

PTSA Committee Meeting Minutes 10/18/23

Board Members Present: Julie Lubbe (President), Elizabeth Keegan (Vice President), Elizabeth Sughrue (Secretary), Christine Neville (Treasurer) and Jeff Litz (Principal)

Rachel Baxter Guest and Principal Litz discussion on Grading for Equity

- Marshall teachers are reading “Grading for Equity” by Joe Feldman. They are focused on determining how to grade students in a manner that is transparent to both kids and parents.
- Rachel determined there are 80 different methods of grading at GCM. Experiences vary across FCPS schools.
- Attendees of the meeting spoke to those at their table and discussed their memories of grades/grading while they were in school.
- Rachel shared that grades become a statement of self-worth.
- Kids in high achieving schools are now named “at risk,” 2 different group studies found.
- Top environmental conditions that harm adolescent wellness: Poverty, trauma, discrimination, excessive pressure to excel.
- Students are at risk if they: Have a parent who is incarcerated, have recently immigrated to the US, live in poverty, are in the foster care system, attend a high performing school.
- GCM’s focus is to get students to focus on learning and not grades as a reflection of who they are.
- Currently a middle school or high school student could have 7 different gradebooks to navigate in the course of one school year. Examples are: 4.0 weighted with points, 100 point-total points, 100 point-weighted categories with percentages and points, 4.0-weighted with percent and only letter grades, 4.0-raw score with points, 100-weighted with points, 100 point-weighted with percents.
- Question was asked, “What do grades mean? Do they accurately communicate what your child is learning?”
- In the classroom we have to recognize and understand our kids as individuals and be clear on what they have learned.
- Equity is meeting students where they are and give them what they need so they can be successful.
- There are 3 pillars of grading for Equity: Accurate, Bias Resistant and Motivational. Some Key Tenets of Grading Equity: Behavior and Participation should not count towards the grade, Homework can still be assigned but should not improve or harm a student’s grade, Students should have opportunities to reassess, students should have multiple options to demonstrate their learning.
- GCM wants grading that promoted a grow mindset versus a fixed mindset. No one learns anything perfectly the first time.

- Principal Litz views this change process as a 3 year project. Jeff and faculty will finish reading book by February and discuss what parts of the book they will take into consideration.
- GCM is focused on learning.
- This year FCPS decided teachers could give zeroes on 100 point scales. Principal Litz disagrees wholeheartedly with this decision and communicated this to all teachers before school started. Some teachers are still handing out zeroes. Principal Litz feels it's very hard to bounce back from a Zero.
- Firm belief is that school is not about a grading scale, but a learning scale.
- GCM is trying to reduce the number of systems of grading that are currently being used.
- GCM is focused on creating good human beings.
- Please contact rebaxter@fcps.edu with any questions on GCM grading practices.

PTA Business

- Meeting Minutes from the September meeting were approved.
- Homecoming was a success thanks to everyone who helped out.
- 452 Academic Letters were handed out last week.
- Next week is Bus Driver/ Food Worker Appreciation week. Hospitality is working on creating gift bags for all of the workers.
- The Reflections contest is still going on. Some categories include: poetry, videography, etc. Last year a student from GCM went to States.
- ANGC: There will be a wine tasting to raise money in November at Total Wine.
- Field of Honor: 500 flags will be out in front of GCM in Honor of Veteran's Day. Cost of flags: 1 for \$5 or 5 for \$20.
- Next Month's PTSA meeting on November 15th will be the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Brick Installation. Cake and Refreshments will be served.

Budget

- Brick Sales raised \$23,000 to \$24,000. The profit was \$6,000 to \$7,000. Waiting for another installment to come in.
- Camo/Blackout shirt sales were a success. We made \$2,400 on Blackout shirts and \$3,000 on Camo shirts.
- We are fairly close to our goal for PTA memberships, but we need about 100 more registrations to match last year's number.
- The Senior class has been selling yard-signs and t-shirts
- The PTSA currently has \$116,600 in the bank.

Principal Litz's Overview

- Staff has been working on Signs of Suicide program to ensure students are doing okay. Some parents have opted out and some parents will be getting calls home to offer help.
- Football is @ Herndon this Friday.

- Special Olympics is on Saturday.
- Band Assessment is on Saturday.
- 11/3 is the end of the 1st Quarter/2 hour early release.
- Staff has identified 30 kids who need extra help with school work.
- Peer tutoring starts the week of 10/23 and meets Mondays/Thursdays. There are 65 Peer tutors. These tutors go through an interview process beforehand.
- PSAT/SAT was administered last week. There was a 1 hour delay, but everyone finished on time. Results will be available through the college board site and Principal Litz will notify parents when available.
- Winter Sports tryouts start on 11/6. Students need to have registration completed beforehand. If you have any questions on this, please reach out to the Student Activities Department for assistance.