
RCMS PTA General Meeting MINUTES August 16, 2023

Location: RCMS Media Room

Start Time: 9:09 am

ATTENDEES

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Angie Douglas - President | 12. Jill Goldstein |
| 2. Michelle Kemp - Co-President | 13. Cara Kuehn |
| 3. Karla Avery - Treasurer | 14. Jessica Lawrence |
| 4. Stefany Sanders - Secretary | 15. Kameron Joelson |
| 5. Marianna Pagani - Membership | 16. Jenna Nudelman |
| 6. Julie Royal - Parliamentarian | 17. Jonathan Gayles |
| 7. Amber Cooley - Spirit Wear | 18. LaQuandra Martin |
| 8. Sajani Patel - Communications | 19. Alyssa Wright |
| 9. Grace Vise - Mini-Grants | 20. Rachel Walker |
| 10. Kira Karlin - Volunteer Coordinator | 21. Christy Malko |
| 11. Christa Owens | |

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Angie Douglas)

- Angie Douglas motioned to approve the minutes from the [May 2023 PTA General Meeting](#). Motion seconded and passed.

VOTE IN MICHELLE KEMP AS CO-PRESIDENT (Angie Douglas)

- Karla Avery motioned to vote in Michelle Kemp as RCMS PTA Co-President. Motion seconded and passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT (Karla Avery)

- The audit was completed over the summer with no reportable issues. We are still waiting to submit our 990EZ tax return to be e-Filed with the IRS due to some issues with the changes in the Accounting Period (from Sept to June) done at the end of the

2021-22 school year. The auditor is researching this on our behalf. The audit will be sent to the PTA at that time.

- Due to the generosity of our school families in past years, we have the means to invest back into the school and classrooms - we are starting the school year with cash on hand of \$50,634.41. We are working closely with the principal to identify special projects this year that we can fund.
- The budget stayed fairly close to the prior year's budget.
 - **Income** - biggest revenue drivers - PTA dues, especially higher tiers, and spirit wear. Spirit wear revenue - over \$30K through Panther Store
 - **PTA Expenses** total \$6,406 - these include all business operation overhead items (audit fees, subscription renewal fees, Square and Stripe fees)
 - **Staff/School Services** total \$50,100 - comprises how we support and give back to staff and school, such as staff appreciation events, which increased this year due to additional headcount (\$12,300), teacher reimbursements up to \$100 for classroom purchases when they join the pTA (\$6,500), mini-grants (\$13k), and special projects (\$14k) - last year we renovated the break room.
 - **Student/Family Services** is over budget from 8th Grade Events, but proceeds from a DDD will help offset the costs.
- Stefany Sanders motioned to approve the 2023-2024 PTA Budget. Motion seconded and passed.

THE PANTHER STORE (Amber Cooley)

- Please spread the word - we are no longer called "Spirit Wear" after rebranding to the "Panther Store" when we started selling more than clothing.
- The top items are hoodies and tees. New apparel has performed well. So well, inventory is low or sold out. Will keep it that way to drive sales in classic tees. Will reassess and stock up later.
- Looking at a soft hoodie option for fall - all the soft apparel is very popular!
- Panther Store hours are now Tues & Thurs 8:30-8:55 am.
- HELP NEEDED - The store needs volunteers to sell from 8:15-9 a.m. on Tuesdays. This role pairs with Emily Bazinet to help kids buy items with cash and card transactions.
- UNIFORM DONATIONS NEEDED - Need donations of gently worn uniforms to clinic.
- PANTHER STORE DONATIONS NEEDED - These donations go to students who may not have the opportunity to purchase independently. We have a little over \$500 for this purpose.
- For all those who text Amber directly about the store, please redirect to the Panther Store email rcs.spiritwear@gmail.com

DRESS DOWN DAY (Angie Douglas)

- First Dress Down Day is August 23rd and is free to those who have joined the PTA, otherwise \$5.

VOLUNTEERS (Angie Douglas)

- There are a lot of opportunities to get involved.
 - [Volunteer form](#) - Tell us what you're interested in.
 - Email Angie directly at presidents@ptarcms.org
 - Sign-Up Genius - Anytime there is an opportunity it is pushed out on social and PTA GroupMe - Please follow and join.

GROUP ME & SOCIAL MEDIA (Angie Douglas)

- PTA GroupMe and Grade-Level GroupMe channels are not school-sanctioned and are informal. Please join both!
- RCMS & PTA Social Media - please follow both!
 - [PTA Instagram](#)
 - [PTA Facebook](#)
 - [RCMS Instagram](#)
 - [RCMS Facebook](#)
- Send posts and ideas to Sajani Patel. Sajani's goal is to keep people informed. She doesn't put too much about PTA in GroupMe grade level chats because those are unsanctioned by the school - she will always drive to PTA GroupMe.

TRANSPORTATION - Brian Pledger, CSPT Coordinator

- Brian Pledger is the coordinator of Fulton North Transportation - responsible for every bus north of the City of Atlanta.
- He leads 11 zone supervisors. Keisha Tilman handles our area. She has been here for 3 years.
- Yes, there is still a driver shortage. The RCMS cluster is 8 drivers down. As we hire, you'll see numbers improve. Currently, use substitute drivers.
- Holding a job fair this weekend to try and hire drivers. Have 50 open routes throughout north Fulton.

- The biggest concern is buses are not consistent.
- When fully staffed, we have the luxury of extra drivers to handle high school when elementary is late. Right now, if one is late, they will all be late because most drivers drive 3 legs (elementary - middle - and high school).
- Transportation for kids is heavily regulated. Staying compliant takes a lot of work.
- Stop Arm Cameras - we were one of the first to have these.
 - Equipment has to be acquired
 - Equipment has to be installed and monitored - the school does not touch these
 - The police dept. has to buy in because pictures are transmitted to them, and an officer has to sit and watch it, so it takes resources. Some municipalities are okay with it, some say no.
 - Every ticket is a civil citation, not a traffic citation. It goes to court, and often the court throws them out because they can't verify it.
 - We are in a contracting phase at the moment with cameras.
- Please don't go to another bus stop to pick up a child early. The most dangerous time for a child is getting on and off the bus. Driver attention must be on the kids and the traffic, not a parent or child trying to intervene who isn't supposed to be there. These are distractions.
- FCS and the school can tell you where all bus stops are along a route. We don't like posting this publicly for anyone to see. Sometimes drivers call in saying someone is following (usually a parent). Here Comes the Bus (HCTB) app is a good way as well.
- The HCTB app is having some trouble that created some communication issues. Trying to resolve this quickly.
- There are some scenarios in the HCTB app where the wrong location is showing - this stems from the issues shared above.
- ETA on a fully functional HCTB app? Hoping to resolve this in the next week.
- Can't allow kids to cross a street where the speed limit is over 35mph, even if it's more convenient and saves time to drop off in this location.
- You can request a more convenient bus stop than the one you are assigned. Ask zone supervisor Keisha Tilman.
- When a stop is added to a route, it's added for elementary - middle - high school. There are restrictions on how close stops are to each other. Drivers have to go out and see the stop for themselves to make sure it's safe, etc.
- All buses have tablets mounted, and we had hopes that routes would be programmed in for easy reference while driving. The sales rep said it would do that, but what happened is the program routes the bus via the shortest distance and doesn't take into account which side to pick up on, so it doesn't work the way they need it to. Now they have a printed route sheet that takes them in the right direction for the safest pick-up.

- If a bus driver calls out, they must do so at least 1 hour in advance, which can be as early as 4:15 am or as late as 1:15 pm. We have backup drivers, but this is an issue. Keisha has had to drive this week, plus do her regular job.
- We don't have insight into why the driver shortage continues. We have never seen people just quit their jobs without having anything else, but that's happening now. We pay \$22.43/hour - the highest in the state until last year. Cobb and Marietta increased their rate, and we lost 12 drivers to them but got them back because FCS takes care of their drivers and works to retain them. Waste Management found a way into a meeting and recruited - lost 8 drivers in a week. Trucking companies down on the south side recruit our drivers. Over the last 3 months, applicants have been increasing.
- What is a great bus driver appreciation gift? Brian used to drive, and he appreciated something to eat. Also liked a shirt or hoodie with a school emblem - makes them feel part of a team/family, and they like it better than an FCS shirt. But no magnets on the buses - they will remove it.
- Do you need to be on a bus list to ride the bus? No, you just need to be registered at school, and it will upload to FCS Transportation. Any child can take the bus. Had an influx of new students this year and still working through it.

CHAT WITH THE PRINCIPAL (Principal Garrett)

- The focus the last 2 weeks has been student accounts - 938 projected students, but have 952 students this year. We are over-projection. Need 1,000 to get a 3rd assistant. Principal and Counselor, so the current team will have to play additional roles. Need 48 new kids by this Friday, or we won't meet the projection for the extra roles.
- Priorities
 - Instruction - Aligning to MYP, AVID, IB.
 - Meeting Benchmarks - Only 15% of ESL students passed GA Milestones.
 - Relationships - In a good place with attendance and discipline, but trying to increase to 90% attendance. Working on discipline rate with proactive measures to address mental health and more.
- Increasing goal to 80% passing GA Milestones with 40% proficiency - need strong PLCs to map out what they have to teach and who they are teaching, look at those assessments, and ensure progress is happening. We can be an A or B school - currently a C school. Know the demographic to focus on, and we need to go slow to go fast, but this is the focus
- Why does it take so long to get GA Milestones scores? Three phases - Taken in April. They are embargoed to administrators until May. Then it needs to be loaded into a DB and released in August to the parents.



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- How can parents help? Give Mr. Garrett time. It was a great help to provide meals during pre-planning and the upcoming Open House (Thur Sept 7 @ 6 pm). Continue supporting as you have.
 - Mr. Garrett suggested spotlighting new employees in Panther Tales since there are so many new ones. And he needs to get himself on the website - Dr. Blackwell is still there.

Meeting Adjourned - 10:18 am