

Middle School PTA Meeting  
September 18, 2024, 9:15am  
Middle School Auditorium (& Zoom)

**Call to order-** 9:15 AM by MS PTA Director Tara Kelly

**Quorum:** Met

**Handouts:** Meeting agenda emailed to everyone prior to meeting; hard copy available at entrance to PTA meeting

Welcome – Tara Kelly, MS PTA Director- Welcomed everyone to the 1<sup>st</sup> middle school meeting and introduced upcoming speakers.

**Get to know the Middle School' Presentations:**

Middle School Updates – Mr. Matthew Samuelson, Principal

- Mr. Samuelson thanked the PTA for the partnership with GCMS. Recent victories for the MS: 1<sup>st</sup> few days have been great. Wonderful welcome for the students (thank you PTA for balloons), 6<sup>th</sup> graders are getting used to navigating the school, lunch, library and classrooms. Things are going smoothly in the cafeteria. He thanked the beautification team and informed us the school will soon be repainted.
- There were new hires over the summer and thank you to students who volunteered for demo classes. They were wonderful participants.
- Year started with an assembly for each grade. Students were reminded how to receive help if needed and discussed behavior in building. No cell phones are to be seen at school and phones must be locked in locker. Students need to lock their locker to protect belongings and is a safety issue. Let the school know if your student needs a lock.
- Back to school night was a success. Parents should feel comfortable to connect with teachers
- 9/11- Students planted flags out front in memory of 9/11 victims Mr. Maher spoke about 9/11 to the students and also focused on the remarkable events of the next day. How people and our community came together. Was a wonderful message for the students.
- Chromebooks are being distributed to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, then 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> next week. All Chromebooks are new and they will have a case. We are working hard to protect them and students will have safety expectations. No stickers or damaging Chromebooks. Chromebooks will be restricted during cafeteria and home base. Those times should be used for socializing.
- Welcome and thank you to the new teachers at GCMS
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade class sizes are larger than we wanted. The district has brought in aides who are teachers. Looking for ways to support the large class sizes.
- Transportation- There have been unfortunate delays. The buses have had changes in other districts and drivers have been ill which has led to difficulties. GCMS needs to pause dismissal when bus issues arise. They need to know who leaves and who stays. We don't want students in the bus lane for safety reasons. Hopefully will be better soon. Everyone is frustrated.
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade outdoor field day event is Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> - Outdoor fun team activities and academic bowl with Ms. Samuelson.
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade party is Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>- DJ, games, pizza, snacks.

- Core Value Awards- GCMS will encourage students to focus energy on things you should be doing. Will teach a new core value every month. September was trustworthiness. Students will be rewarded for displaying that month's core value.
- CELF is new in 7<sup>th</sup> grade science and will replace SSEP (experiments in space). CELF is a new program focusing on environmental science which is part of the curriculum. They will study wind farms, working on a field trip, and have a science symposium.
- Exploratory period– This year exploratory will be extra periods of core classes. They will work on 1 week projects based on and supporting what they are working on in the classroom.
- New electives- Computer science 2<sup>nd</sup> year, theatre arts, technology class (good prep for high school programs)

Diana Intintoli- Cafeteria and Food Service Director

- PaySchoolsCentral

- Lunch is a little different than what 6<sup>th</sup> grade experienced on 5<sup>th</sup> grade tour. Students can preorder and invites kids to try school lunch. Come through the line and see what is offered.
- To find lunch info use the GCMS website. Go to middle school site- menu- parents-GCMS school lunch. Preordering lunches needs to be done on the PaySchoolsCentral app. Everything is there except world market which changes daily. Noticed many 6<sup>th</sup> graders don't have prepaid accounts which makes lines move faster. Use PaySchoolsCentral app to fund lunch account. Students will give their 6 digit student id number to pay. Cash can get lost in the cafeteria.  
Question: When students put in their id will it go to their account? Yes and it helps us track what they are eating and can keep track of food allergies.
- We can't keep the cookies in stock! Working with IT to build social media and will put out more info like pop up meals. Will let parents and students know what is offered so you can decide.
- Trying to get the kids through as fast as they can.

Questions:

1. On PaySchoolsCentral can you see what they ordered? Yes- add your student and you can see what they are buying.
2. What percent are buy vs. bring? - about 20 percent buy lunch. Partly because there is only 22 minutes to eat. GCMS always had 22 minute lunches and kids are done eating within that amount of time. They are sitting and chatting.
3. Does that work for vending machines?- No separate company
4. Why are there not enough cookies. I hear they are running out by 8<sup>th</sup> grade lunch? – Trying to order more each week.
5. Are there core items you have every day? Yes- on the app
6. Are menus on the app? – No, on website
7. What happens when children forget their lunch? They can charge up to \$15. We don't let them leave hungry
8. Why preorder? The meals are put together in the morning and stored. They can grab and leave. Vegetable and juice comes with meal they should grab it. Preorder students don't have to wait in line.
9. Why is there a breakfast menu? Breakfast is available if kids want to grab a muffin or breakfast sandwich. 8:05-8:20 we are open.
10. What happens to food waste? - We do not put anything back. It is thrown away.
11. Was there a glitch where you could not see the school balance?- it's fixed.

Mr. Samuelson-

- Homecoming- Garden City is the GOAT
- NWEA coming up
- Clubs and math lab is starting next week. Send your children to math lab if they have any math questions

Michael Davola, Technology and Nadine Wenger, Library Media Specialist

Technology at the Middle School

SchoolTool, Parent Resource Page –

[Click here for presentation](#)

- Schooltool- Download the app but must use new weblink for 1<sup>st</sup> log in this year. Schooltool has student info, parent contact info, schedules, grades, discipline, and attendance. Guidance counselor can be contacted through Schooltool.
  1. Questions: Is there a way to know day 1 or day 2 on Schooltool? No. Day 1 day 2 calendar is on website and always posted in library.
- If web WebEdge viewer is not working make sure you allow popups. This is how to view assessment test scores.
  1. Question: Can scores be seen only on computer- Depends on device but not on the app. You need to request full site.
- If you need to update contact info email [schooltoolparent@gchfsd.net](mailto:schooltoolparent@gchfsd.net)
- Parent Square- Parent communication tool. Everything posted district wide is posted here. Download the app. Can send posts or private messages. Alerts for emergency situations get texted or phone calls. Notifications can be updated to get less alerts if there are multiple postings. You can choose your settings.

Questions:

1. How can you change the language notification if emails are not in correct language? Check the “my account” if it’s not working or reach out to support.
  2. How should we contact teachers? Teachers can be contacted though Schooltool or work email. Schooltool goes to work email but some teachers may not have linked their email accounts.
  3. Is the message feature emails or chat? It’s a chat that does go teachers email. Posts go to school email and app for parents.
  4. On the web directory emails aren’t posted. How do you email two teachers? If you are emailing two teachers use Parentsquare and link conversation. Took emails off website for cyber security reasons. If you need emails they are on Schooltool.
  5. How do we contact coaches that are not employees? Mr. Ramierz- Some use non tech ways of communicating. Anything from employees will come from parent square.
  6. Can you sync the calendars for just certain buildings? We aren’t sure yet
  7. How can we see a missed assignments on google classroom? They are on google classrooms and students need to click “turn in.” If you did assignment it won’t look completed until student hits “turn in”
- Webfilter will give you a weekly report of chrome book activity going forward. Working with filtering system to get the correct combination for each school.

Tara Kelly- We have a lot of questions on parent square and will come back to it at another meeting.

#### Athletics - Eduardo Ramierz

- Mr. Ramierz introduced himself. It is his 26<sup>th</sup> year in education. Worked in Baldwin and South Huntington before joining Garden City. Has 3 kids of his own and has been through all levels of athletics.
- Health education has changed- 6<sup>th</sup> grade is first aid and CPR , 7<sup>th</sup> traditional health, 8<sup>th</sup> will be a mindfulness class.
- Athletics- Most schools are dropping teams but not the case in GC. Which is great but tough. GCMS had cuts partly because we just don't have the space. We lost fields at St. Pauls and coaches are doing best they can. GCMS is one of only a few schools that have 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and combo. We encourage students that are cut to get involved with morning athletics. This makes GC great but also tough. 400 kids came out for teams.  
Pandemic caused a shortage of officials in Nassau county. We are working to encourage people to become officials. Parents need to be mindful of behavior. Please encourage and thank game officials. Thank you to new coaches this year. Parent meeting for incoming 7<sup>th</sup> and outgoing 8<sup>th</sup> will be this May so parents know what to expect.
- Thank you to coaches and staff at the middle school. They do a great job as a feeder program to the high school. Mr. Tullo can answer most questions regarding middle school sports.
- GC Athletics has an Instagram
- Athletic speakers and assemblies will always include middle school and they will be recorded.

#### Ms. Michele Ingoglia – 6<sup>th</sup> grade Guidance Counselor

- Counselors follow students from 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. It helps us really get to know our kids and families. We watch them grow. Hope everyone had a great start to the school year. GCMS had a great start
- Guidance Counselors are Whiston- 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Tumminello- 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- We meet with each team at least once a week and our teachers meet together every day. We are talking about the students. Students are different in each class and we start to know their strengths. We get a snapshot into their world and a chance to see them academically.
- Clubs will start end of Sept./ Oct. Encourage them to get involved. It really helps make this their new home for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Best way to feel comfortable is to be here outside of the academic day. Morning intramurals or afternoon clubs. The list will be sent out.

#### Questions:

1. Are there new clubs? - funds are limited. Not sure what the status of new clubs are such as Dungeons and Dragons but there is chess, art, music, festival chorus
  2. Can kids access the locker room to change in the morning? Not in locker room but can change in bathroom
  3. Where do we drop off? Drop off and pick up in front of school
- Homework center starts Thursday- staffed by teachers on Tues and Thurs 3:30-4:30. Good way to get homework done and get help from teachers. Every teacher has extra help before school and it is posted on their google classroom. Good idea to write down questions the night before so they get the help they need.

- Jr. Honor Society- policy and requirements are in the planner and on GCMS website. Encourage students to try to get into Jr. Honor Society. Will work together to place students and figure out what will work best for each child. Contact guidance with any questions.
- New guidance intern – Jessica- students will see her thought the building
- Math lab- Encourage your kids to attend if they need math help.

#### SEPTA News and Events- Lynda Valliant MS director

- Updates: General membership meeting- 9/24 10 a.m. at Stratford – healthy friendships speaker coming.
- Nov. meeting- process for evaluations and IEPs. Will walk through process
- Join SEPTA- it's for all students and works closely with PTA

#### Questions:

Will there be a zoom link for SEPTA meeting? Depends on who is hosting. We will find out and will post on website and Instagram

#### Middle School News and Events - Tara Kelly

- PTA still looking for committee members- reflections, sportswear, nominating committees and digital citizenship committee.

#### Questions:

1. Do the kids on sports teams wear their jerseys for spirit day? Many do and some will wear spirit day shirts.
2. What is career resources committee? Committee that will move down from high school to MS. Helps students decide where they want to go in their career. Small business owners and interviewing tips for the high school. Are looking for volunteers from the community.
3. Where is 6<sup>th</sup> grade day field day sign up?- in the newsletter from the PTA. There is a link for each school and it will be circulated again. Sign up genius did go out. Please donate if you can.

#### Adjourn

#### Upcoming Dates:

Spirit Week: Monday, September 16 – Friday, Sept 20, 2024

Homecoming Parade and Varsity Football Game: Saturday, September 21 at 1 and 3 pm

SEPTA General Membership Meeting: Tuesday, September 24 at 10 am

Picture Day: Thursday & Friday, September 26th & 27th, 2024 -Gym Day

6th Grade Field Day (New Date!): Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Schools Closed for Rosh Hashanah: Thursday, October 3 and Friday, October 4, 2024

1st Quarter Progress Reports: Monday, October 7, 2024

Last Day to order Sportswear: Sunday, October 13, 2024

Schools Closed for Columbus Day: Monday, October 14, 2024

Unity Day: Wednesday, October 16, 2024

All Schools PTA Meeting: Thursday, October 17, 2024

Family ID Registration Opens for Winter Sports: Friday, October 18, 2024