of TAG identification. Ms. Page will run the program. HES staff have already had training for this program.
- There was a discussion about possible adverse effects of labeling students as TAG in front of other students, and the use of the word “gifted.” Several parents expressed the feeling that it would serve our students better if we as a community did not emphasize the word “gifted.” Concern over students being singled out by their peers due to the new pull-out sessions led to the suggestion that staff not refer to the pull-outs as being for TAG identified students, and instead refer to them by the name of the curriculum (Maker Space) or some other term.

Zombie Run

Vice President and Zombie Run Race Director Kevin Blackerby provided an update on the Second Annual PTA Zombie Run 5K fundraiser for next school year. It is scheduled for September 30 starting at Magruder Park.

- We have raised \$10,000 in sponsorships already, but we are still contacting sponsors. Printed flyers are available to distribute to local businesses. Blackerby asked all PTA members to consider approaching local businesses they frequent to ask them to sponsor the race. This can entail simply handing a manager/owner a flyer and asking them to contact Blackerby with questions or donations. Please contact Blackerby with any suggestions for business to approach for sponsorships.
- The race is USATF certified, licensed, and insured.
- Registration will be open soon.
- We are hoping to have other local elementary schools use the Zombie Run as a jumping off point to create their own fundraisers. Other schools can also set up tables to sell things or set up traditional sponsorships where friends and family donate money based on a successful run. Other ideas are welcome for how to engage other local schools.
- We need lots of volunteers on race day and in the weeks leading up to the race. Please contact Blackerby or Volunteer Coordinator Meg Miller to volunteer.
- More information and race registration will be available soon on the race website at <http://hyattsvillees-pta.org/zombierun/>.
- Blackerby can be contacted at hyattsville5k@gmail.com.

PTA Budget update

Treasurer Meredith Muth provided an update on the PTA budget for SY 2016-2017.

- The current bank balance is \$30,805.
- Revenue was \$13,000 over budget (due to the success of the Zombie Run)
- Expenses budgeted was \$49,000, but we spent only \$39,000.
- Next year we need to spend more money!
- Muth mentioned that only 15 teachers submitted forms to be reimbursed for classroom materials. It was suggested that teachers be reminded now to keep their receipts for supplies purchased over the summer. How can the PTA more effectively administer this program so that more teachers take advantage of it?

Volunteer opportunities

President Powell asked for volunteers for the following duties:

- PTA communications coordinator
- Garden & Grounds Day
- Zombie Run
- Volunteer to Ms. Page for tutors
- Cafeteria supervision
- Implementation of arrival and dismissal procedures, for Principal Bey

Fingerprinting

HES hosted a county fingerprinting event on April 26. PGCPs requires fingerprinting for parent volunteers who work with students in the classrooms or who chaperone field trips. We processed 58 parents at the event. Thanks to Ms. Penate for organizing it. We will try to do another local fingerprinting session early next school year.

New local aftercare option

Parent Audrey Engdahl shared that Impulse City is expanding. Impulse City, run by UPES parent Sarah Nelkin, is a popular summer camp program. They will be expanding to offer an aftercare program during the school year.

- The fall session will run September 6-December 22. This session will include a production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.
- They will pick up from HES with a bus.
- The program will run M-F, 2-6 pm.
- Students can be enrolled full or part time, and they will accept drop-ins.
- Fees are:
 - \$26 per day
 - \$125 per week
 - \$480 per month
 - \$1850 for the full fall semester
- More information is available on their website at <https://www.impulsecity.com/cgi/fall2017>

Teacher appreciation lunch

Mary Warneka discussed the PTA sponsored Teacher Appreciation Lunch on Friday, June 9.

- HES parent Stephanie Knowles will cater the lunch for all staff.

- She needs three parent volunteers that day. One person is needed to help with set up from 11:45-12:15. Two more parents are needed to help serve the food, from 12:15 until all staff are served.
- Contact Mary to volunteer at mwarneka@gmail.com

Rising kindergartners

- Principal Bey will hold a kindergartner open house the week before school starts. Parents should bring their students. Students can visit the kindergarten classrooms and meet the teachers. Parents will be briefed with school information and can ask questions to Principal Bey.
- The PTA will host a rising kindergartner playdate over the summer, date TBD (follow the PTA Facebook page or visit the PTA website for info). This will allow kindergartners and parents to meet each other before school starts. The PTA will serve refreshments.

Jefferson Street murals

In collaboration with ArtWorks, this year the 5th grade classes will again help create new murals on the open spaces on the Jefferson Street wall next to the playground. Each class will create one mural. The drawings have been made and painting will begin soon. Keep an eye out for the completed murals.

Updates from Principal Bey

Ms. Bey thanked the parents for the support during her first year at HES.

- Staffing updates:
 - We will have an Associate Principal (new), full time art teacher (we keep Ms. Yazvac!), full time media instructor (instead of half time), full time music teacher (Ms. Conrad, but we'll also have another half time music teacher).
 - We will be able to maintain current staffing levels as well.
 - There will be two full time pre-k classes next year (instead of one like this year).
- Class assignments will be mailed to parents over the summer, rather than announced via a posting of names at the school, as has been done in the past. The letters will be sent around the beginning of August.
- Parents mentioned concern that the administration leave situation and substitute teacher shortage this school year had caused many teachers to be overextended by the additional efforts of many teachers to ensure that students who did not have a teacher still received appropriate instruction. Principal Bey indicated that she was not concerned about overextension.

Other topics of discussion

- Teacher Ms. Peele expressed thanks for the new recess games provided by the PTA.
- Teacher Ms. Roy said thanks to the PTA for the field day t-shirts. The kids really liked them.
- President Powell encouraged parents to follow the PTA Facebook page for more info on PTA and school events. <https://www.facebook.com/HyattsvilleESPTA/>
- Sign up for email updates from the PTA on the website at <http://hyattsvillees-pta.org/>

Conclusion

President Powell gave thanks to all the parents and teachers for attending and participating in PTA events this year, and wished everyone a nice summer break. She then concluded the meeting.