

Garden City PTA
High School PTA Meeting
January 20, 2021
Via Zoom

Call to Order: 9:17 AM by HS PTA Director, Joyce Turner

Quorum: Met

Handouts: Meeting agenda emailed to everyone prior to meeting

Approval of Minutes: November 17, 2020 High School PTA Meeting minutes posted to the Garden City PTA website were presented for approval. No objections to posted minutes; minutes stand approved as submitted.

PTA News and Updates: J. Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself as High School PTA Director.

- Membership: Please join PTA (www.gardencitypta.org) and SEPTA (<https://gcsepta.new.memberhub.store/store>) Membership helps us support your children through senior year.
- Budget: E. Bayduss, VP GC PTA Legislation spoke regarding upcoming Board of Education Meetings to be held at GCHS which will feature proposed budget discussions. The budget vote will be on May 18, 2021. Google Form to submit questions or comments regarding budget can be found on the PTA website homepage. Contact Ellen Bayduss at legislation@gardencitypta.org with any questions.
- Nominating Committee: D. Kraus, EVP GC PTA spoke regarding the need for an additional high school parent volunteer for the Nominating Committee. Nominating Committee selects the next slate of officers for GC PTA. Open positions include President Elect and High School PTA Director - J. Turner offered to answer any questions about the HS PTA Director position. Nominating Committee process begins next month. Every Child One Voice – the PTA represents everyone. To volunteer or nominate someone for an open position contact Donna Kraus at executivevp@gardencitypta.org.
- Health and Safety Committee: J. Schmitt gave an update that the committee is meeting today and will be discussing how to proceed with programs such as the Safe Driving Campaign. Steve Dodge's Alcohol and Substance Abuse video will be viewed by students during gym periods; Dina Grappone, GCHS Social Worker, is accepting student applications for the Peer Educator Program until February 1; registration for the Active Parenting Workshop program is now open - the program begins February 23 12:00 – 1:30 PM and continues for six weeks.
- Curriculum Committee: MC Bohn provided an update that the fall committee meeting notes have been posted to the GC PTA website; any comments, concerns or questions can be sent to the high school curriculum representatives via the Google Form on the PTA website.
- Parent University: L. Kennedy, VP Curriculum provided an update that Parent University will have a new virtual format this year and will take place over several Thursday evenings in February with programs starting at 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM each night. Offerings to include a three-part series on Executive Functioning and an Online Safety Course among others. Look for registration information beginning next week.
- SEPTA: E. Campbell, HS SEPTA Director spoke regarding SEPTA Grant Program which provides funds to teachers for things such as equipment purchase and integrated activity programs. Applications are due January 31 to grants@gcsepta.org. Upcoming SEPTA sponsored speaker event on February 9 at 7:00 PM – Aide Support and Promoting Independence.
- NYS PTA Award available for high school students:
 - Youth Humanitarian Award ~ In Memory of Stanley Marcus is open to high school juniors and seniors that exemplify humanitarian principles through word or deed. Applications are due to the counseling center by January 27. Link can be found on the PTA website.
- PTA has ordered copies of the book selected for the One School One Book program for high school students.
- Senior Parents be on the lookout for email from J. Turner to provide ideas and suggestions for ways to honor the Class of 2021 while adhering to social distancing.

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One School One Book: Presented by Ms. M. Calemmo, High School Librarian

- Students were given three book titles and voted via Google Form; the winning book: *Allies* by Alan Gratz.
- Copies of the book are on order; book is also available via Overdrive in eBook and Audio Book formats and via the Sora app through GC Public Library.
- Reading the book is voluntary but encouraged and supported by teachers and staff.
- There will be an informal checkpoint during February and a culmination event in mid-March with the format TBD.
- Email Ms. Calemmo at calemmom@gcufsd.net; students can join GCHS Library Google Classroom with code:

ugggus6

Guidance Updates:

Presented by Ms. M. Stefankiewicz, Assistant Principal for Guidance and PPS; Ms. J. Kennedy, Guidance Counselor; Mr. R. Shanley, Guidance Counselor

- **Guidance Spotlight: "Course Selections and Electives":**
 - Course Selection process will begin next week; email to be sent out on January 25 with detailed instructions. Process will not pull students out during class time.
 - Paper course selection forms will be distributed during English classes on January 26 and 27; forms can also be found on the GCHS website under the Guidance Department tab on the left side where forms are listed by grade level. Forms show available electives with required prerequisites.
 - Forms are to be completed and signed by parent & student and will be collected during English class on January 28 and 29. Remote students should email completed form directly to their guidance counselor by January 29.
 - Students should complete all selection slots on the form including 3rd, 4th, 5th options or could end up with an unwanted study hall. Counselors do their best to accommodate 1st or 2nd choice, however, some courses are singletons with only one section offered and unable to fit into schedule.
 - Updated Course Description Guide can be found on the GCHS website under the Guidance Department tab and it includes detailed descriptions for each course including which grades the course is available to and required prerequisites. Be mindful of required course prerequisites.
 - Students can make an appointment or email their counselor with any questions.
 - Students needing Math, Reading and/or Speech support services sometimes do not have room in their schedule for electives. There will be opportunities for these students to take electives during later high school years.
- Course changes for next year include:
 - **English 12R** will now be a full year course. This change was made because some colleges did not accept the previously offered half year course combined with an English elective to meet graduation requirement for English. Film Appreciation and Creative Writing electives will still be offered but students must take the full year English 12R course or AP English Literature course in grade 12 to fulfill graduation requirement.
 - **College Business Management** course will now be offered to grades 10, 11 and 12.
 - **Algebra 2** is a new non-Regents course to be offered for students who wish to learn Algebra 2 topics at a supportive pace and will replace the current Math 3 & Math 4 courses.
- All students are encouraged to join the Guidance Department Google Classroom which contains a wealth of information ranging from honors policy, scholarship opportunities, college planning kits, dates and summer program opportunities to grade level information and academic support resources. Code to join is: **ipujguk**

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- College Board has eliminated SAT Subject Tests effective immediately and will no longer offer the optional essay with the SAT after the June 2021 administration of the exam; focus will shift to AP Exams going forward.

High School Updates: Mr. K. Steingruebner, Principal

- The number of students required to quarantine and those testing positive are leveling off. Currently reporting approximately one positive case per day on average.
- Garden City Community as a whole has seen the number of positive cases double from December to January when compared to number of positives from March to December.
- Predominately single cases are arising and not much contact tracing is needed.
- Nassau County Department of Health has changed the number of days required to quarantine from 14 days to 10 days after exposure or a positive test result. Some school districts are still using the 14-day quarantine rule and that impacts GCHS staff resulting in teachers working on remote. Some school districts have closed school buildings due to staff quarantine cases. GCHS has been able to anticipate and manage without closing the school building.
- There has been an increase in the number of students opting to go fully remote. We are now at approximately 200 compared to the steady number of approximately 40 students since the start of the school year.
- Low and Moderate Risk Winter Sports have begun. Recently held first Boys & Girls Fencing meet in the gym with students wearing masks beneath their headgear. Meet was broadcast for spectators utilizing two live-stream cameras - one via YouTube and one via Zoom to see which method worked best.
- Winter Sports such as Riflery and Bowling have a different look as teams are not traveling to compete against other schools in-person. Scores are recorded and compared to determine winners.
- Adjustments are happening inside the school building in anticipation of having the senior class return to school every day. Desk shields are being installed and the Math wing classrooms were completed last week. SCOPE program has moved out of the high school and has returned to the Elementary school buildings. Date of full-time student return to be announced at the upcoming Board of Education meeting.
- GCHS Staff members are getting COVID vaccine.
- Science Research program continues to grow and now includes 150 students. Currently working on creating dedicated space for the program through plans that were in the works pre-COVID.
- Mr. Martin Malone's position as interim Assistant Principal has been posted to be filled.
- Normal planning has begun for traditional events such as Prom and Graduation to be prepared in the event that restrictions are lifted. Logistics to be worked out later.
- Winter Wonderland has been postponed due to the number of students in quarantine. The Student Council is working to reschedule the event in a format where students can attend in shifts.
- Skit Night has been canceled. It is not possible to hold the event in the traditional manner and planning for it will not happen at this point.
- Too early to start plans for other events such as Spring Fling or Senior Trip.
- GCHS continues to think outside the box to bring students together for traditional events. Appreciate suggestions and will say yes when possible as did with Student Food Drive and Clothing Drive.
- Many activities and events have already taken place this year in a modified format such as Bagels & Hot Cocoa for the senior class; Spirit Week (plans are in the works for a second Spirit Week in the spring); Senior Class Panoramic Photo; Sports Team Photos (will be photoshopped so students can take off masks); Athletic Signing Day; Extra Help; Club Fair was held outside; Mathletes and Speech & Debate events are taking place virtually; Parent Teacher Conferences; Financial Aid Night Presentation; ACT & SAT offered in person more than previous years.
- Yearbook is student driven. This year is especially challenging. The students are working hard to put together and meet deadlines.
- Open House for Eighth Graders - videos created by each academic department will be posted on GCHS website alongside course selection form.

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- The 21st day of each month will be a special celebration day for the Class of 2021. Any ideas or suggestion on how to celebrate the senior class can be sent to HS PTA Director J. Turner via suggestion form.
- Doing our best for students. Important to stay positive. We will get through this!

Questions/Comments: Responses from Mr. Steingruebner, HS Principal

- *Can we get lawn signs made for the class of 2021?*
Will continue to collect new ideas to honor the class of 2021.
- *Will students have access to their lockers when they return full time?*
No, students will not have access to lockers. Continue to offer space to store athletic equipment in the auxiliary gym.
- *Will there be a band and orchestra spring concert? The seniors would especially like to see this.*
Traditional concerts are not possible. Dr. Prasso is working on creative solutions to offer a spring showcase for the performing arts. Format is TBD and may include groups or individual performances.
- *There hasn't been any communication about a school play or musical. Is that being considered in addition to sports?*
Dr. Prasso is working on creative solutions to offer a spring showcase for the performing arts. Format is TBD and may include groups or individual performances.
- *What are the plans for our seniors – what is the full time/5 days date? Winter wonderland? Father/daughter & mother/son dance? Prom? Graduation? Senior commitment day? Skit night?*
Adjustments are happening inside the school building in anticipation of having the senior class return to school every day. Desk shields are being installed and the Math wing classrooms were completed last week. SCOPE program has moved out of the high school and has returned to the Elementary school buildings. Date of full-time student return to be announced at the Board of Education meeting.
- *Is anyone actively working on plans to highlight our seniors?*
The 21st day of each month will be a special celebration day for the Class of 2021. Any ideas or suggestion on how to celebrate the senior class can be sent to HS PTA Director J. Turner via suggestion form.
- *Will there be a winter wonderland for our juniors and seniors? How will it work?*
Winter Wonderland has been postponed due to the number of students in quarantine. The Student Council is working to reschedule the event in a format where students can attend in shifts.
- *When will our Seniors be coming back full time? How can we make this first week as a group super special? Another breakfast? A lunch? Decorations? How can we highlight them as a united group? They are so divided and we as a community need to fix this.*
Adjustments are happening inside the school building in anticipation of having the senior class return to school every day. Desk shields are being installed and the Math wing classrooms were completed last week. SCOPE program has moved out of the high school and has returned to the Elementary school buildings. Date of full-time student return to be announced at the Board of Education meeting. The 21st day of each month will be a special celebration day for the Class of 2021. Any ideas or suggestion on how to celebrate the senior class can be sent to HS PTA Director J. Turner via suggestion form.

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- *Are there any special events being planned for our Senior Class?*
The 21st day of each month will be a special celebration day for the Class of 2021. Any ideas or suggestion on how to celebrate the senior class can be sent to HS PTA Director J. Turner via suggestion form.

- *Will the school be planning a Senior Prom?*
Normal planning has begun for traditional events such as Prom and Graduation to be prepared in the event that restrictions are lifted. Logistics to be worked out later.

- *Will there be a traditional mother/son or father/daughter dance? This was not mentioned in your email.*
Too early to plan for these events.

- *Girls are buying winter wonderland dresses already and kids are asking dates. Continued disappointments for our kids is not ok. To cancel skit night and not brainstorm a way to have this safely (maybe outdoors) sends the message you are giving up on important events these kids have looked forward to their whole high school career.*
Winter Wonderland has been postponed due to the number of students in quarantine. The Student Council is working to reschedule the event in a format where students can attend in shifts. Skit Night has been canceled. It is not possible to hold the event in the traditional manner and planning for it will not happen at this point.

- *Why cancel Skit Night...why not wait till we can hold it outside in warmer months? You have cancelled everything for seniors this far.*
Skit Night has been canceled. It is not possible to hold the event in the traditional manner and planning for it will not happen at this point.

- *I respectfully request that the HS administrators think "outside the box" for the Senior class....on everything. While the communication from guidance to the seniors/parents about sending "highlights" sounds nice, most likely you will not receive many submissions. My senior is not going to brag about something he accomplished recently for all to read online. We need to do better. Their senior year is nothing but doom & gloom. Can we at least change up the yearbook on pages/layouts we can still update with fun submissions from the seniors.*
The 21st day of each month will be a special celebration day for the Class of 2021. Any ideas or suggestion on how to celebrate the senior class can be sent to HS PTA Director J. Turner via suggestion form.

- *Any update on when the new Chrome books will arrive?*
Still waiting on new Chrome Books.

- *When are the elective sheets due?*
Forms will be collected during English class on January 28 & 29. Remote students should email forms directly to their Guidance Counselor by January 29.

- *Can you specify where Curriculum Coordinator videos will be/are being posted online?*
GCHS website under Our School tab – Course Offerings. Theatre Arts is already up. Others to follow and will be sent out via eblast as well.

- *Do you think the NYS Regents will be canceled again?*
New York State makes this decision and there is no indication as to when it will be announced. We are providing instruction and learning in line with the state and exam prep in case the State maintains the exam.

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- *Will quarterly grading be adjusted after Regents decision is made? Will the regents be rescheduled? If not, how does that affect students going forward?*
Quarterly grading will be adjusted depending on Regents. Midterms were not given which were previously counted as 8% of final grade. Transcripts will show 'EXEMPT' from Regents and there will be no penalty for students.
- *Some teachers still gave benchmark exams. They are counted as regular tests?*
Benchmarks count as an exam during Q2. Teachers are working with students to overcome testing challenges and remain flexible.
- *Regarding sports...if we get approved to play low and high-risk sports in March have you made plans for this and if no spectators allowed do you the means to livestream games so parents can view the game? I believe that this is something that needs to be addressed.*
Fall and Spring sports are still slated to be low and moderate risk. Fall sports are scheduled to begin in March and Spring sports are scheduled to begin in April. Decision on which sports are allowed rests with Section 8 and is not up to the school district. Assemblyman Ed Ra spoke out in favor of allowing students to play high risk sports and Nassau County Executive Laura Curran also voiced support. Plans are in place to livestream meets and games.
- *Other districts have communicated about fall sports and BOE and AD advocating for the start of fall sports to start we have heard nothing from GC voicing support.*
Fall and Spring sports are still slated to be low and moderate risk. Fall sports are scheduled to begin in March and Spring sports are scheduled to begin in April. Decision on which sports are allowed rests with Section 8 and is not up to the school district. Assemblyman Ed Ra spoke out in favor of allowing students to play high risk sports and Nassau County Executive Laura Curran also voiced support. Plans are in place to livestream meets and games.
- *What is the high school doing to advocate for fall sports specifically football. We have seen in the news local assemblymen and senators advocating for football to start?*
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- *Will the AD try and do what was done last year for seniors in sports?*
Eamonn Flood, Athletic Director, has plans in the works for athletics.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM