



GVMS PTO General Meeting 10/6/22 9-10am Hybrid (In Person Library and Zoom)

Attendance in person: Alpa Jani, Roxanne Cockerham, Cristina Hartley, Meenakshi Krishnamurthy, Christine Bradley, Dr. Sharon Cohen, Mary Morelli, Joanne Tidwell, Christina Savino, Dana Marie Harrison, Ameer Feager Davis

Attendance via zoom: Tiana Threadgill, Jasmine Jones, Kelly Hennigan, Kerry Cavalcanto, Tramaine, Vleaman, Amy, Alan Walter

1. Welcome and PTO Board Introductions

Roxanne provided introductions to the current board. If you have any questions, please contact us. 2022-2023 Board is as follows:

- **Tiana Threadgill- Advisor**
- **Alpa Jani and Roxanne Cockerham- Co- Presidents**
- **Cristina Hartley- Vice President**
- **Meenakshi Krishnamurthy- Treasurer**
- **Christine Bradley- Correspondence Secretary**
- **Open Positions- Co Treasurer and Recording Secretary**

Welcome to 2022-2023. We are looking to make it a great year for the kids. Co-treasurer position is currently an open position. Looking for co-treasurer to join with Meena, who is presently working with Tiana until a replacement is found. Recording secretary position is open also. If you are interested in joining the GVMS PTO or volunteering in any capacity email INFO@GVMSPTO.ORG, message on Facebook, or visit our website www.gvmspto.org.

2. MS Updates and Info Sharing

Dr. Souders is not here today. Dr. Cohen, assistant principal, is stepping in today to provide updates. Thank you for generosity for staff and students – putting them first and forefront. Appreciates support.

- Patriot proud started last year – a school wide behavioral approach. Difficult transition from covid to present. Patriot proud uses common language and sets common expectations. Highlighted last year and expanded with posters school-wide reminding students of expectations. Beginning of school year has been fantastic – holding students accountable. Students are given tickets for recognition (kind, right) with brief description of what student is



being recognized for. Collected by grade level and 3 names are pulled and announcement on Fridays to select and give incentive. Tickets are kept and have a larger drawing at end of school year with all names with more significant incentives, which PTO supported. Also added in teachers so students can recognize teachers and staff with description. Pulling three names once a month for teachers/staff recognition. Well received by students and staff. Staff can select students, students can select staff, but students cannot select other students.

- Heritage Fest will be on November 17 at 6:30 pm. Questions about food – unfortunately no food will be permitted. Food becomes too much of a focus and do not want participants only visiting tables for food. Looking forward to the event.
- Question from participant about funding for Patriot Proud? Last year there was extra support for incentives and other funds. Local business donated. The school is good this year from what has been seen for the school budget.

3. PTO Updates (Sept./Oct. Events and Fundraising)

Alpa started with a welcome and thank you for support for PTO.

- The GVMS PTO has started a calendar to list events. Need to finalize items and contacts and will be posted on PTO website. PTO is looking for volunteers to help support events – please let us know if you are able to contribute in any way.
- September events include superintendent meeting (also meeting today) and will be meeting with other schools in district to review initiatives. We will share with this group going forward.
- Teacher appreciation happens every month. Looking forward to support fundraising on Patriot Pride t-shirts and teacher appreciation events.
- Fundraising has a small group of volunteers. Fundraising provides funds/support for teachers/staff and students at GVMS, e.g., covers costs for field trips, etc. Let us know if you have ideas, planning, or can help with fundraising in any way.
- Membership toolkit may have a potential sponsor. If you have already paid fee when signing up for toolkit, you may receive refund or donate money to PTO. Would like to offer these tools to everyone in school. To stay informed, please be sure to sign up for membership toolkit, if you have not already done so. gvmspto.membershiptoolkit.com
- Question about superintendent meetings – Are there notes? How does that information get shared? The notes are not shared publicly. Alpa will ask during the meeting. Follow up from Alpa



- I did ask at the Superintendent Mtg and confirmed: The PKC network and PKC webpage (<https://www.gvsd.org/Domain/42>) is the correct place to go for communications. Tiana says they do not share publicly. Question - Is there a reason for that? There is a PKC (Parent Key Communicator) network– 3 representatives meet with the superintendent regularly. Information is shared on GVSD website with PKC meeting notes. The superintendent meetings with PTO are more for information gathering. PKCs communicate to everyone.

4. PTO Updates (Volunteers and Parent Comments)

Roxanne provided further updates.

- October 2nd was custodial workers day. 8 custodians were given cards and \$10 wawa gift card as thank you for awesome job! PTO added that to our list this year.
- Volunteer recruitment is low. From the volunteer forms, received about a dozen mostly 6th grade parents. We need more volunteers. If you don't want to fill out a volunteer form, just reach out by email, Facebook, etc. If you are able to help in any way, please let us know.
- PKC – Roxanne is on PKC, which meets every 6 weeks. Notes from meetings are published within about a week on GV district website. Roxanne will post on Facebook page to make link available. Roxanne will also give updates. Great first PKC meeting. Three highlights: (1) Speaker Series is partnered with Be a Part of the Conversation again. Comments from parents about digital learning – part of January speaker series. (2) Another about Kids and Cannabis and how to discuss with kids. (3) A new one for mental health first aid training equating to CPR from mental health perspective. How do you recognize signs? Who do you reach out to? Not scheduled yet. Dr. Goffredo asked to reach out to parents about general interest for mental health programming and if preference for weeknight or Saturday session? Is there enough interest? Send an email to Roxanne and she will provide info at next PKC meeting. Generally good response at PKC meeting. Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) – Dr. Wexler is in charge of effort for district. She spoke to team – November audit/review district wide with parents, students, staff with focus groups. More information soon. Part of comprehensive plan commitment to meet all goals. Coordinated by University of Pennsylvania and will come back to district in spring with results/findings.
- PTO meetings will be added to the district calendar. If you subscribed to the district calendar, you will receive information on meetings/events. Roxanne will provide link to add to Google, Outlook, etc.
- Looking for updates/re-vamp for GVMS PTO website (www.gvmspto.org). We would like it to be more usable and friendly. If parent(s) or student(s) with website design experience and could help upgrade website, please reach out to us. Student could possibly receive volunteer hours.



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- Question – Could tech teacher ask students? Middle school or high school student? Either would be fine as long as they know what they are doing and can help us. Mrs. Search is asking NJHS (National Junior Honor Society) students. Will add tech teachers. Dr Souders will add to MS Matters. We are currently hosting website (www.gvmspto.org) on Square Space. Membership toolkit has web hosting capabilities – possible scrap Square Space in future. Mr. Matthew Ellis is advisor for computer science club at High School – contact him as well.
 - Question from Kelly – about current website platforms – currently pay for Square Space. Will consider other options – possibly free options. Need a web developer with expertise. Sugartown has a great website – colorful, friendly, registrations through membership toolkit. Comment - This could be an eagle project for Boy Scouts.
 - Question about cost of Square Space - \$252 for Square Space plus \$450 for Membership toolkit. Need to transfer domain – free for non-profit through Google hosting.
 - Question about utilization/traffic of website. There is a FB page, etc. Question if Middle School PTO needs website at all. Just use FB instead. Response – not everyone uses FB. Comment to check Google analytics. Responses - Need something outside of FB, but perhaps utilize FB more. We are non-profit and are separate from school. We have links to monetary things like Paypal for Just Write a Check, etc. We need more/better information sharing and a more robust website, which is easily maintained. Another reason we need website is corporate matching requires a link to website.

5. Budget Review and Approval

Tiana and Meena review. See separate budget.

- Not going through budget line by line. We have about \$20K currently. We are looking to run a negative budget of \$10K this year. Would like to have \$10K left in bank at end of school year for next school year. Want to be as fiscally responsible as possible while providing support for next year.
- Three columns with budget: (1) 2021-2022 budget; (2) 2021-2022 what was actually spent; and (3) proposed budget for this school year. Still auditing 2021-2022 year so numbers may change slightly because possibly not allocated to correct buckets.
- Directory sales was one source of cash, but projecting to not charge for Membership toolkit any more in order to increase participation. Just write a check budget was previously \$5K, but budget for just write a check \$3500 this year. Some corporations can match a dollar amount.



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- Newly registered for BloomBox for spring fundraiser.
 - \$450 toolkit for directory software may be sponsored.
 - Character counts provides \$25 Barnes and Noble gift cards.
 - Trip sponsorship/teacher funding \$10,500 for those two alone. Trip sponsorship for 7th and 8th grade field trips. Cape Henlopen 7th grade. Amazing race previously 8th. \$3500 to offset costs to parents.
 - Total spend \$17,400.
 - Student of the month – PTO will continue to sponsor and offset costs to school.
 - 6th grade socials – no dances, no field trips for 6th graders. Socials in the past have included capture the flag and virtual bingo. Opportunity for students to get together. Typically host in cafeteria or online. Well received by prior 6th graders.
 - Budget increase uses of cash for accounting, insurance, office. Previously did not carry insurance. We need to carry insurance. Even though we don't sponsor fair, etc. Need to carry to protect board members – E&O (Errors & Omissions) on board members and protect funds in bank account for errors/theft, etc.
 - PTO no longer sponsoring art club but will be covered directly by school now.
 - Teacher funding requests – electronic translators are needed. PTO will assist with and help offset costs of translators. PTO will cover patriot pride t-shirts for all teachers – cost about \$1K. Will likely spend all \$3500 allocated.
 - Fundraising committee – we are all ears and would like to bring in as much money as possible to support all efforts at the middle school. Alpa is steering fundraising. Roxanne is focused on volunteers. Alpa has a list of all ideas and suggestions with a contact person for each. Looking for volunteers to spearhead. Will post list. Last Dine and Donate only received \$18. We need better participation with fundraising.
 - Question - Do we have a Venmo account? We are starting that now. Any non-profit is now permitted to have non-profit Venmo.



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- Question – Do we have homeroom parents? No. Should we have homeroom parents through advocacy? Discussion - We have hardly any volunteers. 6th grade parents are used to homeroom parents in elementary. Volunteer forms filled out previously – different with covid – but volunteers were not allowed to do much. Need to abide by district guidelines. This year is different. If you filled out a volunteer form, Roxanne will provide volunteer opportunities. Cristina needs help for teacher appreciation dinner on Monday November 21st. Parents need clearances to volunteer. Parents need dates – calendar will be sent out/made available shortly. Information will be posted on FB, GVMSPTO.Org website, MS Matters. Trying to get back to a normal cadence with calendar, sign up genius, and other means to communicate information. There is a lot on the schedule.
 - Question – Bus driver appreciation is in February. HS wants to know if we can contribute \$75 to a joint effort. Response - Send email to Alpa and Roxanne. Can discuss at next board meeting. Makes sense to coordinate efforts.
 - Vote on budget raised. Tiana makes a motion to approve budget. Joanne Tidwell seconds. No objections. Budget is approved and adopted.

6. Questions and Comments

- Teacher appreciation dinner will be headed by Cristina Hartley. Question about teacher appreciation lunch. Breakfast appreciation. All appreciation events fall under VP, Cristina Hartley. Everything is on calendar – volunteers are welcome to head any event of interest.
- Question - 6th graders and field trips? Response – 6th graders have not had a field trip historically. Mostly socials.
- Comment – Need help with downstairs in basement – big mess. Request for volunteers and help.

Meeting adjourned at 10:13am.

Upcoming Meetings:

General PTO Meetings (hybrid): 1/5 1pm, 3/2 6:30pm, 5/4 1pm