

**Sequoyah Elementary School  
PTA General Membership Meeting  
Tuesday October 6, 2015 7pm**

**Attendance** (23 people based on sign in sheet)

Tina Webb	Stephanie Strahan	Dr. Jasper	Carrie Zimmerman
Sandra Jose	Vilma Duran	Jen Fosk	Narhay Johnson
Taline Diarbi	Sandy Walsh	Peter Ryba	Doris Ryba
Robin Smithgall	Tracy Moriarty	Jean-Yves Van Halle	Mose Miguel Gonzalez
Monas Kpakpa	Maria Bing	Alade Abiola	Elizabeth Conti
John Moriarty	Francesca Connetti	Ms. Cohen	

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Tina Webb, PTA President. Tina made introductions for the current PTA board and all attendees made introductions as well. Ms. Cohen, first grade team leader was present on behalf of the staff.

**Approval of Minutes**

Two meeting minutes were presented to be approved. The first meeting minutes is from May 5, 2015 and the second meeting minutes is from June 5, 2015. Doris Ryba motioned to approve both minutes and Sandra Walsh seconded it.

**Administration Report**

Dr. Jasper welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that she will look into providing a translator for the next PTA meeting on November 3rd if needed.

Dr. Jasper discussed a new reading program called Ready Common Core that she incorporated in our school very recently.

- Teachers of 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders who teach reading language arts in their classes chose a group of students from their class to work with in regards to this program.
- These children's outcomes were measured over time and very recent data shows that the academic progress in reading has improved greatly for all students.
- The MCPS has recently heard about this program being introduced in our school as well as the seen the data and has sent the MCPS director of curriculum Nikki Hazel to our school to observe.
- The program is a complex program and is not easy to execute, however, the Sequoyah staff is willing to do it as well as the Kindergarten and first grade teachers.

Dr. Jasper discussed Sequoyah's current enrollment.

- We currently have a decrease in the amount of students at 385 from 483 students and the reason for the decline is due to a number of houses being torn down in the Gaithersburg area.
- There is speculation that more houses might be torn down in the Gaithersburg community and therefore people are hesitating to move in the area.
- Two staff positions were lost due to the decrease in enrollment.

- There could be a possibility of decreased paraeducator hours due to the decrease in enrollment.
- Sequoyah is a Title I school, focus school with smaller classes and more paraeducators. This is an advantage and benefits students all around.
- This is a great community, with great people, friends and a good place to be.
- Families from the new community next door, The Preserve at Rock Creek, need to be better informed about our school and not rely on the computerized statistics as Sequoyah is a wonderful place and they need to come and see for themselves.

Open House is on Monday October 12.

- Dr. Jasper encouraged everyone to come and visit their children's class as well as to visit any of the other classes as this is a great opportunity to see the various instructions and how great of a school Sequoyah is.

Dr. Jasper was very excited to introduced our new NAACP representative, Alade Abiola.

- We have not had a NAACP rep in years.
- Mrs. Alade will represent all students at Sequoyah especially ones who are underrepresented at being successful.
- Mrs. Alade is very excited to work with our students and feels she will benefit many students.

### **Staff Report**

Ms. Cohen has been elected as the faculty liaison by the teachers for this school year and she will deal with instructional issues within the school.

- Unions reps meet with Dr. Jasper once a month.
- Halloween was a topic that was discussed at their last meeting. Ms. Cohen said that about 2-3 students from each class do not participate in the Halloween festivities that we have at Sequoyah and they would like to include all.
- An idea is to have a Fall Festival to replace the Halloween parties and the name "Halloween" instead of the costumes etc. to have cultural inclusion.
- Although the idea came about very close to Halloween this year, Ms. Cohen is putting this suggestion out for next year.
- Dr. J said that Fall is harvesting time and all celebrate that.
- Tina said that having a Fall Festival to replace the Halloween traditions would be a huge transition for our community. It's also way too late to consider for this year and that the board will discuss the idea for next year.
- It was suggested that since the issue is such a big decision, it should be decided by the whole community. We should consider doing a survey monkey (after Halloween) to get some feedback.
- Several parents agreed that they would not like for any child to be left out of the festivities and all should be included.

### **Officer Reports**

Tina Webb- President

- Reported that after much discussion with Dr. J and the board, there will be no after school clubs this year in the fall due to the bell times changing to later and because the children will in the dark during bus pick up and drop off.

- After school clubs will pick up again in the spring sometime in late March.
- Tina also reported that the staff requested that International night be moved to the winter time.
- No more market day. The company that governs market day got bought out by another company who has now eliminated the program.
- We have discussed new ideas that will be presented to replace the market day fundraiser. One idea is a used clothing and toy drive. Company will pay us per pound of bagged clothing or toy items that we have. This fundraiser could raise at most \$1-2000. Tina will get more info if we are interested in this.

Stephanie Strahan- Present Elect

- Welcomed and thanked everyone to attending the meeting today.
- Stephanie encouraged all to get involved in the PTA and to not hesitate to contact her with any questions.

Francesca Canetti- VP of Fundraising

- Briefly talked about the book fair which starts October 9th.
- Will help look into the clothing drive fundraiser as well.
- Presented the idea of a shoe fundraiser which is similar to the clothing/toy drive. Company will pay per pound of shoes that we have.
- October 27 will be our restaurant night at Mama Lucia's restaurant from 4-9pm. Flyer will be in the Wed folder next week. They pay 10% of the entire night sales. The flyer needs to be presented.
- We will continue the brick fundraiser which began last year. Brick fundraiser was a big one last year. Francesca would like to push sales for Christmas time by creating a flyer or a video to present to the community for holiday sales and then do another push in the spring.
- Jean-Yves will discuss the IPAD fundraiser. You could buy tickets sold at various events for this or you can get free tickets with your paid PTA membership.
- Box Tops is another fundraiser we are implementing again.

Kelli Markham- VP of Programs

- PTA fundraisers support our various programs such as after school clubs, art fever, cultural arts, and international night.
- Fall dance is coming up in a couple of weeks, and Tam Miller is the chair for this but is looking for a co-chair. DJ will be All for one.
- Some programs still do not have chairs. We need more people to get involved. We have a volunteer form.
- We would like for a parent volunteer to be a liaison between the PTA and the room parents so we can bridge the gap. The purpose is to better communicate to all.
- Dr. J would like to know which classrooms still need a parent for this role. Teachers could make a personal contact with certain parents to be in this role.

Taline Diarbi- Secretary

- Everyone will be getting paper copies of the Wednesday folders for the remainder of the year.
- These copies will be given to the youngest in family.

Jean Yves- Treasurer

- Budget was ready in June however, certain modifications occurred which needs to be discussed and re-approved.
- Ready Common Core expense was added on, Market day was taken out, fall after school clubs budget item was changed, IPAD fundraiser was added.
- Book fair fundraiser numbers and brick fundraiser numbers were slightly but conservatively increased to balance the budget.

- It was suggested the Ipad fundraiser should not be combined with the membership incentive on the budget and should be separated.
- Stephanie said that this does not change the numbers on the budget in regards to approving it.
- Question was addressed about the brick fundraiser budget amount and if it's a realistic number considering that this year is not an anniversary year for Sequoyah. (last spring we celebrated 25yrs)
- Sandy Walsh motioned to approve the modified budget and Stephanie Strahan seconded it.

### **Committee Reports**

Stephanie Strahan is in charge of the book fair. We will have two book fairs for the year.

- It starts a day earlier this year with set up on Thursday and preview on Friday.
- Sales will be from Monday-Thursday night during the dance.
- We will continue with the book raffles and a general raffle with additional items.
- All for books drive is a drive to raise money to buy books for our school. The class which collects the most money will win a pizza party. Scholastic will also take the amount of money we raised and then will donate to other organizations to promote reading and literacy for students who don't have access to books.
- Teacher preview will be on Friday after school. Mocktails will be served. They will have a board with their wish lists on it.
- We still need volunteers for the book fair, please check the sign up genius.
- All sales are tax exempt as we the PTA runs the the book fair.

Sandy Walsh who is in charge of membership reported that 96 members have joined the PTA so far and 23 of those are Sequoyah staff.

- These numbers are about the same as last year.
- Membership forms are in both English and Spanish.
- We will have more membership forms available at the Fall Dance coming up.

Sandy Walsh also reported on the directory.

- Every family member will receive one regardless if they are PTA members or not.
- Sandy has gotten about \$1000 in ad sales from local businesses.
- Printing will cost right around \$1000 in black and white.
- Tina said this is a program and not a fundraiser.
- Flyers for directory ads have been in the Wednesday folder for several weeks now.

We have no new business. John Moriarty motioned to adjourn the meeting and Kelli Markham seconded.  
Meeting ended at 8:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Taline Diarbi  
SES PTA Secretary 2015-2016