

**Gayhead Elementary PTA
General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, January 17, 2007**

The General Membership meeting was called to order at 7:07pm by Mary Jean Staudohar, President.

Recording Secretary: Noreen Healey

Quorum Established

1. Welcome (President, Mary Jean Staudohar)

Mary Jean Staudohar welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked everyone for coming. Mary Jean introduced Joanne Sereda, WCSD Director of Human Resources who came to speak about the process for interviewing Principal candidates.

2. Joanne Sereda, WCSD Director of Human Resources

Joanne has spent 2 years in Human Resources, and 20 years in the WCSD. This is her 6th principal interview committee. As part of running the principal interview committee, she is asked to seek parent input, and is why she is here tonight.

Here are points that were made during her speech:

- The decision was made to assign and keep Mr. Downer at Gayhead for the entire school year, but we cannot keep him here.
- Per the teachers and administrators contracts, the position must be internally posted first.
- 4 assistant admin in the district responded
- The interview committee will interview internal candidates and make recommendations to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will decide whether to open a further committee for external candidates.
- The interview committee includes the following people: an elementary principal, a JHS principal, an Instructional coordinator, staff and teachers of GH (including Michelle Ross, Mr. Nurre, Ms. Gilman, Mrs. Carroll, Mrs. Banda), a teaching assistant (Judy Boe), GH Principal Secy (Mrs. Gabriel), 2 parents (Mary Jean Staudohar and Beth Roth)
- The internal interviews are scheduled for 2/14 and 2/15
- An ideal candidate would be a sitting elementary principal with a successful career, however that's hard to find, or an assistant principal, of which there are not many.
- Of the 3 placed last year, all 3 were assistant principals from middle or HS
- We shouldn't discount a candidate just because of no admin experience

- If the committee, superintendent, and board of ed decide to go external, you cannot go back to your internal candidates if you don't like your external candidates
- By the way, Myers Corners is also posting for a Principal
- A lot of the admin turnover is due to retirement, not due to leaving for higher paying jobs
- The committee searches for someone who really wants to stay
- The internal candidate pool has improved recently due to internal programs in the district including a shadowing program (where a future admin person may follow/shadow a current principal), and also open discussion forums for the assistant principals to help them discuss issues and to better prepare
- Administrators do not get tenure if they had tenure as a teacher (there's a 3 year probation)
- The Superintendent can also elect to transfer another WCSD elementary principal from another school
- The minimum qualification is that the candidate be a certified administrator (plus they also look for administrator experience, especially because our school is so large)
- Timing of interviews
 - At the end of the 2nd day, the committee makes its recommendations (the committee works like a jury..they discuss as a group and then make a decision)
 - Then, 2nd level interviews are done by Central Office Staff
 - Then, a one on one interview with the Superintendent
 - Then, a Board of Ed final decision
 - Overall it could take a couple of months
 - The committee would be reconvened if they have to go with external candidates (i.e. if internal candidates did not work out)
 - If an internal candidate is chosen, that person will most likely have time to shadow Mr. Downer before the end of the 06-07 year.
 - If a candidate is not found, they would go with another interim Principal for the next school year
- The following are the items that were brought up by parents as things to look for in a new principal, and concerns they have about the school:
 - Lack of communication seems to be an all-around issue in the school ... parents - teachers - staff - PTA
 - Would a new principal possibly come in and switch the house plan again? It was noted that house plan decisions are not made unilaterally by the Principal; there are more involved like the Superintendent, etc.
 - The principal should be someone who is **approachable** (welcoming)
 - Should be willing to put time in to the various after-school events....someone who is **visible**
 - Should be someone who supports **heavy parent involvement**

- Someone who will **really get to know the students**
- Someone who will be able to **make a tough decision** and stick by it
- Someone who will continue to support **the various PTA programs**
- Some other questions to ask may be:
 - what would your school look like in 3 years?
 - How would you go about assessing the programs at our school?
 - How would you implement/execute your plan for our school?
- If anyone has questions about the interview committee, you can contact Joanne Sereda at joanne.sereda@wappingerschools.org

3. Principal's Report - Mr. Bruce Downer

Mr. Downer noted he's been working on how to better utilize the support staff for struggling students. As soon as the end of January, he is aiming to make changes to the 1st and 2nd grades for comprehensive literacy/reading program. (& target 3rd & 4th next) Early intervention with young struggling students is key to success. Currently, these students receive support staff instruction approx 2-3 times per cycle in a 1:10 teacher/student ratio. He is trying to make changes so that these students can receive instruction approx 5-6 times per cycle and reduce the ratio to 1:5 or less. He feels this would have a very solid impact on the kids. It gives double direct instruction for those students struggling. He has support from central office, and from the teachers.

Mr. Downer is asking the district for another librarian, (Library 1ce per 6 day cycle is not enough) and another reading teacher (retention rates are too high)

4. Reading & Approval of Minutes (President, Mary Jean Staudohar)

The minutes from the November 15, 2006 General Membership meeting were read, and approved.

5. Treasurer's Report (Sue Kline, Treasurer)

- The PTA additional fundraisers were broken out separately so you can see how they performed. They brought in an additional \$1,622.89
- We still have to pay the fall fundraiser company (that why the number looks big)
- The PTA donated \$200 to the district Science Fair

6. Correspondence (Corresponding Sec'y, Lee Bukofsky)

- Received a letter from Mrs. Maiello thanking everyone
- Received a dozen or so thank yous for the staff lunch given by the PTA right before the break (the week that Mr. Hoke and a TA passed away)

General:

Chairpeople are still needed for

Hospitality -to set up the food/refreshments for PTA meetings

Grizzly Growl -the periodic school/pta newsletter. Please contact Lisa Fusco if you're interested.

7. VP Communication (Lisa Fusco)

- A chair is still needed for the Grizzly Growl newsletter. Please contact Lisa Fusco at Rafmonte@aol.com if you're interested. Submissions for the second edition of the Grizzly Growl should be sent to Lisa by end of 2/07.
- No TV week will be 4/23-4/29/07 chaired by Joanne Iannacce
- Senior Breakfast will be 4/18 and 4/19, co-chaired by Kim Barnett and Kristen Whelan
- Trish Watt/yearbook, is still looking for student pictures for the following classes: Ms. Hannah, Mrs. Dixon, Mrs. Hemmer, Ms. Jankowski

8. VP Administration (Rebecca Yeager)

Membership:

- The PTA member tally is at 519 members out of the 640 goal.
- Approximately 70 families opted to pay \$2 for school directory only, instead of joining the PTA.
- Will send out a followup to those who haven't joined
- We need more teachers...a letter will go out to them soon
- The goal of 640 members seems a little aggressive

Other:

- Staff appreciation will be scheduled soon (approx 1st week of May)

9. Events

PARP (Lisa Bald)

They still need help with decorations. The Wellness committee has been a great group to team up with on this. Dates will soon be set.

Career Day

Michelle Merritt noted it will be run the same format as last year. Each speaker talks to a class for about 15 minutes. Notes will be going out soon.

Spelling Bee

Letter is being sent home tomorrow. The dates are 1/25 preliminary bee, 1/31 final bee, and 2/1 snow day. (the bee will only be at local level; sponsorship beyond local level was not secured)

10. SLT

- No report

11. Council

- Beth Brofman noted that the Council would like input from our PTA as to what concerns/programs/items we would like the Council to get involved in on our behalf
- Also, it was noted that a letter was sent by PTA Council to the NYS Education Department regarding the lag between testing and results. This letter seems to address the same concerns raised in last PTA meeting. A copy has been distributed at this meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Beth Brofman that a letter from the GH PTA to the NYS Education Dept re: timing of testing results is no longer needed since the PTA Council has already sent one expressing the same concerns. The motion was seconded. The motion was passed.

12. General

- A copy of the SED letter regarding testing results has been distributed.
- Next General Membership meeting will be on 2/23/07 at 9:30am
- Workers are needed for the polls - budget vote 5/15 \$9/hr 7am-9pm
- Volunteer judges for Science Fair needed 3/10 8am-11am 298-5000 x174

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.