

## **Minutes of the Ridgeview Middle School Parent-Teacher-Student-Association Meeting**

**September 12, 2017**

A called meeting of the RMS PTSA was convened on Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Media Center of Ridgeview Middle School in Gaithersburg, MD, pursuant to notice duly given.

Attendees: Ms. Sherri Wood-Powe, President; Ms. Jill Fleisher, Second Vice President; Ms. Laura Bookman, MCPTA Delegate; Ms. Dee Tomasetti, Treasurer; Ms. Mary Jane Kissel, Secretary; Mr. Daniel Garcia, Principal; Dr. Matt Paushter, Assistant Principal; Dr. Carla McNeal; Ms. Feri Jahanmir, RMS Office Assistant; Jannelle Barrow, Phillip Bonner, Brenda Bautista, Simon Bautista, Meredith Bollini, Latoya Bonner, Nichelle Cathlin, Monica Chiaramonte, Catalina Clavenia, Maryam Cordova, Jennifer Culliton, Audrelle Daniels, Binh Do, Erica Epps, Jake Epps, Tracy Evans, Stephanie Fitz, Bob Gibson, Michelle Kaufman, Tara Kavadias, Becky Krimstein, Sammy Krimstein, Steven Lee, Minwei Liu, Kassie Merker, Susan Montgomery, Devrim Moral, Nem Ndanga, Sylvie Ndanga, Josh Nelson, Amy Pomrink, Rich Powe, Crystal Rathke, Natasha Romano, Sugathri Sharman, Sumbal Sheldon, Gina Simone, Nico Simone, Yael Tamir, Pamela Taylor, Rashakrishna Tirumalai, Tashu Trivedi, Josh Turley, Jody Usatine, Heidi Weiner, Bonnie West, Sophia West, and Janet Wolk

- I. Welcome/call to order: The meeting was called to order by Sherri Wood-Powe at 7:00 pm.
  - The PTSA board was introduced, followed by an introduction of the Ridgeview staff.
  - Ms. Wood-Powe reminded attendees about picking up the meeting handouts and information.
  - She reminded everyone about the deadline for ordering PE uniforms and RMS spirit wear.
- II. Treasurer's Report
  - Ms. Tomasetti gave the treasurer's report.
  - Ms. Tomasetti explained the budget and the need to vote and approve the budget so that programs and could be funded.
  - She explained the need to balance income versus expenses, which is the end goal for the budget.
  - Highlights of this year's budget include a spring and fall fundraising goal of \$2500, the reduction in the spirit wear budget, the elimination of Destination Imagination from the budget, and an increase for the engineering program.
  - The motion to pass the budget was made by Josh Turley to vote on the budget, and it was seconded by Laura Bookman. The budget was passed by a majority vote.
- III. Membership Report
  - Ms. Fleisher gave the membership report.
  - The goal for this year is to have 100% of parents, students, and staff become PTSA members.
  - The best way to improve the school and community is to get involved as a PTSA member.
  - She highlighted various other benefits and discounts available to PTSA members.
  - Anyone that joins the PTSA by September 26 can take advantage of the discounted membership rate of \$20 per family, and \$10 per individual.
- IV. Administration Report
  - Mr. Garcia and Drs. Paushter and McNeal gave a joint presentation.
  - Each administrator introduced themselves and shared their background information.
  - Mr. Garcia reviewed all of the major school departments including the various academic departments, administration, building services, security, Para educators, and clerical staff.
  - FAQs and where to have them answered were also presented.
  - Dr. Paushter highlighted upcoming dates including:
    - 9/21, No school for students and teachers

- 9/27, Back to School Night
- 10/6, Early Release Day
- 10/11, Picture Day
- 10/13, RMS Tailgate
- 11/9, 10 or 17, Possible dates for parent conferences
- The date of parent conferences is still in flux due to scheduling issues, and should be finalized soon.
- Dr. McNeal reviewed the RMS core values and reminded the group that Ridgeview is a PBIS school.
- myMCPS Portal will be replacing edline this year as the mechanism by which parents can review students' academic progress and attendance.
- A tutorial on the portal will be given at Back to School night
- The general student schedule was reviewed. Students had homeroom the first day of school, and going forward will have homeroom as needed.
- There are three lunches, one for each grade.

V. New Ridgeview Policies for 2017-2018

- Mr. Garcia and Drs. Paushter and McNeal reviewed the changes in school policy for this year.
- Mr. Garcia stated the driving force behind the changes is to benefit instruction time.
  - Locker Policy:
    - Lockers can be decorated for special occasions, but students must use materials that won't damage the lockers or take paint off.
    - Lockers may not be rigged to open easily.
    - Lockers may be visited in the morning before first period, before and after lunch, and at the end of the day. Backpacks are to be kept in the lockers at all times, and locker doors are to be closed and secured when not in use.
  - Electronics/Cell Phone Policy:
    - Cell phones must be kept in lockers all day. Phones can be used on the bus, before first period, and after school.
    - The policy was changed because the phones take attention away from learning.
    - Every student has access to chromebooks in every class for academic purposes, so phones are no longer needed in the classroom.
  - Dress Code:
    - The outdated dress code found in the agenda books was drafted a long time ago, and is no longer in use. Definitions of clothing and styles have changed.
    - Ridgeview has now adopted the gender neutral MCPS dress code that is in use across the county.
    - The dress code is as follows:
      - Students have a responsibility to be dressed and groomed for school, in accordance with the community standards for dress and grooming addressed by the local school discipline policy. Students may not be disciplined for their style of dress or grooming unless it—
        - is likely to cause disruption to school activities;
        - causes a disruption to the educational environment;
        - endangers health or safety;
        - fails to meet a reasonable requirement of a course or activity;
        - is associated with gangs; is lewd, vulgar, obscene, revealing, or of a sexual nature; or promotes the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.
  - Bathroom Policy
    - Students were initially told that they would be restricted to 3 bathroom visits per class, per marking period. That is no longer the case

- Students no longer have restrictions of bathroom visits, except during the first ten minutes of class and the last ten minutes of class,
  - Tables at Lunchtime
    - Students are asked to choose a seat at lunch and stay there.
    - Since the weather is still nice, students are being allowed to go outside after eating, and talk to anyone that they would like to talk to.
    - The administration will decide how to handle social time as the weather turns colder.

**VI. Comments from Parents and Students**

- Ms. Simone commented that narrative on the dress code should focus on helping girls have respect about themselves and not dressing to make others comfortable.
- Dr. Paushter stressed that the dress code is not in place to shame anyone and that any issues that come up going forward will be handled in a cooperative manner between staff, students and parents.
- Nico Simone asked about reinstating the use of electronics, that it is a privilege the students have been working for since 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Ms. Sheldon recognized all the kids that came out to advocate for themselves, and encouraged the RMS staff to listen to the students.
- Ms. Pomrink suggested that maybe cell phone privileges be earned as a reward for good behavior, for example, allowing 8<sup>th</sup> graders to have phones on a Friday after a week of good behavior.

**VII.. Q&A Session**

- At the beginning of the meeting, attendees were asked to write any questions down on index cards that they had for the RMS administrators.
- During the Q&A session, Ms. Wood-Powe read the questions out loud, and they were answered by the RMS administrators.
- The questions were as follows:
  - What is the current bathroom policy? (see answer above)
  - What is the best way to give feedback to the school?
    - Either through direct contact with the appropriate department or the grade level administrator; Garcia for 6<sup>th</sup>, Paushter for 7<sup>th</sup>, and McNeal for 8<sup>th</sup>.
  - Why are kids being yelled at by Mr. Mason at lunch?
    - Most likely this has to do with kids not adhering to the new table seating policy (explained above). Dr. McNeal agreed to address the issue with Mr. Mason.
    - Several parents expressed disagreement with the seating policy, saying it was too restrictive and that students should get more privileges as they get older.
  - How do students view their grades?
    - Students can view their grades through google classroom, and parents can check grades through the myMCPS portal.
    - Ms. Kellner is the RMS point of contact for myMCPS portal issues

**IX. Closing Remarks**

- Ms. Simone commended all the students for coming and advocating for themselves.
- Ms. Krimstein suggested that it would be a good idea for the administration to introduce the policies again to students, now that they have been modified.
- Ms. Wood-Powe commended the collaboration of all the staff, parents and students that were at the meeting, and expressed hope that the conversation on important issues would continue to take place in the school community.

**X. Adjournment**

- Ms. Wood-Powe adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Jane Kissel, Secretary

Date: 9/14/17