

PTA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
December 6, 2023
Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Michael Wasko
Vanessa Wolsky
Aaron Wasserman
Lisa Bomengo
Carmen Camean
Roberto Camean
Darrin Stark
Michael Anderson
George Dakak
Maria Carrell
Chris Kelly
Tom Quirk
Linda Fritschy-Oakes
Christina Cronkite
Marie-Ann Arcuri

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- 1) Welcome
 - a. Mr. Wasko, Superintendent of Schools, welcomed everyone to the meeting.
 - b. Mr. Ziegler, MJS Assistant Principal and Supervisor of Music, introduced Mr. Erhard, MJS Chorus Teacher, and the 6th Grade Chorus for a special music performance.

- 2) District Winter Concerts
 - a. Mr. Wasko shared that Winter Concerts are upcoming and that the dates have been posted on the District Calendar.

- 3) BOE Election Updates
 - a. Mr. Wasko shared that three candidates were elected and will be sworn in at the January 4, 2024 Board of Education Re-Organizational Meeting.
 - b. The newly elected candidates include Chris Mattesich, Bill McCabe, and Michelle Stricchiola.

- 4) Enrollment/Staffing
 - a. Enrollment
 - i. Mr. Wasko provided updates on the current enrollments in each of the schools.

1. BMS- 302
 2. MTV- 265
 3. SDS- 238
 4. MJS- 425
 - ii. Mr. Wasko shared that we have received some additional enrollments from the hotels in town and that there is some fluidity with the numbers.
 1. These numbers are impacted by the affordable housing shortage.
 - iii. Mr. Wasko will continue working with the town to monitor the continued development and their impact on enrollment in the district.
 - b. Staffing
 - i. Mr. Wasko shared that the district is continuing to look for bus drivers and that we are continuing to utilize contracted drivers
 - ii. The only tenure-track position in the district is the part-time Contemporary Art & Design position at MJS.
- 5) Safe Return to School Plan, December 2023
- a. Mr. Wasko shared that the plan needs to be Board approved every six months and is posted online on the district website. The current plan that is posted on the website was updated on June 13, 2023. The updated plan will be Board approved at the upcoming meeting in December. There have been no updates to the plan aside from the updating of the date.
- 6) Preparations for the 2024-2025 School Year
- a. Update provided by Mrs. Wolsky on the budget for the 2024-2025 school year.. The administrative team is working to finalize and submit their budget proposals. Individual budget meetings with the schools/departments will be scheduled in the coming weeks.
 - b. Mr. Wasko shared that Kindergarten registration will be taking place soon. Depending on the number of students who register, it can impact scheduling and the number of sections offered at each school.
- 7) Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC Monitoring)
- a. Mr. Wasko provided an update on the process. In November, we had our facilities tour with Karen Dunn, the Executive County Business Official. The feedback we received was positive and she was pleased with her visit. The administrative team is working to review the indicators for the District Performance Review and compile evidence for submission.
- 8) Curriculum Updates - Aaron Wasserman
- a. Mr. Wasserman provided the community with the notifications of the Title I funding and how the allocations are being used.
 - b. Mr. Wasserman provided an update on curriculum initiatives and highlighted the recent technology presentation at the Board of Education meeting conducted by our Education Technology Specialists/Computer/Technology Teachers. One of

those presenters, Michele Pratola, will be presenting at Caldwell University STEM Conference in March. Mr. Wasserman also highlighted many of the ongoing professional development being provided in the district to address student achievement, including math coaching, LLI training, and BAS testing. In conclusion, Mr. Wasserman pointed out that Friday, January 12, 2024, and Friday, February 15, 2024 will be early dismissal days for students and that the district staff will have professional development in the afternoon.

9) Recreation Updates

- a. Tom Quirk from the Hanover Township Recreation Department provided an update. The winter sports season is just getting underway and there is a continued need for coaches and assistant coaches. Mr. Quirk highlighted the annual Winter Wonderland event, which is taking place at the Community Center the first weekend in December. Mr. Quirk concluded his report with an update on the middle school Ski Club. At this time, the club is full and has 90 middle school students registered.

10) PTA/School Updates

- a. Regional High School School District - Maria Carrell and Chris Kelly
 - i. Maria Carrell provided an update on the projects taking place at Whippany Park High School that were part of the referendum that had recently passed. To date, phase I, which was focused on roofing, has finished. Phase II will be starting soon. Mrs. Carrell also provided an update on the upcoming scheduling process. This year, for the first time since the impact of Covid, the high school guidance department will be meeting in-person with our 8th grade students and assisting them with scheduling. Mrs. Carrell concluded her report by sharing information about their dual-credit course offerings and partnerships with area colleges and universities. Mr. Kelly shared information regarding student involvement in activities this fall. Over 80% of the students were involved in a variety of afterschool activities. The Whippany Park Winter Formal was well attended and included over 400 students in attendance.

In response, Mr. Wasko took time to highlight the connections and partnerships with the high school including the marching band assembly, the Pride and Passion Concert, the Junior Achievement partnership with the elementary schools, and the Interact Club involvement with the MJS homework club.

- b. Salem Drive School - Roberto Camean and Marie-Ann Arcuri
 - i. Mr. Camean highlighted the character education initiative running in all of the elementary schools, specifically the "Souper" Bowl Food Drive.

- ii. Mrs. Arcuri shared that the SDS PTA has been busy preparing for concerts and decorating at the school. Additionally, through the Jaguar Generosity Program, they have been providing support to the SDS families who are in need this holiday season. Finally, Mrs. Arcuri discussed how the PTA is supporting the staff with Workout Wednesdays and various staff luncheons.
- c. Bee Meadow School - Darrin Stark and Lynda Fritschy-Oakes
 - i. Mr. Stark focused his update on the partnerships each of our elementary schools have with community organizations, including Junior Achievement, Barclays, and the Hanover Township Police Department L.E.A.D. program. Mr. Stark also provided updates on the outdoor classroom and InView Testing for the 3rd graders.
 - ii. Mrs. Fritschy-Oakes discussed the holiday shop that was happening at BMS. She also shared some upcoming events, including an author visit in February, the BINGO for Books program, prepping for Super Saturday, and the Benevolent Bees program to support the BMS families who are in need.
- d. Mountview Road School - Carmen Cemean and Christine Conkrite
 - i. Mrs. Cemean provided an update on the upcoming holiday season and the concerts/performances taking place in each of the elementary schools.
 - ii. Mrs. Cronkite highlighted some of the events that were scheduled or that were upcoming, including a scavenger hunt, a magic show, the Paint & Sip event, an ice cream day for students and the luncheon for staff to celebrate the end of Marking Period 1.
- e. Memorial Junior School - Michael Anderson
 - i. Mr. Anderson provided an update on character education initiatives at MJS, an assembly on Vaping for students and parents that is being sponsored by the Hanover Township Substance Awareness Council, and the upcoming TREP\$ Marketplace.
 - ii. Mr. Anderson also highlighted information from the PTA, which focused on a variety of fundraising activities. These activities included the PTA Book Fair, the Winter Activewear Sale, and a fundraiser event at Whippany Pizzeria.

11) Public Relations

- a. Mr. Wasko highlighted items that we included as part of PTA/School updates, including our ongoing partnerships with Whippany Park High School, Hanover Township Police Department, the Barclays Corporation, and the Hanover Rotary.

12) Looking Ahead

- a. Mr. Wasko provided some important events and dates that are forthcoming including:
 - i. Board of Education Meeting on December 12, 2023
 - 1. Will include music performances by district students and recognition for Board of Education members.
 - ii. Board of Education Reorganizational Meeting on January 4, 2024
 - iii. Board of Education Meeting on January 24, 2024 (Tentative)

13) "For the Good of the Order"

- a. Mr. Wasko concluded the meeting by providing well wishes for the upcoming holidays and a reminder about notifications in the event of inclement weather or emergency closings.

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 14, 2024.