

Notes
PTA Meeting
Georgian Forest ES
November 3, 2015
6:30 – 7:30 pm

Attendance: *Board:* Johanne Saintime (PTA President); Jodi Goldreich (PTA Treasurer);
Staff: Kim Rogers (Principal), Lindsay Rabe (Music); Mandy Davis (Media Center);
Parents: Laura DeWeese; Ana Carillo; Donald Tobar; Kate Monzo; Martha Lucia Santamaria; Jose Andres Alvarado; Salua Sayegh; Mia Chisholm.

Welcome – Johanne Saintime, PTA President welcomed the membership.

Principal's Update:

- Halloween and Fall Festivals: 180 students did not participate in the Halloween festival (around 25% of student body); some students were absent; other students were picked up early.
 - Opinion is that celebration of Halloween created a type of division instead of inclusion because there were too many different things going on. Therefore school will send out survey and ask community/ staff/parents their opinions on the idea of not celebrating this event in school next year and ideas that could replace the Halloween theme. One idea was to keep the fall festival but with costumes that are not ghoulish. So the nature of the costume would be limited.
 - Parent mentioned that an adult was wearing an inappropriate costume and the school should probably not allow on the premises adults that are not wearing decent costumes.
 - Parents questioned logistics of parade or lack off. There was some sort of plan in place when it started but the end of it was chaotic.
 - Each teacher was in charge of organizing their class celebration and informing parents on activities planned and expectations for the day. Considering that there are a lot of new teachers they may not be aware of information to include in their notes to parents. In the future the school will consider a uniform template containing basic information for parents that teachers will be able to edit to include things that are specific to their classrooms.

Classroom Updates: 2 teachers provided updates to what they are doing in their classrooms.

- Music: Preparing students for grandparents' day celebration. It will be the day before winter break (December 23). Prek-5 graders will sing. Teacher is also organizing a winter concert with 4th-5th graders (70 students) to be performed at Leisure World on December 3rd. Inviting PTA to hold a fundraiser or an activity at one of these events if possible.

- Media Center: overview of role and responsibilities. Library has a flexible schedule; assists teachers and kids with their research or investigations; help children with mastering CHROME books.

Effective Parent Teacher Conference: Mrs. Rogers made a power point presentation on how parents can prepare for the parent-teacher conference. The questions to ask and what to expect from teachers. Conference ended with Q&A:

- Grading system: how it works and what the letters ES, P, I, N mean.
- Curriculum: divided in two sections per semester that include information on subjects students are learning and the activities parents can do with them at home.
- GFES website is a useful resource to find info on Montgomery county education system.

Book Fair: Reminded parents of upcoming book fair. Flyers would be in children's backpack. It was recommended that parents look at flyers with their kids and talk to the teachers about the suitability of the choices based on reading level and topic; then to drop by the media center to purchase the books.

Volunteering opportunities: PTA is looking for parents to volunteer for these positions:

- Book Fair – November 11 and 12
- Box Top coordinator - ongoing
- Glass display in front entrance - ongoing
- Fall Family Festival – November 21

Fundraisers: Laura DeWeese, PTA member, reported on money raised from Lavender's fundraising. It was better than last year. More items were sold and more money was collected. There should be a very small deficit because of some people who underpaid but in the other hand some people collected taxes thus making up a little bit for the underpaid orders.

Finances: Jodi Goldreich, PTA Treasurer briefly mentioned the amount of spending money PTA has available based on funds raised so far. Members were asked to think about activities money can be spent. Suggestions made:

- Brainstorm with teachers/team leaders on classroom needs.
- Assemblies: it is time consuming for principal. Assemblies need to be researched, organized and included in school calendar. Although there are some very interesting ones out there, it is a full time occupation that somebody could volunteer for. The school doesn't have and cannot afford a staff for that only.
- Headphones: all grade levels use headphones. There aren't enough in the library. They are sold in bulk.
- Field trip: there is a field trip for 4th graders to go to St Mary's. It's \$30 per student. Other field trips that were cancelled due to insufficient funding could be reinstated.
- International Night: bigger and better.

Parents were asked to contact Claudia Goldman or the PTA by email if they have other suggestions.