



General Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2023

6:00 - 7:30 pm

6:00 Meal + Community Time

6:15 Welcome and Introductions Carissa White

- Carissa W. discussed revamping the PTA Board for 2023-2024 to include fewer board positions in hopes of beefing up our volunteer base to lead committees.

6:30 Treasurer's Report Kristina Killian

- Income (Since 2/1)
 - \$680 from Fun Run
 - \$6,125 from Spring Book Fair
 - \$110 from Amazon, 312 from Lowes
 - \$245 from corporate matching donations
 - \$720 from Friday Shop
 - \$165 from Spirit Wear
- Expenses
 - TOY and IAQY Award Banquets
 - Ms. Panico (IA) is a finalist for IA of the Year
 - Cultural Arts
 - spent \$272 for the movie night, made \$114 from Food Trucks
 - \$1450 Curriculum Support
 - \$204 Parent Hospitality
 - \$371 PBIS
 - \$66 Staff Recognition
 - \$1430 Printer



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- Total Income \$66,077.82
- Total expenses \$55,342.74
- Field Day, Spring Fling, Teacher Appreciation, 5th Grade Graduation, library book purchase (\$4,000) coming up.
- Sales tax refund forthcoming (\$976.20)
- Budget meeting next week and the 2023/2024 budget will be voted on at the next meeting.
- Ms. Caggia mentioned the county only gives \$65 for every student for a total of \$42,000 to operate the school, which is not nearly enough.
 - Next year the school is allotted 605 students for a total of \$39,000 as a starting budget.
 - The PTA supplements this budget.
- There was a concern mentioned about the bank account surplus.
 - Carissa White explained that we have a large surplus from Covid years and will need a bit each year moving forward to cover our budget deficit - we always run on a deficit.
 - Special projects are also possibly in the works
 - Blinds for the gym
 - New instruments
 - Outdoor classroom

6:35 Family Engagement Updates Joy Brunson-Nsubuga

- Spring Fling 5/3 - 5-7 pm - AES Goes Global
 - Flags from over 100 countries
 - Photo booths with families



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- Drumming petting zoo
- Activities/games set up based on different regions/countries
- Performers (Indian dance troupe, Taekwondo)
- Henna artist and face painters
- Ms. Graham's art exhibit inside
- Apex Mayor will be here to announce song of the year, Spirit Wear designs, and FUN RUN theme
- DJ Services from Bach to Rock
- Giveaways
- 6 Food Trucks
- Sign Up Genius on AES Socials

Staff Appreciation Week Updates

Gloriann Austin

- May 8 -12, For ALL staff
- International Theme
- Breakfast one day, lunch one day, popcorn bar, candy/trail mix bar, etc.
- SignUp Genius forthcoming for volunteers

Laurie Bell, AIG thanked the PTA for their support of the new teacher mentorship program. Also, a shout out to Donors Choose for funding her project for new white boards, which was supported by Loft.



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6:45 Ask Me Anything with AES Staff Carissa White

- Katie Caggia, Principal
- Ann-Marie Devlin, Literacy Coach & Instructional Facilitator & Testing Coordinator
- Courtney Broadbent, School Psychologist
- Allison Bowman, School Counselor
- Carissa White, Outgoing PTA President
- Sarah Moore, Outgoing PTA Secretary

Questions:

Q (for Ms. Broadbent) - Why are you serving 2 schools?

A - The National Association of School Psychologists suggests a ratio of 1,000 to 1 for students to school psychologists. This is a suggested advocacy item because the need is great.

Q (for Ms. Broadbent) - On what tasks/areas do you spend most of your time?

A - Ms. Broadbent answered that she spends most of her time split between general education and special education. She must be a part of the MTSS team (multi-tiered system of supports), IEP teams, and is heavily involved in data collection to support all decisions. She spends most of her time in meetings and writing reports but would love more time to pull small groups and work with students one on one.

Q (for Ms. Broadbent) - Can a parent request psychological testing?



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A - A parent can always request a referral for special education services. The IEP team would come together and look at all the information and discuss if they suspect a disability. In an ideal world students would go through MTSS (tiered intervention services) first. An evaluation is not guaranteed. All evaluations are for school based supports so things like ADHD or autism can not be diagnosed.

MTSS Explained

MTSS stands for multi-tiered system of supports. It's a framework schools use to give targeted support to struggling students.

- Tier I includes the instruction and support provided to all children.
- Tier II serves students needing more help. Extra instruction and support often are provided to these children in small groups.
- Tier III is for children who need intense support in order to succeed. Extra instruction and support are provided, often in even smaller groups or one-on-one.

More information about MTSS can be found [here](#).

Q - How many intervention teachers do you have?

A - We have three interventionists. Mary Maxwell is our intervention facilitator 50% of the time and she spends 50% of her time running intervention groups. Julie Aponte is a 50% employee and does math intervention groups. Kathy Miles is a part time reading interventionist.

Covid relief funding is running out next year, which is what is currently paying for part of these positions. This is also a point of advocacy and it is crucial the district finds the funds to pay for the same level of interventions that we've had.



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We also have 2.5 special education teachers (CCR teachers).

Q - How many instructional coaches does AES have?

A - One. Annmarie Devlin is a part time literacy coach focused on K-2. She is also an instructional facilitator (K-5). As literacy coach she supports teachers through LETRS training. LETRS is an initiative pushed through the state of NC in which every public school teacher is being trained in the science of reading.

As Instructional Facilitator, Ms. Devlin supports teachers with resources, curriculum, and testing.

A parent voiced concern about lack of math coaching and focus on math. It was suggested that concerned parents write to senators and learn about how the school board allocates money.

Q - Can you describe the measures taken to ensure school safety?

Yes. We currently do 1 lockdown drill a year and we work closely with local law enforcement. Our school resource officer (SRO) is here once a week but is very responsive and comes if needed.

We utilize a camera system at the front door as well as a security vestibule. The interior vestibule door is always locked and parents must be buzzed in through that door and the exterior door. Next year we will have a system where volunteers and visitors must run their driver's license through a program that runs background checks. Ms. Caggia is given all sex offender notifications.



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WCPSS facilities department is great about fixing windows and doors quickly. Staff is also great about notifying administration if anyone unknown is on or near campus. The Town of Apex has also been helpful as AES is part of the county park system. Sometimes pickleball players have to be asked to leave during school hours.

WCPSS has a safety hotline and more information [here](#).

3rd graders in portables use a buddy system when walking between trailers and the main building. We have cameras near the trailers and staff at the exterior door in the mornings. Trailers are also locked at all times. Ms. Devlin or other staff downstairs will often assist with teachers/students in the portables.

In most cases of an emergency, a schoolwide message will be sent out immediately by Ms. Caggia. If there is an imminent threat to students or staff, families will hear from WCPSS as Ms. Caggia will be in direct contact with law enforcement.

Q - Is WCPSS considering other safety measures?

Russ Smith is the Senior Director of Security at Wake County Public Schools and is always careful about what he relays publicly. New protocols are always being considered but Ms. Caggia didn't think anything new or different was forthcoming security wise.

Q - Can a chair be put in the vestibule for people who are signing kids out and may have trouble standing for long?

A - Yes.



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Q - Is there a policy or procedure for computer use at school? Should they be sent home?

A (Ms. Caggia) - K-1 computers usually stay at school. 2-5 more freely moves back and forth between school and home depending on the teacher's preference. There is no specific policy about how often they should be used. It is an instructional tool.

A (Tonya McMillan 2nd grade teacher) - 2nd grade is split on how much they go home. It is very teacher specific. Ms. McMillan keeps them at school unless parents want them home on the weekend. Teachers are monitoring constantly.

A (Ms. Ramsey 4th grade) - some older students have to take their computers home for extra practice. Students who've had issues are made to sit in specific places so teachers can easily monitor. Some of the resources are mandated by the county (Letterland, DreamBox, etc.)

Q - Can we have a family night with teachers with educational activities like a science or math night?

A - Ms. Shea wrote a grant for family math night materials, which will happen in the fall of 2023. PTA's family engagement committee is connected with the staff family engagement for this. Help will be needed!

Other activities suggested: Bingo night, roller skating party, dances, growth mindset rewards (Ms. Caggia thinking about this for next year).

Q - What opportunities exist for volunteers to support special education?



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A - Joy and Carissa went to the PTA fall leadership conference where they focused on ensuring events were inclusive. Quiet spaces have been offered at movie nights. We are looking at ways to make events more inclusive. All ideas welcome.

A - Ms. Caggia reminded everyone that volunteers need green badge clearance. Volunteering in your student's classroom is always an option.

Q - How often will we have to renew green badges for volunteer clearance?

A - This year you did not have to renew if you already had a green badge. We are not sure if we will have to renew next year but Ms. Chi assumes we will have to continue to renew annually.

Q - Has the PTA considered other spirit wear items?

A - Yes! Please send us your ideas.

Q - When is the next general meeting?

May 16 at 6 pm is the next meeting. We will vote in new board members and approve the new budget. A quorum is necessary (20 dues paying members).