

ERHS PTSA Meeting December 15, 2020

Welcome

Ty reviewed the agenda. Teacher appreciation has been rescheduled to next week due to inclement weather.

ERHS Board updates

Kurian gave the treasurer's report. Stripe (credit card payment) has been launched on MemberHub. He will post the treasurer's report on the PTSA website.

Anne noted that she is still looking for someone to take over responsibility for updating the website, it does not take much time.

Berdenia, Membership Chair, asked people to send her questions if there are any issues with MemberHub. She also said an email has gone out about Givebacks, the PTSA earns money from purchases made on MemberHub.

Jamie , Recording Secretary, mentioned that there is a Hub set up for alumni, we will work to get alumni more involved with the school.

State of the School - Mr. McNeill

Mr. McNeill noted that the school has lost a staff member and a student and he thanked everyone for supporting the families during this rough time.

Dr. Goldson delayed the scheduled family survey, PGCPs will not attempt to re-open at the beginning of February. Mr. McNeill says they are starting to think about what it will look like if we do not go back this school year, what will happen with the school building.

Mr. Taylor said that ERHS did a survey for the students about remote learning, then did a survey for the teachers based on the information gathered from the students. The administration is meeting with each department regularly to determine how to engage the students without overwhelming them. For example, they are asking teachers to think about how much homework they are assigning, keeping in mind all of the other classes the students are responsible for.

Mr. Taylor noted that the administration is now planning as if remote learning will continue for the entire school year. He noted that they will make a plan for hybrid learning/return to school if and when that decision is made by the county.

The administration is considering changing the schedule, allowing for a 40-minute break between 4th and 5th period for students and staff to be off of the computer entirely.

Administration is still in the process of talking to students, teachers, and parents before they decide on schedule and other changes.

Mr. McNeill emphasized that the administration does not want the quality of the instruction to slip, but they want to keep the kids engaged for the entire year. He noted that the survey showed that 50% of the students are babysitting, working, or taking care of someone else in the house during the school day.

ERHS is considering block scheduling, but are reluctant to adopt it because it is the only high school in the county with an 8-period day, and they may not be able to return to that schedule when in-person school resumes.

Mr. McNeill is very concerned about the children's mental health; building positive relationships with students is critical.

One parent expressed disappointment that other public schools in the country are offering some in-person instruction. She feels that it is laziness on the part of PGCPs to have no plans for in-person instruction. The parent expressed support for ERHS and its administration, but disappointment in the county leadership.

Mr. McNeill responded that if things change and are moving in a safe direction, Dr. Goldson will do what she can.

Ty noted the size of the district and the difficulties in providing the best services and best opportunities possible. It is important to provide grace and space for this educational experiment during a pandemic. The teachers' roles have been completely changed.

Mr. McNeill noted that there is talk about opening up some outdoor sports. If anything is offered, the administration will send out information as soon as they get it after the holidays.

Mr. Taylor noted that prom has not been cancelled yet, but encouraged parents not to buy dresses/tuxes yet.

One parent is concerned about dual enrollment and the suggested 45-minute break between 4th and 5th period. The administration said that they are still thinking about how that will impact those students, but noted that there was not a lot of pushback from students about this. The break would not alter the start and end times for school, it would take 5 minutes off of every class.

Memberhub Fundraising

Lynne will be running the fundraising hub. Ty explained the GiveBacks Hub (<https://erptsa.new.memberhub.store/store?category=Sponsors>) where the PTSA earns money from purchases. You can buy things like gift cards and stocking stuffers for Christmas.

PTSA also plans to do a crowdfunder, a one- or two-day fundraising event to raise money for teacher appreciation events. ERHS PTSA is also on Amazon Smile.

There was some discussion of parent-driven outdoor events. Mr. McNeill noted there are certain things legally ERHS cannot do, pandemic or not.

ERHS submitted three proposals for ACE grants: 1. Destination Imagination, we have a couple teams, 2. Science Olympiad, this would only be the second team in PG County and 3. E-sports intramural league.

After receiving a recommendation from the band director, PTSA has also applied for a \$1,000 Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant, part of National PTSA.

Teacher Appreciation

Berdenia is leading teacher appreciation efforts. PTSA will purchase lunches for the teachers next Tuesday. Teachers will drive by to pick up gifts/lunch. Ty and Mr. McNeill will discuss the possibility of parents/students dropping off gifts for teachers and staff.

Next Tuesday there will be an activity bell schedule to allow the music and art departments to put on a holiday show.

Ty noted that we can support Grad Night with \$20.21 donations.

National Design Center presentation

Allie O'Neill, Community Design Director at National Design Center (NDC) spoke first about how we might be able to make improvements to the building to support the unique environment of ERHS. NDC is a non-profit working to support growth of strong, vibrant neighborhoods.

This project began before the pandemic. They want to be sure to address the changing needs for space. Remote learning has shaped our vision of learning environments in the future.

Two architects from the firm Perkins-Eastman also spoke. They are a knowledge/research based design practice. They've done 300 projects around the world and not one looks like any other. They are all individually designed based on what your existing conditions are, what you'd like and what resources are available.

Dunbar High School in D.C. is one example. After moving into their new building, the school posted the highest test score gains of any high school in the city.

They are concerned with indoor environmental quality. They measure light/thermal comfort/acoustics/air quality. These elements can enhance learning ability.

They spoke about holistic wellness: public health/social justice/economic/climate. There are white papers on their website detailing the impacts on student performance, etc. of their projects.

Link to Perkins Eastman website: <http://www.perkinseastman.com/>.

Link to Neighborhood Design Center <https://ndc-md.org/>.

Mr. McNeill thanked them, specifically about using the existing space, making sure we are using the building in the right way. He would like to get staff and parents involved to make sure this happens in the best way.

Ty noted that ERHS is not scheduled for a new building until 2039, so working with the existing space is imperative. We can rethink the space and how to “future proof” it, that is, change it in ways that can be expanded or modified to meet future needs.