

Garden City PTA
High School PTA Meeting
November 17, 2020
Via Zoom

Call to Order: 9:19 AM by HS PTA Director, Joyce Turner

Quorum: Met

Handouts: Meeting agenda emailed to everyone prior to meeting

Approval of Minutes: September 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.
- GC Shared Shelf Book Club first meeting and discussion featuring *This is All I Got: A New Mother's Search for Home* author Lauren Sandler will take place on Thursday, November 18 at 7:00 PM.
- Sportswear: Pickup is Saturday, November 21 from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM at St. Paul's with drive through format.
- December 3 at 7:00 PM Parenting Workshop # 3 for parents presented by GC PTA will feature Laura Campbell.
- Health and Safety Committee: PTA sponsored guest speaker Steve Dodge, who presents to students about Alcohol and Substance abuse, created a video this year that will be shown to students during gym periods. The Health and Safety Committee worked with high school social worker, Dina Grappone, to bring this presentation back this year in a COVID adapted format.
- Reflections: Nine entries were received at the high school and they have been sent on to the regional level. Good luck to all entered students!
- Curriculum: New curriculum intake form on the GC PTA website. Send any comments, concerns or questions to high school curriculum representatives. First meeting of the high school curriculum committee was held in October; the summary of the meeting is available for review on the PTA website.
- NYS PTA Awards available for high school students:
 - Jenkins Memorial Scholarship for Teacher Education is open to seniors that are planning to attend a SUNY or CUNY school and major in education. Application is due to the counseling center by December 9. Link can be found on the PTA website.
 - 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.
- 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. Please contact Donna Kraus: executivevp@gardencitypta.org for more information.
- SEPTA General Membership Meeting Wednesday, November 11 at 10:00 AM featuring special presentation: "Building Independence: Helping Students Cultivate Their Executive Functioning." Go to SEPTA website to register for the meeting: www.gcsepta.org.

Guidance Spotlight: "Helping Students and Parents Navigate Hybrid/Remote Learning"

Presented by Mr. T. Casale, High School Guidance Counselor

- What can we do as parents to support students during hybrid/remote learning?
 - Acknowledge and respect feelings.
 - Identify things we can control and things we cannot control; can control when and how we receive information.

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- Learning environment at home: distraction free; schedule time to look at phone - take screen breaks; do not use eight minutes between periods to look at phone.
- Testing policy reminder: students can take advantage when they have three or more full period exams scheduled on the same day to move one or more exams; see update section on website for full details
- Utilize school counselors - schedule Google Meet or make an appointment through counseling center.

Guidance Updates: Ms. M. Stefankiewicz, Assistant Principal for Guidance and PPS

- Grade Level Guidance Meetings
 - Junior & Parents College Information Session: November 18, 3:00 PM Webinar (virtual and recorded)
 - Guidance Meeting for Parents of Sophomores: December 2, 3:00 PM Webinar (virtual and recorded)
- Meetings are held at 3:00 PM when all counselors can be in the building and can be hardwired. Meetings are recorded and can be viewed when convenient.
- Google Form available to submit questions in advance. Responses will be posted following the meeting.

High School Updates: Mr. K. Steingruebner, Principal

- We are in this together. Hybrid learning is tough for all and the high school continues to be flexible.
- Support available for any that need it - reach out to school psychologists and/or school social worker
- Fully remote students have chosen to learn remote full time; about 3.5% of school population. Some students have changed from fully remote to hybrid; this is possible because there are no separate rosters for fully remote students, and they can move seamlessly between fully remote and hybrid with their classes.
- Positive cases are up and the number of students on quarantine is up over 50. These cases have all occurred outside of the classroom. School is able to remain open because exposure was outside of school.
- Seeing a new trend where students are choosing to go fully remote for a set period of time.
- Five high school teachers are currently in quarantine due to exposure outside of school; one high school staff member tested positive. Teachers are still teaching remotely rather than use substitutes. Areas in the building such as the auditorium and cafeteria have been set up for students to Google Meet with remote teachers.
- Number of staff members absent on the rise - this includes staff such as hall monitors that help make the school run smoothly; will continue to monitor so can deliver the best education to students.
- Contact Tracing with Nassau County Department of Health asks school three questions:
 - Are students six feet apart?
 - Are students wearing masks?
 - Have students been together for less than an hour?

School is able to stay open because of answers to these questions. Students change rooms every 40 minutes and fresh air is circulating with open windows and fresh air vents in classrooms. Students have mask breaks outside.

- Students in school every day currently include Special Education and Life Skills students. Seniors can be in the building every day but are not allowed in their classrooms on their remote day; they must work remotely within the school.
- Meet weekly with Nassau County Principals to stay informed as to what other schools are doing. Most are hybrid and offering less extracurriculars - no athletic training. Less than five high schools in Nassau County have students in classrooms under six feet apart. This results in large numbers of students quarantining and school closures when they have positive cases.
- October survey over 800 students responded: want to be back in school where they learn better but are managing.
- Continue to monitor the situation and look at plans for the right time to bring students back.
- Winter Wonderland: Student Council decided to postpone Winter Wonderland until February 5, 2021 with the hope that it can more closely resemble traditional event.
- Skit Night: we will wait until closer to the date to make a final decision.

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- Food Drive sponsored by the class of 2021 is a student created and lead event: collection will be this Saturday, November 21 from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM at the Merillon Avenue bus circle. Look for more information.

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

- *Is there anyway the teachers can guide the students about what they really really need to maintain in the folders? Since there are no lockers the backpacks are extremely heavy, they have them all day long and that affects their backs.*
Students should not be carrying textbooks, only binders and folders along with Chromebook/personal devices. Teachers will be asked to remind students that they do not need to carry everything all the time.
- *Are you able to share the results of the survey (student and parent one from October) as it relates to the HS?*
Survey results show students are generally managing but prefer in person learning. Technology issues are being addressed and remote teaching has greatly improved from Spring 2020 and continues to improve from September 2020.
- *Can you please provide some detail around how a student on a 14-day quarantine pivots (now considered 'fully remote', for the 10 days out of GCHS, I suppose) and will be able to keep up with their work, be able to take assessments in a timely manner-not have to return to school and sit for multiple tests in person (can they complete 'at home' as remote students would)-attend extra help or arrange remote extra help sessions with individual teachers. With the numbers rising this week at GCHS, a significant number of students (and faculty?) are affected, and it would be helpful to obtain some guidance for students and parents on how this will be handled and any advice or best practice gchs can recommend.*
Students that are out due to quarantine will be fully remote for the days they need to stay home. They have access to classes (via Zoom/Google Meet), assignments, exams, quizzes, extra help as they would on their remote days.
- *How is it working with the seniors who opted to return to school each day? (Not sure if it started yet...) How has attendance been, which open spaces are being used for the opposite cohort to follow their classes remotely and how is this working w supervising teachers, subs, etc.?*
Seniors that opted to come into building everyday are not allowed into their classrooms on their remote day. Spaces have been created throughout the building for seniors to attend classes remotely from within the building.
- *There have been so many days that our internet is down, the teacher leaves themselves on mute for the class, the smart board writing is far away and BACKWARD for the whole class.... the list goes on and on. My son is a good student but clearly some teachers are navigating this better than others. If the entirety of a teacher's class is doing markedly worse than in past years can there be some assumption that perhaps there should be a curve offered for the class?*
We acknowledge that technology issues happen at various times; systems have been upgraded with increased bandwidth; all teachers received new devices. We were hesitant to offer a COVID curve and feel that we made the right choice since first quarter grades are in line with last year.
- *Looking at the Q1 progress reports issued yesterday, can you comment on how grades were year over year versus Q1 2019 and if any adjustments are being considered for the rest of the quarters for this school year?*
First quarter grades were released at 3PM yesterday and early reports show grades are similar to last year and there has been no significant decrease. We acknowledge that some students are struggling; teachers are

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understanding. There are a number of students with incomplete grades or failures and students can still submit missing work and failures can be changed. The priority is to continue to make sure students are still learning.

- *HS students that are in honors classes usually have regents at the end of the year. The honors students are usually very well prepared for the regents. Since they usually score very very well on that test and then that test would be averaged in as 20% of their overall grade..... how will you address that this year if there are no regents? It is unfair if their grade misses the opportunity for that bump? Can the teacher administer a "regents" as an additional final and count it as 20%?*

If New York State cancels Regents exams we are in control of whether or not to offer final exams to help student grades. We will look to make sure it does not negatively impact students.

- *If a parent decides they want their child home for a day or two working remotely, can they call the attendance office so they can be marked present for the day but work remotely?*
This is a new trend and we have just received 3-4 requests to go full remote for a set period of time. The high school can be flexible; need to email or call attendance office, guidance office and/or Mr. Perrotta, Assistant Principal.

Additional Comments: Mr. M. Malone, Assistant Principal

Request help from GC PTA and SEPTA to communicate and reinforce message to continue mask wearing and social distancing compliance with respect to outside school activities and parties.

Upcoming PTA Meetings

- January 20 HS PTA Meeting, 9:15 AM
- February 10: All Schools OTA Meeting, 7:30 PM
- March 11: Joint Middle School/High School PTA Meeting, 7:30 PM

Upcoming Board of Education Meetings

- December 2: Board of Education Work Session – **Special Education and Athletics**, 8:15 PM
- December 15: Board of Education Meeting, 8:15 PM
- January 5: Board of Education Work Session – **Student Achievement Report**, 8:15 PM
- January 20: Board of Education Meeting, 8:15 PM

Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving to all!

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 10:38 AM