
Thurgood Marshall PTA General Meeting Minutes

January 24th, 2013 6:30 - 8:30pm

In attendance - Julie Breidenbach, Tina Shepard, Tram Doan, James Modie, Martin Saxer, Tasha Irvine, Jodie Nathan, Scott Engan, John (Jay) Potratz, Laurie Milodragovich, Janice Jackson, Perry Lee, Katy Ransom, Casey Sommers, Sharmila Williams

Julie began the meeting by introducing Principal Jon Halfaker from Washington Middle School for a brief discussion followed by a Q and A period.

Some highlights of the WMS discussion -

- Principal Halfaker anticipates a student count of 1200 for the 2013/2014 school year, up from almost 1100 this year. WMS has a very diverse student body - 30% Caucasian, 30% Asian, 30% African American, almost 10% Latino and a very small Native American population.
- 50% of WMS students qualify for free and reduced lunch - therefore subsidizing of key programs continues. Special Education at WMS is an inclusion program - Special Ed students are in General Ed classrooms. Principal Halfaker believes that middle school students benefit greatly from interaction with one another - so he encourages as much mixing between programs as possible. Certain program constraints do exist - such as LA/SS - which is entirely APP/Spectrum/General Education.
- Math is not programatic, ie not defined by APP, Spectrum or General Ed. The math level of each student is based on math recommendations that are built around winter MAP scores and teacher referrals. There is some flexibility based on students' abilities/preferences and teacher/parent discussions.
- All LA/SS classes are self-contained. Language classes are blended. Physical Education is blended. Music is blended. Most teachers teach a variety of programs, not staying within one program or another.
- WMS has a large adult support network available for students. Counselors, health care workers, security officers, teachers and various admin compose the staff of over 100 adults working at WMS full-time each day. There is also in-class tutoring for those requiring assistance.
- 600 students are currently in the WMS music program.
- February 19th, 20th and 26th are the scheduled tours this year. No rsvp necessary. Tours begin at 8am. Students and parents are invited. The tour will start with a short discussion and then a guided tour of the entire building and visits to various classes from all programs.
For more information on Washington Middle School, check out the WMS website at <http://washingtonms.seattleschools.org/>.

General Meeting minutes from 11/15 were approved.

A question of the upcoming levys and Thurgood Marshall's support was raised - we moved to endorse both levys as a school.

Upcoming school events -

There is an Instrumental music concert on Tuesday, January 29th at 7pm in the gym.

Ann Hollar is going to speak to 5th grade families on Monday, Feb 4th at 6:30pm about mindfulness and its benefits to students and their families.

The Lunar New Year Celebration will take place on February 8th in the gym. Time tbd.

Thursday, February 28th is the Thurgood Marshall Open House for current students and prospective students.

Safety Committee Update - Toni Bader is the chair. Feel free to contact her anytime. She would love to have parents join her on the committee.

Treasurer's Report - Nan gave Mark's report in his absence. We are starting to think about the process for planning the budget for next year. The budget committee will meet in the spring - chaired by the current treasurer - and any parents who are interested in working on the budget next year are encouraged to attend and get involved. Next year's fundraising goal is also decided at that time. People are also welcome to simply attend the meeting and listen in if they are so inclined with no involvement necessary.

Opportunity Grant Update - grants are at about \$7000 to date. Great requests that will benefit all students and all staff members are coming in.

Fundraising Report - We have raised over 85k to date. Pup Press will start to highlight where some of this money goes and how beneficial it is to all students at Thurgood Marshall.

Volunteer's Report - We are planning a Bingo Night for March (date tbd) which will be an RSVP event due to limited space in the gym and will require plenty of parent support, as will the Lunar New Year Celebration in February. We are actively looking for a chair for Teacher Appreciation week in May. Also, the board is discussing a way to recognize the Bailey Gatzert teachers at this time as well due to their limited PTA support.

Principal's Report - Julie discussed the MAP testing and explained how we use the scores but within an appropriate context. They are just one measure of students' progress. 5th grade MAP will be Feb 4th and 11th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.
