

Minutes: EGRPS Middle School PTSA
November 27, 2007
9:00 am

Welcome and Introductions

Andi Allen, President

Guest

Scott Robertson, Athletic Director at HS

Scott discussed the season changes in men's and women's sports at the high school level which were mandated by a Supreme Court decision last year. Parents of 8th graders will be able to attend an orientation event later this spring (date and time will be posted soon). Parents will receive information about try-outs and cuts, the alignment of seasons, and player expectations for high school athletes. Scott noted that HS athletes practice daily, that Sunday practices are becoming more common, especially for teams that compete on Mondays, and that it is not possible to participate in two sports during one season in the HS. Parental involvement is decreased and student-athletes are expected to advocate for themselves with their coaches and to communicate with them directly via telephone and e-mail about missed practices, conflicts and etc. Scott noted that this is a big change from MS, where coaches more often communicate directly with parents.

Middle school sports seasons are not changed at this time. One challenge in changing them is that MS sports are often tied to Recreation department programs. Although there are benefits to retaining the current MS sports seasons, especially in terms of coaching availability, the OK Conference is working on a plan to align the MS and HS school seasons in the future. No firm timeline is in place.

Scott expressed thanks to the community for having passed the bond issue. The improvements will help all coaches to manage better their practice and game schedules.

Superintendent's Report

Improvements to Mehney Field and Canepa will be finished this summer. Planners are working out timelines for the rest of the bond issue improvements. The areas around the back of the HS will be messy this summer.

The Board of Education has approved plans for a new MS entrance, which will improve safety by putting a defined entrance near the office, enabling a desk employee to see all persons who enter the building. Existing front doors will remain, as they are needed for efficient exit of crowds for school and athletic events. Those doors will be open for students to enter the Cafeteria in the morning, but will be locked when school begins, making the office door the only one which may be used during the instructional day. Construction will begin when the frost clears and will be completed before the 2009 Fall Semester begins. The design incorporates architectural features from the City Center for visual appeal, and also will enable some energy-cost savings for the building. A canopy over the front walkway was cost-prohibitive and has been eliminated from the plans.

Administrative Reports

Peter Stuursma

Peter reported excellent representation at conferences and commented on some of the challenges. The administration will continue to try to improve the process. Teachers and parents are encouraged to stick to the five minute time-allotment. Peter is aware that it is difficult for parents to get to all teachers if they also have to visit the high school. He reminded us that they must work within mandated guidelines concerning the teachers' time.

Recent concerns about parking have been reported to the police department. It was noted that when parents park illegally or in an unsafe manner in the circle drive, they are displaying a poor example for our student-drivers.

The back door (off Bellclaire) is open in the morning. Teacher Laurie Potter monitors that door. Parents are asked to drop students off in the turn-around, have students use the sidewalk and stairs, and to leave promptly, keeping the back service entrance clear at all times. Staff parking and delivery vehicles must be accommodated at all times.

Next year's 6th grade class is large and the staff is already building the scheduling model and conflict matrix. Peter commended their work on this.

Peter will be sending a letter to all parents about new emergency plans, terms and practice procedures. Look for information about Full Sheltering, Limited Sheltering, and Evacuations, and also about communication procedures.

Joann Kuklewski

A letter went out about some bullying, rudeness and disrespectful behavior among *some* of the 8th graders. Boys and Girls were spoken to separately. Joann is working on solutions to these challenges, using the Ros Wiseman "Owning Up" curriculum when appropriate, using the LISTEN meetings as a place for discussion about what's going on in the building and with hallway behavior, and by making sure that adequate hallway and stairway supervision is in place.

National Mix-It-Up Day was successful with 8th Graders. The LISTEN group is meeting on Thursdays at 7:30 am. Students come with their own agenda, sometimes as many as 30 students. Linda Rupke facilitates LISTEN as an opportunity for students to process their feelings on matters of diversity, bullying, harassment, etc. Often the discussion is very good, and time runs out. Some of the students return after school to follow up, as many as 12. DIVE meets with Joann at lunchtime. Two 8th Grade girls are interested in leadership for DIVE.

"Way To Go" cards have replaced merit cards. Teachers issue these when students exhibit Respect, Responsibility and Personal Best. Card-earners have the chance to win small prizes from the Spirit Shop in Friday drawings. The students say they like this program.

Parents are asked to encourage Secret Santas to limit their gift giving to the last few days before break.

Regarding Teacher Gifts for the Holidays: Lisa Healey coordinates the Families in Need Program. Parents can give donations in honor of teachers and the teacher appreciate these gifts. The assistance

to families in need is anonymous and determined by the Guidance office. These expenses are noted as "Sunshine Fund" in our financial statements. Please consider giving in this way this year.

Student Council Reports

Emma Hall spoke with Andi before the meeting and had no news to report.

Teacher Reports

Solo and Ensemble Festival was November 17. EGR had the biggest representation. 62/64 received Superior or Excellent Ratings. Mr. Topolewski was very pleased with participation.

7th Grade Bands had a clinic with area jazz musicians during which they discussed the structure of pop and jazz tunes.

Linda Rupke: STARS and GEARS are planning some optional activities such as a Friday night movie/pajama party. All girls and moms will be invited.

Career Lunches: we are very grateful to Amy Keane and team. Students sign up at lunchtime two-weeks ahead of time. There is a lottery draw for 50 participants. No student goes more than once. The list of speakers for this year is great. Plans are in place to make a film recording of this event available. Amy needs some volunteers for set-up.

Out-Of-Grade Level testing:

8th graders will be taking EXPLORE test (8th grade version of ACT) and the scores will be used for English and Science placement for 9th graders.

Anthony Morey: offered thanks for the Youth In Government trip and said it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and the students were very enthusiastic. EGR students "sponsored" a bill to outlaw smoking at all beaches, and their legislation was "passed."

Teachers expressed thanks for the Teacher appreciation event and homecoming lunch.

Committee & Liaison Report

Mini Grants and Rewards Programs

Stacey Levitt described mini-grant for foreign language activities:

Spanish dance instructors at Dec 7 dance: other activities during Foreign Language activities.

Remember to shop in places that support the MS.

CAC—Community Action Council

Look for letter from Mary Kelly about what this group does. Its President is Dee McGraw. Principals, Superintendent, Library, Rec Dept, and Parents are all encouraged to support a drug and alcohol free environment for minors, and healthy lifestyles for all.

Budget Approval

Susie Gerow, Treasurer

Susie was absent today: Stacey Levitt distributed the financials. There were no questions.

Old Business

Minutes

Approved October Minutes. No changes for the web site.

New Business

Andi Allen mentioned again that the PTSA is working on putting questions together for the 2007-08 Survey, and that they are working on using an online survey tool. They'll be sending a notice out at the end of the semester and will give us a month to complete it. The Survey is for parents to fill out online.

If you have suggestions for questions or topics, please fill out a pink card and turn it in to the office. There can be big difference in questions for 6th and 8th grade questions.

Our last survey was three years ago. Many changes have taken place; a new one will give us important information about Middle School life.

Spanish activities: there will be a special reception at the end of May, will be looking for 20 people from MS to provide an international dessert.

We are continuing to work on web site: adding info on intramurals. Let Andi know if you'd like to see changes there.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:27 am.

Respectfully submitted by Jodi MacLean, Recording Secretary
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