



**City High-Middle PTSA (PTCC)
ZOOM Meeting ID# 687-900-9733
Membership Meeting • 7 p.m. - 8 p.m., October 21, 2020**

Prior to Meeting

Please enable audio (members must be able to hear and respond to each other).
Please enable video (if you are comfortable using that feature).
Identify yourself by name each time you speak (especially if video is not enabled).
Meeting presider may utilize the “mute participants” tool so a presenter can be heard.

Minutes

1. **Call to Order, Welcome, Establish a Quorum** - 7:00 pm, about 45 attendees - 40 parents and students, 5 admins.
2. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** - approved.
3. **Approval of Current Agenda** (*additions, changes*) - approved, no changes.
4. **Executive Board updates**
 - a. Membership Drive - doubled from last year! We currently have 213 staff and student members for all schools (City, Blandford, CFE and Zoo). The board was blown away by the City Families’ responses to joining and donating. We reached and went beyond our \$10K fundraising goal! Final numbers will be ready for our next meeting. Swag on order.
 - b. 2020-2021 Budget Proposal for vote - Carol Carr, treasurer, presents.
 - i. Proposed budget was presented last month and available for review on website. Reduction to many line items, increase to teacher stipends from \$100 to \$150 per teacher (40 teachers, librarian). Tara Kaley shared some of teacher Mr. Rizley’s ideas for Environmental Sciences expansion and gave us the head’s up that a proposal or 2 will be in the works, possibly a multi-year effort. Enviro has \$800 set aside in our budget for them. They may request additional \$200 in the spring. This could be presented as a new teacher opportunity project and we would vote on it when the funds are needed knowing that the project is for later in the year or next year. Watch Mr. Rizley’s video here:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/12_wpFsvSOHflat8V5pIM8a3l-Ed24Zhe/view
 - ii. **Vote - Budget is adopted.**
 - iii. Email Carol treasurer@cityptsa.com with questions.
5. **CHMS Administrator Updates - Mr. Huppert, Principal**
 - a. 2nd or 3rd week of Nov for virtual parent-teacher conferences. Survey/signup coming up soon for parents to fill out. Like last year, there

will be one day set aside so that teachers can contact parents of students that might need some help and that have not attended the conferences.

- b. Compared to 30 hours per week of instruction in “normal times”, how can teachers bridge the gap with hours reduced to 12 hours/wk? Staff are working together to get better at streamlining instruction, sticking to core concepts.
- c. Lots of emails from teachers? Overwhelming. Can teachers do better? Google classroom generates an email every time there is a new assignment, you get a grade on an assignment, update to assignment, etc. Mr. Huppert says that is a challenge for sure. Tapping most experienced teachers who have gotten a handle on this, and they are now training the other teachers to get all those notifications under better control. They recognize this issue. J. Helmholtz says they’ll be making changes on their end, too, so students only get student-specific items on.
- d. Can we have a big textbook distribution? So kids aren’t only reading online? Ruth (parent) offers an example: “The Crucible” is assigned and currently only available online - can’t escape the screen. Dr. Gorman suggests that Mr. Huppert please add novels, etc. for next materials distribution day.
- e. City Count Day update - enrollment up 44 students!
- f. Reenergizing virtual learning priorities: collaborating lots with staff; resetting around well-being for students and staff; sharing best practices; strategies for addressing inequities at home/virtual; look for a parents opt-in to notifications for Gradebook - will send something out to close communication gap; build community with more staff videos, etc. working with Counseling Dept.; parent-teacher conference info coming; all the while planning for safe return to in-person - our building has taped-off areas, up/down staircases for passing between classes. Can’t wait to see all our students again!

6. GRPS Updates - Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Ron Gorman, joined by Communications Head John Helmholtz and Director of Nursing Kim Baron.

- a. SAT for Seniors - Tues, Oct 27th. Look for letters to seniors taking SAT next week that include bus tickets - good for 10 rides - to use to get to school next week - trying to remove a barrier/address equity. *Dr. Gorman answered.*
- b. *J. Helmholtz answered the next few questions* - they’ll do better on communications going forward. Sometimes they have to communicate with us without all relevant information. That was the case recently when parents noticed a big difference. Plus they have to consider things like school board and teacher union rules and policies, executive orders, county dynamics - these impact what communications can be done and when.
- c. Changes in Comm. Dept. to make better? Currently down 1 staff person (from budget cuts in spring), trying to hire now (webmaster/designer).
- d. GRPS owns up to difficulties with meeting tech needs and some confusing emails - typos causing more emails to go out with a small change to be accurate (ex. error with a recent important date) but it was hard for parents to spot the change. Working on that.
- e. Why did commitment forms/links go to student emails? for GRPS backend accuracy of matching students correctly with preference, plus

monitor and trace responses better and more accurately because emails were generated through Synergy.

- f. Are GRPS and teachers union working together so our decisions can be faster/smoother next time we consider going in-person? *Dr. Gorman* - We would have been ready next week- the problem was the increasing Covid-19 numbers in the area - not readiness. Sure there would've been bumps in the road to going hybrid but district was ready. But this will give us some time to make our plans even better. For instance:
- g. So, some districts like us that are E2020 - some are ending up being virtual 6 hrs per day solid and that's not great. GRPS working on something better on screen time for our next semester possible hybrid option (more info below).
- h. Plus at City, the IB requirements come into play (not simple) in planning with the union. A proposal went to the school board recently to get cameras in each "classroom". They'll look for some volunteer staff for a 100% virtual environment, hoping to address the needs of those who couldn't teach in-person due to health concerns. Idea is a simultaneous broadcast to virtual and hybrid students on classroom cameras. Challenge - affects teachers' contract category called "working conditions" - has to be negotiated with the union. Going well so far. (This idea would also help address student sports participants who need to meet NCAA clearinghouse requirements.)
- i. As to beefing up synchronous time (parents want), teachers hear you. They are considering small in-person groups in bldg - similar to learning pods with our teachers. We are trying to develop a GRPS-approved learning pod model for all of our buildings. If this is a go, it would start with the district's most vulnerable - students with disabilities - and go on to those students struggling more generally who really need some time with a teacher.
- j. Zoo School question: school has many assigned projects and students need supplies from the bldg. Need more material distribution days - they're planning one more, and may need more - Mr. Gorman hears you and is discussing with superintendent now.
- k. Winter Sports - continuing to follow health dept. guidelines. And GRPS doesn't expect winter sports to be affected.
- l. Increasing Covid-19 numbers: Other local school systems closed a middle school and a high school just this week! #s are going up, positive test rate now at 4.5% recently (our state's health experts prefer 3% or lower), and today is closer to 5.9%. Experts say it is likely higher. A close-by district may shut down this week because people won't stop gathering. Boston Schools just now shut down at this same rate we're seeing here. These school systems report that their staff is spending lots of time contact tracing.
- m. Pods? Would 6th grades be eligible for this? If it's available at one GRPS school, it'll be available to all in some fashion.
- n. Dr. Gorman says he has 3rd and 6th graders, Mr. Helmholdt has a middle schooler - they're in it with us. Their kids are disappointed too. But the rising numbers are bad.
- o. GRPS.org will replicate Ann Arbor schools dashboard for Covid stats as an upgrade. Helmholdt will ask Kent County Health Dept for a further

breakdown of cases to help families follow along and understand the decisions by-the-numbers. Will be added to GRPS website.

- p. Be assured that, even though GRPS didn't sign on to the recent letter signed by many superintendents, GRPS admin collaborates with Kent ISD everyday. They didn't sign on with the joint letter so as not to confuse (as GRPS had already made 100% virtual decision). We'll have our own letter going out. (same with Muskegon/Muskegon Heights) It will be similar in reminding families that chances of going back to school in person are better if we all stop gathering and get back to basics of pandemic control in our area.
 - q. Can new students tour the bldg before January? Gorman says we'll take it into consideration and will let us know soon. Understands that 6th and 7th graders, for instance, really want to see the buildings, lockers, etc.
 - r. When rates look better, will we be ready to open better than this time? Please know that those who started hybrid earlier(Aug & Sep) had bumps, too. Benefits: our teachers are now trained in cleaning procedures and camera use, and our buses are ready with the plan admin developed for Cohorts A and B. Every week they meet with the teachers union on Tuesday, facilities (I think this is the group mentioned) on Thursday, principals meetings on Monday. Communications will be better and ready for "re-commitment" when the time comes.
 - s. Kim Baron Dir. of Nursing - be assured that buildings have a solid process and staff training for reporting within 2 hours of student or staff testing positive with contact tracing starting immediately (24 hr max allowed under health directive, but we are striving for earliest reporting).
 - t. Metrics to return in person? Hard and fast shut down # for then? "Bright lines" for when to shut down if a positive case found? There will be solid guidelines. Improved website dashboard will help us watch the numbers.
 - u. Parents want more synchronous time - want to see our teacher more. GRPS admin is working out time increases with teacher's union (teachers are making a proposal for admin to consider now).
 - v. Screen time healthy recommendations...considering? Yes. For example, 4 hours is the high school max. Recommended by experts. It could look like this: 30 minutes virtual teaching/learning in 1st hour, then working on your own stuff for the other 30 minutes of that hour. Trying to reach a balance that way. A 6 hour day but only 3ish hours on screen.
7. **Questions from City Families to Dr. Gorman and Mr. Huppert** - Please use this [link](#) to submit questions in advance. **Covered above.**
8. **Adjournment 8:00 pm.**

Next Meeting is November 18, 2020 at 7pm

<https://zoom.us/j/6879009733>

Please use this [link](#) to submit questions in advance of the Nov. meeting.