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Northwood PTSA General Meeting November 20, 2018

Meeting was opened at 7:35 pm by Ms Robyn Watts, PTSA President.

In attendance were Ms Watts; Cathy Shrestha, PTSA Treasurer; Jenn Sawin, PTSA Secretary; Ms. Charley-Greene, Principal; Jenny Espinoza, PTSA Membership Chair; Michele Moller, Northwood Cluster Coordinator Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz, MCCPTA Delegate; Jillian Newby, After Prom Chair. Andrea Verbrugge, PTSA Vice President; and Tamara Overby, NAACP Liaison were unable to attend. Approximately 9 other persons were in attendance.

Minutes

Copies of the October 16, 2018 meeting minutes were distributed. A motion was made from the floor to approve the draft minutes. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Presentation

Ms. Eileen Seligman, Media Specialist, presented online resources available to students, including a handout of online databases. Ms. Seligman noted Northwood is 1 of 7 high schools recognized for “digital citizenship” – understanding online safety and reliability of information. Students can eat lunch in the Media Center to use books, computers, and other resources. 120 did today, which is a light day. Ms. Seligman seeks to build bridges/relationships with students.

Books: New books are listed on the school website, and books can be donated in honor of someone. eBooks/audio books are available so students can listen online. Summer reading books are on hand for students’ access.

Databases: Britannica; PrepStop (practice tests, study materials, flashcards, SAT subject tests); US Newsstream (592 newspapers, 60 Minutes videos, Hispanic resources, all from 1980-forward); Opposing Viewpoints in Context (a GALE resource, offers searchable, translatable, visual graphic displays that can be downloaded to Google Drive and annotated); Pathfinders (topics Ms. Seligman has put together); and JStor.

Northwood Educational Foundation

Belvey Russ, former Northwood counselor, explained that NEF funds programs MCPS can’t, such as exchange students, and the current priority is Class of 2019 scholarships. She is recruiting for NEF board members.

Northwood Rebuild

Michele Moller updated on renovation/rebuild plans. The 3 options are now onsite phased build; temporary at (renovated) Woodward; converted office space in downtown Silver Spring. Because of the option changes, our survey data aren’t relevant, but comments are – Michele will send those to the Board of Education. Same with the survey Northwood students developed and circulated. We understand a community consensus would be nice but unlikely we will get one, so people should email BOE. Need to consider future community – affected students are now in elementary or middle school. Construction will be 24/7 so community will be affected. Unexpected developments will be easier to address with students offsite.

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Onsite: Earliest start is January 2022, 5-6 years' build time, finishing 2027-2028. No fields available at Northwood – must use other schools or parks; at times some elements/facilities will be unavailable in either old OR new construction. Safety concerns. Northwood teachers who lived through the previous build (2004) do NOT want to stay on-site during construction.

Woodward: Start renovating Woodward 2020, Northwood moves in 2023 and moves back 2025. Woodward will be a generic high school, may not accommodate Northwood programmatic needs. Woodward fields unavailable, there is adjacent park space and we have asked about using Northwood fields while offsite. Transportation is a big concern; in addition to morning, afternoon, activity buses, we need family access, MC access, accommodation for late arrivals.

Office Space: Nebulous. Stems from Parks and Planning, following the initiative to look into non-traditional facilities. Location is good; unknowns are exactly where and when. Will need to build the space out.

Slides from community meeting 11-7-18 at Northwood are on BOE website. Testimony at 11-12-18 BOE CIP hearing went well; written testimony identified key requirements for each option (e.g., transportation if Woodward were used). Next steps will be a staff meeting at Northwood on 11-26-18 (see Principal's Report below), then a BOE meeting 11-27-18.

[UPDATE: Because we had no December PTSA meeting, your secretary is adding a further update. At the 11-27-18 BOE meeting, Dr. Smith's recommended to BOE to move Northwood offsite during construction, all possible locations to be considered including (but not limited to) Woodward, alternate facilities such as commercial space, and other MCPS facilities. Regardless of the approach, MCPS will work with MCDOT and Northwood administration to meet student and family transportation needs, work with MC HHS to provide school-based Health and Wellness Center services, and ensure after-school activities and athletic facilities are provided to students during construction while the school is located offsite. (Agenda Item 2.4)]

Ms. Charley-Greene, Principal

Ms. Charley-Greene reported that our Latin Dance Team took 1st place in Bachata and Cha Cha, and 2nd place overall at the recent competition. Students were classy, true to culture and style; very proud of them. Northwood is now over 50% Hispanic, which developed over her tenure.

We face an issue re our cross-country trail, which is under SHA control and it is unclear they will honor their letter agreement. Students gave testimony at the 11-12-18 BOE hearing. Very proud of the leadership shown by our students in preparing and presenting testimony.

The fall play, The Importance of Being Earnest, will run November 15-17.

Northwood staff are meeting 11-26-18 with Seth Adams from MCPS re the Northwood rebuild. Staff have strong views; some opposed to an on-site rebuild, while other teachers would be unable to make the commute to Woodward (longer time and distance, no public transit). Different families have different access to resources.

Ms. Charley-Greene met today with principals from the feeder schools in the cluster looking at cluster literacy data. Need to align student work so they are scaffolded, building skills and moving up.

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Ms. Charley-Greene reported on MC2 developments. Starting next year, the program is open to 32 students outside DCC with applying students chosen by lottery. 100 students applied from outside DCC for the 32 slots. Priority on ensuring no adverse effect on DCC students in numbers entering the program and in keeping up/performing well in the program. Northwood is adding a portable or building out a lab, and adding 1 staff person to accommodate the increase in enrollment.

Brief discussion on the assault at Damascus high school. Coaches and athletes are now getting additional training. Parents who hear anything should bring it to Ms. Charley-Greene's attention; she is working with Mr. Fugetti. Parent question how to address locker room safety, because can't have cameras? Students should not be in locker rooms without supervising adults. At today's basketball scrimmage, coaches need to be personally responsible for supervision, seal emergency doors to limit movement when lot of visitors in the building, can have security guards sweep locker rooms and halls to ensure spaces are clear.

Important Dates:

11-28 and 11-29: Internship program. Important for 11th graders to connect to a 12th grade internship.

12-18-18: NO DECEMBER PTSA MEETING

1-15-19: January's PTSA meeting will have presentation on active assailant training. Need to walk the line between explicit discussion and safety training, but keeping school a "safe space" for students.

Jillian Newby, After Prom

Jillian noted that the Mixed Bags fundraiser continues online through 12-31 with direct shipping.

Jenny Espinoza, Membership

We currently have 128 members from the staff, 55 parent members, and 5 student members.

Ms. Cathy Shrestha, Treasurer

Cathy presented her monthly update report.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:22 pm.
Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Sawin, PTSA Secretary