

Minutes of the Special Ridgeview Middle School Parent-Teacher-Student-Association Meeting February 27, 2019

A called meeting of the RMS PTSA was convened on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Cafeteria of Ridgeview Middle School in Gaithersburg, MD, pursuant to notice duly given.

Board Member Attendees: David Lee, President; Andrea Girimonte, VP Volunteers; Megan Peluso, Secretary; Dee Tomasetti, Treasurer; Sumbal Sheldon, MCCPTA Delegate; Jenny Bolanos, MCCPTA Delegate and Jung Lawrence, VP Membership.

- I. Welcome and Introductions: The meeting was called to order by David Lee at 7:00 pm.
 - The PTSA board was introduced, followed by an introduction by the panel members:
 - Michelle Schultze – Director OSSI and for QO Cluster
 - Alyson Baber- Director Safety and Security cluster coordinator MCPS
 - Michael Harting – Acting Supervisor Dept of School Safety and Security MCPS
 - Officer Dan Fizz – MCPD
 - Officer Lowery – QO Cluster SRO – MCPD
 - Mr. Lee also laid out the ground rules for the meeting and explained the goals are for the meeting which are our student’s safety and security and questions will be written down to allow parents to ask any questions of the panel after presentation is complete. (see attached agenda)

- II. RMS Presentation “RMS Safety and Security”
 - Please see attached presentation.

- III. MCPD Information
 - Deputy Commander Fizz explained that he was in attendance to give his support to the parents and staff at RMS.
 - Office Fizz explained that police arrived at the scene within minutes of receiving the call regarding the locker room incident.
 - The incident was considered a child based assault.
 - He explained that the case now rests with the Department of Juvenile Services which is an agency above the police and they do not have to report back to the police with their findings.

- IV. Q&A (8pm)
 - I am concerned about any type of touching in the locker rooms. What exactly are you doing to prevent this? How are you going to prevent this and what are the consequences?
 - Students who touch another student in the locker room are put onto behavioral contracts and may be moved to a different section of the locker room.
 - With all the processes in place, serious incidents have still occurred. How did the pills/locker room and fighting happen despite all the safety measures and what specifically are you doing to fix the gaps identified?
 - Students make split second decisions and end up in a fight. Sometimes two friends start back and forth then it escalates. Because of the number of staff in house the fight time has gone down and they are very short.
 - How many students have been relocated from other schools to RMS because of previous behavior issues and being removed from their home school?
 - 1 student has been moved here for behavior.
 - Has the school spoken with the kids about what happened?
 - Dr. McNeal has spoken to the students during lunch to remind them consequences of bad behavior and what is expected from the Ridgeview students.

- What happened in the locker room?
 - Commander Fizz answered that from reading the police report there were 5 boys approximately 12 years old on a bench getting dressed. One boy said “hey this kid said build a wall” the other kids took him back to the back of the locker room where 4 boys committed 2nd degree assault against 1 student. It is a paper arrest. All 4 boys had different reports as to what happened.
- What happens to students who are in trouble more than once?
 - The Code of Conduct determines how to handle punishments and escalation. Serious infractions can result in 10 day suspension or expulsion. Minor fights 1-2 days suspension.
- Do kids have to change for PE every day? Would their grade drop if they did not?
 - If a student shows up in clothes that are inappropriate such as skirts or slacks or would be dangerous, such as uggs, sandals, non-sport shoes, then they are required to change. A lot of students wear clothes to school that are considered gym clothes so there is more flexibility. A grade could be affected if someone who was not dressed appropriately continued to not change for gym.
- Is it possible to have officers drive around schools before and after school.
 - That is already being done.
- Are the kids who committed the crime back in school?
 - Mr. Garcia was not at liberty to speak to this due to student privacy concerns.
- Was the attack planned?
 - Mr. Garcia was not at liberty to speak to this due to student privacy concerns.
- Was the attack connected to gang relations?
 - (Officer Lowery) No gang relations. additionally there were no ER visits, no doctors involved and the police are taking it very seriously and spoke to all of the involved kids and their families.
- What are the MCPS Rules on gang activity?
 - There is a new section of the codes that if there is suspected gang activity it must be reported to police. Additionally, bullying also needs to be reported.
- What kind of securities are at the school in the summer?
 - When there is an incident at a school during the summer it is reported to the police then a work order is created to fix any damage.
- There seems to be a culture of not snitching and kids are scared to report incidents. What is being done to remedy this?
 - This should be a collaborative effort, a partnership between the student, staff and parents.
- Can you explain Restorative Justice?
 - It is an office in MCPS where someone is required to take a 3 day course to learn how to problem solve with a student, it’s a conversation. We also try to get parents involved early on in any incident.
- What is the prescription drug policy?
 - Not answered.
- When will Mr. Garcia get control of the students?
 - Mr. Garcia does have control of the school. He also understands that students need someone they can vent too who will just listen to them and so that is what he does.
- Can we go back to holding town hall meetings?
 - Yes, we will go back to the town hall meetings but are looking for a good time and format for them.
- What is being done at the elementary school level to not allow bad behavior so it does not spill into middle school?
 - Restorative Justice and a student Code of Conduct.

- What can we do to encourage kindness with our kids?
 - That will be discussed as the first topic at our next PTSA meeting

V. Adjournment

- Mr. Lee adjourned the meeting at 9:03 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Megan Peluso, Secretary
Date: 03/07/2019