

PTA Meeting Minutes - September 5, 2023

Amy Haddad called the meeting to order and welcomed parents and staff to the first PTA meeting of the 2023-2024 school year.

Welcome/Board Member Intros

Amy introduced the 2023-2024 board to the audience. The board is as follows:

President - Amy Haddad

VP Communications - Debra Schaffer

VP Programs - Mihaela Biro

VP Fundraising - Nat Gorman

Secretary - Krystal Putman-Garcia

Treasurer - Tina Morrison

Membership Chair- Lauren Lawson Zilai

NAACP Delegate - Latoya Smith

Teacher Representative - Mrs. Gramzinski

MCCPTA Delegate - VACANT

President-Elect - VACANT

If you are interested in an open role, please reach out to Amy Haddad at PRESIDENTELECT@RITCHIEPARKPTA.ORG.

Join the PTA

Make a difference in the RPES community. If you haven't already done so, please consider joining the PTA. Your membership dues help pay for enrichment events like the Science Fair and Culture Night, fun activities like the the Variety Show and Back-to-school Picnic, after-school programs that help kids grow their interests and supplies for classrooms and staff.

Individual memberships are \$15, family memberships are \$65.

<https://www.ritchieparkpta.org/join>

Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities

Back to School Picnic - Friday, September 8th

Join us from 4:30-7pm for the annual Ritchie Park Elementary School PTA Welcome Back to School Picnic to celebrate the start of school and to come together as a community.

This is an event for the whole family! Kids can play games and work their way through an inflatable obstacle course. We'll have pizza and ice cream available for purchase from Potomac Pizza and Carmen's Italian ice (cash or Venmo are accepted).

Volunteers are needed to support events like this. Sign up and learn more by visiting the RPES PTA website - <https://www.ritchieparkpta.org/events>.

Other Upcoming Events

- Staff appreciation dinner: Thursday Sept. 14
- Next two PTA Meetings: Tuesday Oct. 3 & Nov. 7
- Skate Night: Saturday Oct. 28
- Cultural Heritage Night: Thursday Nov. 16
- Pizza Bingo: Friday Jan. 19
- Community Service Night: Feb. 22

Per the above, visit the RPES PTA website - <https://www.ritchieparkpta.org/events> to keep up to date on programming.

All of these programs rely on generous donations from the parent community to the PTA. Nat Gorman leads fundraising and is always looking for volunteers to help fund these initiatives.

Communications

Debra Schaffer leads Communications and mentioned many ways to stay in touch with the PTA and its programming.

1. **A to Z Directory:** *Current and New Parents!* Please update or add your contact information <https://ritchieparkpta.membershiptoolkit.com/>. This is where you can find information about your children's friends and parents (think play date connections).
2. **RPES PTA Website:** ritchieparkpta.org. The website is kept up to date with information about programs, volunteer opportunities, after school activities, membership/donations and more. There are now calendars on the website that include a regular PTA Google calendar (and downloadable Google calendar) that includes MCPS calendar. Once you join the PTA or make a donation you will automatically be added to the PTA communication list.
3. **Facebook:** [Ritchie Park ES PTA](https://www.facebook.com/RitchieParkESPTA). Parents and the PTA send notifications and reminders through the FB page.
4. **Newsletters** - the PTA sends a monthly newsletter about what is going on with the PTA at RPES.
5. **Flyers** are often sent home with children about upcoming events.

After School Activities

Sign ups for after school programs are now live on the RPES PTA website. Some programs start the week of 9/11. There are three seasons after school programs including Fall, Winter and Spring. City of Rockville runs most of the programs out of RPES. Chess runs independently throughout the school year.

Updates from Principal Winter

Principal Winter introduced Mrs. Tibbs and welcomed parents on a great start to the new year. Dr. Campbell joined the event from MCPS and was pleased to share that she saw happy children, good instructors, happy parents, and a phenomenal principal. She wished everyone a fabulous school year.

Mr. Winter reiterated that they want to make sure there is transparency and communication - and that he and Mrs. Tibbs are always available to connect.

New Staff

Mr. Winter noted that while we were sad to see some staff leave (mostly due to family needs and retirement) - we have a wonderful group of new teachers that come with great experience. Returning staff is supporting and embracing the new staff and setting up them up for success.

Class Size

This year all grades have three classes with the exception of 4th grade that has two classrooms. They have adjusted the teachers in the grade to help manage the larger group.

Back to School Night

Back to School Night is fast approaching. It will begin at 6:30 and parents will have an opportunity to meet staff from 6:30-7:00 with a fun bingo event to mingle with the teachers - the winning parent will be eligible for a Starbucks raffle. At 7pm the sessions will begin and the school is hoping for a great turnout.

4th and 5th grade teachers will have rotations so that parents can meet each teacher (if their child rotates to another teacher).

At the event, parents will be able to sign up to volunteer and/or serve as room parents. 2-3 parents will be randomly selected as room parents per class. Selected room parents will be notified the following Sunday about room parent expectations.

COVID Concerns

4th grade was noted to have had a COVID outbreak. According to MCPS policies (MCPS and CDC guidance), 3 or more people testing positive in a week constitutes a class outbreak. Students and staff will wear a mask unless eating or drinking (or sweating playing outside). This action will go through Monday of the next week, 10 days from first reported case.

Safety - September 22 Drill Day

The school did a fire drill the first week of school and will use early release day to do a safety drill that will include earthquake, lockdown and shelter drills for precaution sake. They will also do a simulated parent unification plan practice like last year.

Proud Panther Program

Proud Panther stickers will continue and these remain very motivating and exciting to recognize individual students and classes. The school is not doing the march to 200 since some classes were off to too slow start of a slow start and could never make up progress (became demotivating). This year the rewards will be done by quarterly incentives.

- * 1st - Popcorn and film
- * 2nd - Breakfast
- * 3rd - Dunk tank
- * 4th - Principal Winter on the roof with outdoor picnics to see Principal Winter
- * If class gets 50 all for quarters then they get to turn Principal Winter and Mrs. Tibbs into sundaes.

Reminder - take Proud Panther stickers off before putting clothes in the wash.

Other

- Instrumental music will continue this year for grades 4 & 5. Information will be sent home shortly with more information.
- Chorus will again continue in the first semester for 5th graders and the second semester 4th and 5th.
- Teachers have decided to not do snacks now but will be again addressing at end of marking period
- Students currently have assigned seats and this will be addressed after first marking period. Kids can earn open seating with good behavior - its a grade level decision and incentive plan.

School Improvement Plan

Mr. Winter unveiled the school's new School Improvement Plan that is now focused on a three-year plan with four different paths. This is aligned with MCPS' college, career, and community readiness plan.

There is a four step plan that includes;

Step 1: Data storytelling and root cause analysis - why are results the way they are?

Step 2 Develop SMARTIE goals in literacy, math well-being, and school culture. Think SMART goals with the addition off "I" for inclusion and "E" for equity). This ties into anti-racism plans.

Step 3: Plan school based strategies, actions and measures to accomplish goals.

Step 4: identify needed supports and professional learning to best implement plan.

The Climate and Culture Goal for 2023-24

By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, school staff will have engaged in monthly professional learning to develop competency in implementing culturally responsive relationship building and

instructional practices to address the needs of our African American students. Additionally, teachers will utilize the learning during team planning to intentionally address diversity in materials including adjusting the planning protocol and document to reinforce implementation. This will help staff create an environment where African American students feel more capable and successful as measured by a 10% increase of African American students feeling as though their teachers make them feel capable or successful as reported on our student voice survey (68% to 78%). To monitor progress towards our goal, we will collect data through focus groups of our 2nd-5th grade African American students at the end of the second and third quarters.

By June 2024, at least 78% of African American students will feel as though their teachers make them feel capable and successful as reported on our student voice survey.

By June 2025 at least 88% of African American students will feel as though their teachers make them feel capable and successful as reported on our student voice survey.

By June 2026 at least 98% of African American students will feel as though their teachers make them feel capable and successful as reported on our student voice survey.

Well Being Goal for 2023-24

72.5% (29) of students who are chronically absent are students of color. By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, we will reduce that by 20%

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By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, we will reduce the number of students of color who are chronically absent by another 5%.

By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, we will reduce the number of students of color who are chronically absent by another 5%.

The other two goals are in progress and will be developed and presented in a future PTA meeting.

Meeting Closure

The meeting adjourned. The next PTA meeting will be on Tuesday, October 3.