

## General PTA Meeting Minutes 8.17.21 @ 6:30

### ATTENDANCE

<u>Executive Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Alice Brookner, Co-President	x	
Deanne Uroic, Co-President	x	
Laura Briceno, Secretary	x	
Patrick McGrath, Treasurer	x	
Seth Eisenberg, Parliamentarian	x	
Melissa Bloomfield, VP Communications	x	
Holly Goldberg, VP Education	x	
Heather Stewart, VP Fundraising	x	
Kila Posey, VP Operations	x	
Kelly Collins, VP Parent Involvement	x	
Sharyn Briscoe, Principal	x	

Attendance of general members - 172 as of call to order

Quorum met? (minimum 15) - Yes

**CALL TO ORDER** by Alice Brookner @ 6:56 pm

### **RULES OF MEETING:**

No screen-shots or recording allowed

Introduced new board members.

### **APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**, April 2021

- Motion to approve - Lynley Teras
- Second - Shari Golla & Yukiko Takeuchi
- Approved

## **CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

- Read Mary Lin PTA mission statement: "To make every child's potential a reality by engaging our families and communities to advocate for all children. We want to involve each parent in their child's education. Our goal is not to simply fundraise but to support Mary Lin and our teachers by providing our students with the best learning environment possible."
- Good turn-out at play dates prior to school starting
- School tours happened
- Open house - lots of new members & volunteers
- Teacher lunch after open house hosted by PTA
- Ms. Zubrowski ordered new t-shirts for the staff
- Working on getting room parents set up. Contact presidents if you're interested.
- MASP events over the past several days
  - My After School Program coordinates after-school in several APS schools
  - MASP will remain as the coordinator of MLES after school programs.
  - Deanne read her own statement on MASP: "My After School Program, better known to us as MASP, is an organization that is highly recognized and respected amount the APS cluster schools. Their reputation precedes them which is why we are so excited to have them on board, working to manage and coordinate the program offered from all our wonderful vendors. Currently, there have been no changes made that will affect the children's programming."
  - Statement was read from the owner of MASP: "Our decision to only manage and establish structure, not providing an My After School Program employee on site comes not because of anything in the news media regarding Mary Lin. Let that be clear. We will continue to establish a new structure for extracurricular programming at Mary Lin as we were asked to do. This is a business decision and the impact you will feel from this is little to none. Programs will continue as planned- minus a person being on site that is an employee of My After School Program. Additionally, there is a plan in place to still have that one person on site to help monitor, take attendance and assist with the day-to-day student arrival/ dismissal during Mary Lin Extracurricular Programs. That person will simply not be an employee of My After School Program."

## **PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME**

- COVID updates
  - Everyday is new in contact tracing - spending a lot of time doing contact tracing
  - More kids tested positive or were exposed already this year than all of last year
  - Decisions on close-contacts and quarantining are being made with Fulton Co Board of Health and APS medical staff
  - Covid guidance needs clarifying and should be cleared up at Principals meeting tomorrow
  - Staff is being encouraged to get vaccinated

- High percentage of employees are vaccinated already
  - Distancing and mask-wearing is being pushed by admins and teachers
  - Please make sure masks fit properly so they don't fall down. Try to get masks that have the nose wire because they fit best.
  - Teachers are looking for symptoms and will be proactive to send students to the office
  - Mary Lin has a new nurse this year
  - Due to COVID, APS has a shortage of school nurses, bus drivers, and other staff
  - COVID protocol for parents who suspect their child has COVID, has symptoms, or have privately tested and it was positive -
    - Parents should fill out the self-report form. It's located on the Mary Lin website.
    - You will be contacted with next steps
  - Every Friday Sharyn Briscoe will post surveillance testing numbers - number tested and number positive
  - Quarantine rules for a class only go into effect if protocols aren't being followed
  - To determine whether quarantine happens, the school is looking at things like whether 3-6 ft. was maintained, if kids were wearing or not wearing their masks, where students were for specials, bus riding, and eventually Rocket Power Hour where students may change classrooms.
  - Will class quarantine if a teacher tests positive? Not necessarily. Depends on spacing and other factors
  - MLES is utilizing Zoom buddies in lieu of a virtual option
  - Lunch outside - not enough staff to make this happen. Taking parent volunteers to make this happen. Volunteers will need a background check.
  - Masking at recess - snack and recess were to be mask breaks, but school is reinstituting masks wearing during recess to help minimize potential exposures
  - All COVID protocols will apply to after school activities
- Updates on secondary effects related to federal lawsuit
    - Parents have had security concerns due to unwanted calls and emails to the school. A record of all calls and emails of this nature is being kept and forwarded to the head of police for APS. The building is remaining secure.
    - Sharyn Briscoe is receiving many more emails than usual (mainly COVID-related emails). Please be patient if you're expecting an email response.
    - Thank you for supporting the school
  - If you have supplies to donate, let the school know via email what the supplies are and the school will determine where they can be used
  - Parents should sign up for Remind app for bus updates

**CINS UPDATE -Annsley Klehr**

- Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools (CINS) is a Panel of Midtown Cluster representatives who work to advocate for schools via grant writing, community engagement, etc.
- Consider joining CINS events
- Contact Annsley with any questions about CINS or if you'd like to join

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

- 3 links to documents were posted in the Zoom chat for review:
  - Balance sheet
  - Profit & loss sheet
    - donations down due to covid and events that were cancelled
    - supported by the ML Foundation
    - teacher allotments still went out
  - Budget Sheet for this year - This can change throughout the year
  - Question: How difficult is it to budget for a loss? - This is not common, but we have a cushion built into the budget. And we have room to not spend as much as we usually do.

## **VICE PRESIDENTS' UPDATES**

### **Communications - Melissa Bloomfield**

- New look to Rocket Blast
- If you need to sign up for the Rocket Blast, sign up on the school's website

### **Education - Holly Goldberg**

- Extra-curricular program (formerly known as LEEP) - has started. Holly listed all the vendors/activities/classes to choose from
- Registration started 8/1
- Classes start 9/15
- Most classes are completely full, but there are still about 6-8 classes still available
- Fall Fest in Candler Park is on the schedule for Oct 2-3. Bounce houses are still planned. Masks will be required as well as strict limits on the number of kids allowed at one time. We need more volunteers than usual to make this happen. Look for a Sign-Up Genius in September. Linapalooza contestants can perform at Fall Fest.

### **Fundraising - Heather Stewart**

- We had our first spirit-wear sale which just closed
- There are several Dine-Outs scheduled already
- The School Partner campaign starts this week. If you or someone you know would like to donate, let Heather know

### **Operations - Kila Posey**

- Not much to report for operations at this time
- Looking at grants and awards for PTA meeting attendance

### **Parent Involvement - Kelly Collins**

- The Thanksgiving food drive is the next Parent Involvement event. We partner with Grady Cares on that. Look for info in late October/early November in the Rocket Blast for info on this.
- Look for a survey in an upcoming Rocket Blast for parents on what type of parent social events everyone might like

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Approve 2021-22 Budget
  - Motion to approve - Kelly Collins
  - Second - Yukiko Takeuchi
  - Vote to approve budget
  - Budget Approved
  - Question on budget in chat: What is the diff b/n donating to PTA v. Rocket Fund? How is the money spent in both cases? Sharyn Briscoe will address at a later time.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Foundation announcement - The Foundation is a non-profit organization that raises funds for teacher resources that the district does not cover. Air purifiers and filters, professional development, enrichment materials, etc.
  - 125k goal for the year. \$200/student to get to goal
  - \$150 donation gets you a yard sign
  - Email Amanda Rhein with questions - [amandarhein@hotmail.com](mailto:amandarhein@hotmail.com)
- Go Team - officers not yet selected
  - GO Team is comprised of parents elected by parents, staff elected by staff, and appointees
  - They look at the school improvement plan, priorities, etc., and decide how to align daily practices to follow that plan
  - They can call on the Foundation to help pay for resources, trainings, etc
  - GO Team members are 2 year terms
- Safe Routes to School Updates
  - Join SRTS committee if you'd like to help with walk & bike to school days.
  - Park & walk parents should park on Euclid, not Oakdale if they are picking up at the back door (grades 3-5)
  - We need volunteer crossing guards
  - If you'd like to join the SRTS committee and can't come to the meeting and/or you'd like to volunteer crossing guard, look for Laura Briceno's email in the next Rocket Blast.
- A statement was read regarding the federal lawsuit. The same statement was read at the most recent board meeting on August 12th, 2021 and no issues were raised during the board meeting on this statement.

“We wanted to address the open Federal complaint involving APS and Mary Lin Elementary. Alice and I have spent the week performing our due diligence at both the Local and State levels. The Georgia PTA has determined that there is no direct involvement of the Mary Lin Elementary PTA in this private legal matter. In reliance on the advisement from the Georgia PTA, the Mary Lin PTA Board intends to remain neutral and impartial in the matter. Georgia PTA has also advised that each Board member will need to refrain from making spoken or written comments that pertain to the open Federal investigation and will not speak directly or indirectly to any member of the Press, as a representative of the Mary Lin PTA Board. It has also been determined that, at this time, neither party’s position on the Board has been compromised and will therefore continue to serve on the Board in their current elected or appointed capacity.”

The floor opened for comments/questions on this statement and the related matter:

- How does a board member who already spoke publicly on this matter, not jeopardize his/her position on the PTA board? As long as statements are made as individuals and not as a member or board member of PTA, they are free to do that and does not jeopardize their position
- Has the board met to discuss the removal per the bylaws? The board received a written request for removal. That request was withdrawn, so there is no need to meet
- Is there a conflict-of-interest policy for directors/how can we implement one? There are local, state, and national bylaws for PTA. State and national bylaws are included in our local bylaws. There are sections on conflict of interest. Bylaws are available to review.
- Can the process of removal begin again with another written request? The removal process is in the bylaws, Article 9. The removal policies are described there. Must start with a written request, which can be an email
- How is the board remaining neutral if there is a member of the board that has a vested interest in the outcome? The Mary Lin PTA board is receiving advisement from the GA PTA. The federal case is between an individual and APS, it does not involve the PTA. At this time there’s not involvement between the PTA and the lawsuit.
- Can anyone address whether the school is in an open investigation or if the Department of Ed’s Office of Civil Rights is determining whether to open an investigation & given the neutrality of PTA, can we amend that language to reflect whether we’re in an active investigation or not? The PTA wrote its statement on the matter based on information it had at the time, but the statement can be amended in the future based on new information.
- Why is it necessary to play this out in the media? PTA is not involved in the federal investigation or the complaint, so the PTA can’t respond to that.
- We can amend the PTA statement on this matter if and when necessary.
- Statement made by a member: This issue should go through the courts. She disagrees with the removal of a board member.
- Where is the GA PTA conflict of interest provision? It’s in the national bylaws

- Does the PTA have any plans to keep us apprised of any additional safety concerns or measures? PTA recognizes that safety can be an issue and the PTA's statement was made based on the situation at that time. The PTA board is in contact with the school regarding safety frequently. Sharyn Briscoe reiterated that the front office is fielding unsavory calls. The calls and emails have dwindled. Head of APS police is notified each time. At this time, he does not believe there is a safety threat.
  - What else can we do as a community or through the PTA to support Sharyn Briscoe and the staff? PTA will remain neutral. Members can voice their opinions as parents, not as representatives of the PTA.
  - An excerpt of a longer statement was read by a member representing a group of black parents in support of Sharyn Briscoe. She posted the full statement in the Zoom chat.
  - Is there something we can do to help morale of teachers and staff? Every parent and member can support as they wish. One big goal of PTA as an organization is to support teachers and make them feel appreciated and supported.
  - Can we do a special campaign for teacher appreciation/morale boosting through the PTA at this time? This was already addressed
  - If PTA has a stance of neutrality, what is the best avenue for supporting the teachers and staff. Sharyn Briscoe, the faculty, and staff are operating undeterred, regardless of morale. Faculty and staff are focused on the goals of education and the children.
  - Room parents will take up donations for classroom teachers, but also support staff and faculty. Support could be made in donations to teachers in that way.
  - Everyone is urged to continue coming to meetings and stay involved with PTA
  - A request was made to repost and read the following comment: "On behalf of the Mary Lin teachers, I would like to express how hurt we have been to see our school on the national and local news. It has caused discomfort to receive hateful and threatening emails and has been deflating to our spirit. Thank you for all the outpouring of support from our parents and community."
  - It was clarified that the statement of neutrality that was read previously is the position of the board, and the board is not speaking on behalf of general membership regarding neutrality.
- An Inman Park parent asked what is happening with redistricting? Discussions on redistricting are happening at the district level within the Midtown Cluster team. The district will make their decision on what they will do. Sharyn Briscoe is not personally involved, nor can she affect the outcome.

## **ADJOURN**

- Motion to adjourn - Yukiko Takeuchi
- Second - Sarah-Nell Walsh
- Meeting adjourned @ 8:36