

Call to Order: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 9:15 am by Tara Kelly; meeting held in person and via zoom

Handouts: Meeting agenda emailed prior to meeting and in person handout

Welcome- Tara Kelly, MS PTA Director

Thank you Beautification Committee. Winter holiday decorations looked great.

GC Cares-a-Thon- Jan 31st 6:30-8:30

- Tables and actives will be setup for students to come in and learn about causes and issues. This is student run. Thank you Dr. Greenwald. Donations for causes being supported will go out on a Sign Up Genius soon. Donations can be brought in and given to Dr. Greenwald.

SEPTA- Lynda Valliant, MS SEPTA

- Next meeting Feb 4th. There will be a PPS staff presentation K-12

Mr. Samuelson, Principal- Middle School Updates

Victories

- Concert Season was an amazing demonstration of students and staff talent. Chorus is large and we had to break into two sessions. It went very well. Thank you parents for all the support

Winter II

- Wednesday, January 22, Winter Sports Try-Outs Begin. For many students this may be 1st time trying out and it can be very difficult if they don't make the team. Please reach out if your child needs support. We have a very strong and active athletic program and sometimes cuts need to be made

Acceleration Night

- Session for 6th grade parents to learn about accelerated math and science. Slide deck is on the website under news or counseling. Any questions please reach out.

7th Grade Science

- CELF Program- New science program implemented this year. Students had a trip to Caumsett Park and a speaker on ecosystems. Mrs. Biagiotti won a National Geographic Fellowship. She brought all the interesting information and experiences back to our students.

One School, One Book

- Starting soon. Students can get involved and can discuss the book together.

Parking Lot

- Please be careful during drop off and pickup. Parents need to take turns where lanes meet. Don't turn into the outside lane it can be very dangerous for students walking

Emails Issues

- Messages aren't always landing with the teachers. The best way to email a teacher is last name, first initial at gcufsd.net If you don't hear back in 24 hours please reach out. There is probably an issue

3-8 Assessments

- Practice on the 31st. This is a no stakes assessment. Not tracked, just practice. Test will be on the computer and we need to practice with technology. Tell children to do the best they can

Exams

- Math/ELA- April/May
- Science- May

Core Value Awards

- Trustworthy
- Empathetic
- Ambitious
- Mindful
- Truthful this month-
- 5 more to come. Awards are presented at 7:30 AM in the learning common. This is a student only event to awards students on their success and discuss the core value

Marking period ending shortly

- 27th starts new classes. You can reach out to new teachers. Keep communication open if you have questions. Can always reach out to counselors regarding classes

Orientation for rising 6th graders.

- 1/22- 6:15 for special education interest
7pm meeting for all parents in the auditorium

GC Cares a-Thon- 1/31-6:30-8:30

- Student orchestrated event demonstrating ways that students can give back to the community. Strong participation with PTA and students.

Musical- is on the way.

- Beauty and the Beast Jr. Thurs/Fri/Sat shows. Tickets will go on sale in the coming weeks. Tickets are 1st come 1st serve.

HS open house for 8th graders- 1/30 4pm.

- Self-guided tour and information about courses. Parents are invited. Special education information will be sent next month for incoming high school students

PTA News and Events- Committee Updates:

Parent University and Curriculum

- Parent University is moving to a different format because schedules are busy. Switching to multiple Parent University speakers throughout the rest of the year in partnership with Digital Citizenship Committee. Be on the lookout for more information. Sessions won't be just one night

Curriculum Committee

- Class size has been an issue in GCMS. They are researching ways to change the master schedule that would move electives and help class sizes. Still in the research phase. Committee is also discussing project based learning that is going on in the classroom. Field trips have been an issue because of our transportation problems.
- Digital Citizenship Committee- A new committee which provides resources to encourage less screens. Implemented a no cell phone policy. Teachers are pulling back on use of technology unless necessary.
- World language- More verbal assessments. Studying assessments, encouraging projects but tests are still necessary. Looking for a balance with assessments.
- Transitions from Elementary School to MS and MS-HS. Students have the major concepts but sometimes the language used at each grade level is different. Finding ways for teachers to use the same language so students can ease into classes at the next level.

PTA Dinner

- March 26, 2025, 6:30pm at the Garden City Hotel- The theme is Ascending to the Heights.
- Tickets do sell out so buy early. Silent auction will be available online.
- In need of actual donation baskets. Please email dinnerdonations@gardencitypta.org if you can make a donation or text Courtney at 516-816-1705
- Looking for volunteers. Next Committee meeting is Jan 21st at Saint Paul's cottages if you'd like to volunteer email dinner@gardencitypta.org

Digital Citizenship

- New Committee- Educate families on how to get our students more engaged in real life. Reps are meeting with administrators at each level. For example, elementary-using words for good, MS- text etiquette, HS- ethical use of AI. Embrace paper and old school learning. A SUG will go out requesting game donations for home base. Teachers are looking for supplies. Please contribute if you can.
- Possible Parent University speaker may be someone from Apple help set up guidelines on devices.
- MS/HS collaboration with SADD- Slide show will be presented to MS. Peer to Peer education is very valuable. Topics are drugs, vaping and alcohol this month. May also include social media and phone use.
- At the transition meeting students will be giving out pamphlets with information about phone use and MS students
- Phones are banned during the school day but smartwatches can also cause problems. Thinking about how to address that. If parents have a problem please reach out to teachers and do not put on social media. Want students to model good behavior

Legislation – Regionalization updates

- After initial stage it was determined participation in regionalization was voluntary. On Dec 5th the district opted out of regionalization plan.

Health and Safety Committee

- SADD from high school will push in on Jan 30th for 8th Graders
- March 7th- CPR classes will be offered.

Reflections winners

- Congrats! Names are on website and in PTA newsletter

Nominating committee

- Executive board positions need volunteers. If you are interested reach out to Tara. Sportswear needs volunteers. Good option if you are looking to volunteer occasionally

Navigating Challenging Topics with our Children – Mr. Keegan Baker, LCSW-R, GC Middle School Social

Presentation on Communication with Preteens and Teenagers

New Business

Questions/Comments

Adjourn

Upcoming Dates

- Saturday, January 18: Family ID Closes for MS Winter II Sports
- Monday, January 20: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, No School
- Tuesday, January 21, 3:20 - 4 pm: Athletics Meeting, Winter II, Big Gym
- Wednesday, January 22, 3:20 pm: Winter Sports Try-Outs Begin
7 pm: Incoming 6th Grade Parent Orientation
- Tuesday, January 28, 8:15 pm: Board of Education Meeting, Regular Session
- Thursday, January 30, 4 pm: High School Open House for 8th Grade Students and Families
- Friday, January 31, 6:30 - 8:30 pm: GC Cares-a-Thon