

Minutes: EGRPS Middle School PTSA
March 25, 2008
9:00 am

Welcome and Introductions

Andi Allen, President

Student Council Report

Emma Hall

There will be some Friday Spirit Days in the next few weeks. The first one is Crazy Hair Day. The Student Council is considering ideas for their Spring Fundraiser and would appreciate any ideas we might have.

Guests

School Board Candidate, Michelle Rabideau

Pete Rupert and Michelle will be elected May 6; they are the only two people on the ballot.

Terms begin July 1st. Michelle introduced herself; she has a 6th grader at the MS and a 3rd grader at Lakeside. She works with the fundraising organization at St. Mary's Hospital and is involved with the EGR Schools Foundation.

Lynne Leiter and Matt Allen on CRITERION

Lynne and student Matt Allen demonstrated the CRITERION program, an editing service for students. The program is based on the six traits of writing that are commonly used in teaching composition and also by state testing programs (such as the MEAP). The program is available to students 24/7, from home, by logging into their own personal account. The student sees a "portfolio" of their work and can click on any assignment to review feedback on their writing. Writing assignments may be submitted for review multiple times, and overall improvement is tracked by CRITERION. The service is an important motivator, as students can see how much they have improved with each successive draft they submit.

We were able to participate in a pilot program this year. Mrs. Leiter is thrilled with the service; however, it is expensive. The KISD is exploring ways to fund the service district-wide, and our district is looking for ways to fund an expansion into all of our English classes. The pilot program was \$10 per student. Doug Jenkins handled the licenses for our district this year and after securing some additional funding, Lynne was able to use the service in all of her English classes during spring semester. See the note at the end of the Minutes for more detailed information.ⁱ

Survey Results

Betsy Bloom

- The survey was closed on March 24 and the committee now has printouts of the information.
- A good response generated lots of comments, for example, there were 187 comments about the homework policy alone.
- **Next month the committee will present some organized information about the survey results.** Individual comments will not be revealed.

Superintendent's Report: Sara Shubel

Construction Update: parking is an issue at every building and construction projects this summer will add further stress. Construction begins after Spring Break and will really be underway the day school is out. In preparation, utility work will begin during Spring Break; this will require use of the Staff Parking lot (behind the high school). 85-100 parking spaces are needed by Staff. The Senior Lot will become the Staff Lot, and the Junior Lot will become the first-come-first-serve Senior Lot. Patience is requested.

Students have been allowed to park on the second level of the Jade Pig parking ramp in Gaslight Village, however, some abuses of this privilege have caused Jade Pig and the City some reluctance to continue allowing this. **Please remind students that they may not park on the lower level or in the circle area in the shopping district.** In addition, Jade Pig will be beginning their own construction projects soon.

When Construction is over in Fall of 09, a committee will be established to work on the ongoing parking issues.

Sara responded to several questions about Skyward, particularly the desire for greater uniformity in how and when the teachers update the information. It was noted that parents often don't see information about missing assignments until it is too late to even turn the assignment in for half-credit. Sara remarked that they are continuing to work on these issues, and that parents are urged to communicate with the teachers via e-mail.

Administrative Reports

Peter Stuursma

- Thanks to everyone for participating in the survey. We had over 53% respond. Anything over 50% is considered a very good response.
- PTSA Board will meet to go over the information with Peter and Joann.
- 365 people responded. Items of particular interest include: academic help time, homework time, extracurricular activities (242 said they use the intramural program), emotional and social issues (feeling stressed, fitting in), bullying (whether it has improved).
- **New Online Registration took place for 6th graders.** The process with the counselors did not change, only the technology in entering the information; students still received guidance on their schedules. The new computer process tells us what electives are most popular, gives us good information and saves us time. Now Linda Graham can already begin to work with the master schedule. Individual requests and special needs must still be addressed with the counselors, in person or on paper, instead of through the online system.
- Regarding the School Calendar: We're working through a trial process on the Schedule Star program for athletics. A bold link (in red) will take you right to the athletic schedules and allow us to clear that clutter off the school calendar. This should be up and running soon.

- Try to attend the Technology events; parents should be aware of trends in technology in order to keep their children safe, and also to know about positive trends in technology, things that are *good* for our students.

Joann Kuklewski

- Joann urges parents to use the e-mail system and the phone to communicate with teachers. Don't feel that you are nagging. Joann and teachers will take time to meet with you.
- The policy for updating the web pages is that grades must be online by the 4-week midpoint of the marking period. Dates are in the front of your child's planner.

Committee/Liaison Reports

SAC, Mary Kelly

- Beginning in May, the HS Weight Room will move over to the Middle School basement during construction.
- SALT program continues, with the police officers spending more time in the schools, including at St. Stephen's. Brian Ellis commented that this is less popular with the high school students, though the students in the elementary schools and at the MS seem to enjoy it. It was pointed out that at many schools, there is a regular, full-time security officer and the SALT program allows us to avoid this expense.

Legislation, Jodi MacLean

- There was a good turnout at the Legislative Coffee with Vern Ehlers; nothing else to report at this time.

Mini Grants & Rewards, Stacey Levitt

- Jill Baker, Terri Clay, Tia Carmichael: Additional books for English Classroom Literature Circles (6th Grade English), \$700
- Lynne Leiter: 30 subscriptions to Writing Magazine, to be used by her students (7th and 8th Grade English), \$300
- Jill Fouch: for "Everyone Communicates: Boardmaker Plus" software, a program that supports speech and language development (All Grade Levels), \$400
- Steve Seth: GEARS program outing at Camp Manitoulin (6th and 8th Graders in GEARS), \$500
- We have now closed our application process for this year.

Treasurer's Report, Susie Gerow

- Our year ends this year on June 30. Please be sure to turn in your receipts as soon as possible.

Kathy McKenzie, Chair of the 8th Grade Party

- Great committee is making plans for the June 6 party.
- 7:00-10:00 pm, more casual than it used to be, with light food, lots of games and a DJ. Dancing will not be the primary focus or the only activity for the evening.

Old Business

February minutes were approved without changes. These have already been submitted to the website and can be found in the Newsletter area.

New Business

2008-09 Middle School PTSA Board Slate was announced by Janice Foster and will be approved at the April meeting:

VP:	Lindel Hoff
Asst. Treasurer:	Jill Miller
Corresp. Secretary:	Amy Dozeman

Please renew your Magazines using the QSP link online. A notice has been sent out to all parents in the district. Throw away those renewal forms you receive directly from the magazine companies—our school gets no money if you renew your subscriptions in this way.

The PTSA Volunteer Form is being updated for next year. Please consider how you might be able to participate in the life of our school next year.

Important Dates:

April 16	7:00 pm, 5 th Grade Parent Orientation
May 7	Progress Reports Online
May 9	Day of Caring

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, Apr 22, at 9:00 a.m., Media Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.

Respectfully submitted by Jodi MacLean, Recording Secretary
macleanhouse@comcast.net

ⁱ **More Information on the CRITERION Service:** Feedback is given in each of the six areas: (Grammar, Usage, Mechanics, Style, Organization and Development), along with a window showing the student's actual writing sample, with problem sentences or words highlighted on the screen. The student can then decide whether he or she agrees with the suggestions and can edit the assignment or make arrangements to speak with his or her teacher (who also has access to the information). There is also a "prewriting" component that can be useful to students as they consider how to begin a writing assignment.

Mrs. Leiter explained the benefits of the program for teachers in their curriculum planning. The program reveals what problems are commonly or repeatedly encountered by students and enables her to design teaching units to address those. She also believes that the exercise of using the program helps with students' self-confidence. It teaches them that editing is a worthwhile exercise (it's important to do multiple drafts) *before* they turn their papers in.