

Fairland Elementary School PTA
General Membership Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 6, 2016
7:00 PM, Media Center

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Secretary Jamie Cook. In attendance were: Jamie Cook, Principal Lakeisha Lashley, Assistant Principal Stephanie Spencer, Vidhya Vembar, and Jeanette Proudfoot.

PTA update

Jamie Cook provided a brief update on PTA events.

- The Genevieve's fundraiser was a success, as was the Fall Book Fair.
- The PTA provided a Thanksgiving luncheon to staff, and the staff showed their appreciation by creating and signing a nice thank-you poster.
- Claudia Silbergliitt is working on the yearbook. This year, it will feature 5th graders' art on the cover. She will be selling spots in the yearbook as a fundraiser to subsidize the cost for 5th graders. She will also be arranging a signing party in the spring after yearbook delivery.
- Boxtop store is going well. Donations of small prizes are welcome.
- The next PTA meeting, scheduled for February 7, will focus on community discussion of topics of interest.

Principal's Report

Principal Lakeisha Lashley reported that this is a relatively quiet period at school, in the middle of a marking period.

- Inview testing is going on now for all 2nd graders and for other identified children.
- The new superintendent's budget for the 2017-18 school year will be released on Tuesday at the Board of Education meeting.
- Movie night sponsored by the drama club has been moved to December 16

Community Comments:

The idea of a school garden, which was first raised at the October PTA meeting, was revisited. Principal Lashley suggested contacting Oakland Terrace, which has a garden that is also used by classroom teachers. Jeanette Proudfoot agreed to continue investigating the possibility of a garden.

Guest speaker

The PTA welcomed **Phil Andrews**, Director of Crime Prevention Initiatives, Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, who presented information about cybersafety and keeping kids safe on the Internet. Highlights of his presentation are on the following page. Regarding Fairland, Principal Lashley said that incidents of cyberbullying or Internet safety are uncommon. She also said that MCPS elementary school principals are opposing a potential change in policy that would allow elementary students to have cell phones, citing the potential privacy and bullying problems with cameras and videos that this might cause as one reason.

The General Membership Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Highlights from Cybersafety Presentation:

- Important lessons to teach your child about the internet:
 - Assume anything you post is public and can last forever
 - Don't post any photos online that you wouldn't want to see on the school bulletin board
 - A bad digital reputation can follow you forever (think about future colleges and employers)
 - Think twice before you post once
 - Before you post, you have the power to control your information; after you post, the power is in somebody else's hands
 - Don't post or e-mail when angry or upset
- Cyberbullying is illegal and taken seriously in Maryland
 - Grace's Law, passed in 2013, addresses indirect bullying online (tweeting about someone, rumormongering) as well as direct bullying (e-mailed threats)
 - Cyberbullying is underreported and can have a worse impact on children than face-to-face bullying
 - Teach your child: if they receive something that could be bullying somebody (rumors, negative comments), they should not forward it or they will be part of the problem
 - If your child is cyberbullied, they should tell somebody and the school should be informed
- Your child should have trusted adults that they can talk to
 - Parents, teachers, school counselors are available
 - Teach children about real friends vs. online friends, and not to automatically trust people they meet online
- Don't allow your child to access the Internet unsupervised
 - Put the computer in a public part of your home
 - Make a contract with the child about their use of the Internet, outlining expectations and requirements, with monthly followups
 - Consider Internet safety similar to car safety and party/alcohol safety – if you wouldn't give your child unrestricted access to those things, you shouldn't give them unrestricted Internet access
- Online risks to be aware of:
 - Revealing too much information (e.g., your child should not be sharing name, age, birthday, address, phone number, schedule, school)
 - Online predators
 - Sexting
 - Cyberbullying
 - Inappropriate material (e.g., pornography)
 - Spam
- Netsmartz.org is a source of further information and videos you can show your child to help them understand Internet risks