

## **PTA General Meeting, 8am, 1/7/2019**

Members in attendance (39): Abena Durity, Ruth Judith, Sandra Schwietert, Jen Zwiselsberger, Becky Kotuby, Kathryn Farmer, Kristen Weber, Beth Keber, Morena Gomez, Susana Ortiz, Jenn Topping, KK McKart, Brad Kinder, Staci Rijal, Libby Rector Snipe, Matt Payne, Dana Stefanelli, Julia Eile, Amy Smith, Izume Hoehn, Bridget Baben-White, Brett Liddell Allison Courtney, Sabnaz Alim, Scott Probst, Candi Sparrow, Margaret Lorber, Alison Wines, Anna Jaeger, Amado Baten, Gabriel Key, Laura Jennings, Anne Houston, Ulysses Billips, Carrie Lewis, Catherine Haley-Babin. A few floated in throughout the meeting and didn't have a chance to sign in.

Trey Billips opened the meeting at: 8:15am

Guest Speaker: ACPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Jr (his comments start on page 2)

### **Exec Committee Reports**

- **President**
  - Teacher of the year is Ms. Bucerri for Barrett. Ms. Ford is the staff member of the year. We need help to get them approved, send in letters of support, etc.
- **Treasurer**
  - None
- **Secretary**
  - Motion to approve the minutes was carried.
- **Committees**
  - Every 5 years we are required to submit our bylaws to the Virginia PTA for approval. A committee of Kristen Weber, Becky Kotuby and Sandy Marks reviewed and made minor amendments to our bylaws. The amended copy of the bylaws have been posted, they are on the PTA website at [www.cbpta.org](http://www.cbpta.org). Please take time to read through them; there will be a vote to approve them at the February 4th meeting.

### **Principal's Report**

- Next school year there will be 60 more slots available in Charles Barrett Rec after-school program. We will be giving them the cafeteria space after school to allow them to accommodate more students.
- CBES teacher of the year for 2018-19 is Ms. Bucerri (3rd grade) and CBES staff member of the year is Ms. Ford (day custodian)! We need your help in getting helping them become the ACPS teacher and staff member of the year. Part of our nomination process for the division-wide selection process involves us compiling letters of support for each nominee from our community. Letters of support may be addressed "Dear Nomination Committee," and e-mailed or mailed to me for receipt by January 17th. Letters from students and alumni are welcomed! Please e-mail all letters of support to

Seth at: [seth.kennard@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:seth.kennard@acps.k12.va.us) . Letters may also be dropped off to Seth's attention in the main office.

### **Gregory Hutchings, Jr., ACPS Superintendent**

- Excited to be back in ACPS and his daughter attended Charles Barrett in the past. Happy to be able to serve the community that helped him become the person he is today.
- We have great things happening and some challenges as well. But he believe that we can do it!
- Background:
  - He's an Alexandrian, attended four ACPS elementary schools, then Hammond and TC Williams. Feels this gives him commonality with many of our students as transient students. He had a phenomenal time at the ACPS schools.
    - Personal story: In 10th grade, was not eligible to be in honors classes. Counselor told him he didn't have the grades or the test scores. So he created a petition and asked his fellow students to sign it. Then he took it to Mr. Porter (former TC Williams Principal) and presented the petition. Mr. Porter walked him down to the counselor's office and said "put Gregory in honors classes." This changed Dr. Hutchings' life and he realized that speaking up was power. Tells this story to show that we want this type of action for all our kids. We want our kids to have advocates and be the voice for them when they or their parent can't speak for themselves. That is his vision. If we had an atmosphere where we believe every child can learn and will learn.
- On January 30th Dr. Hutchings will presenting his findings from his first 100 days on the job (from his listening tours, etc). Share what students, parents, constituents are telling us. The goal is to provide a framework to tackle the challenges. ACPS is about to embark on ACPS 2025, which will be a full strategic planning process which will be viewed through the lens of equity. Beyond race, it's about facilities, how we allocate funding to our schools, resources in our buildings, staffing in each school. Have to start looking at our students through the identity lens "how do you identify?"
- Questions from the PTA membership:
  - Jenn Topping: Excited about your enthusiasm. Statement: Redistricting was painful. Would like to encourage the district to look at redistricting more frequently. Transportation question: After school busing from Baroody/after-school activities.
  - Dr. Hutchings:
    - We will be revisiting redistricting with more frequency, not necessarily changes every few years, but looking for issues that may need addressing.

- Transportation: We had been providing after school activity busing, it was 109 bus deliveries, crossing the district. That's abnormal. This year they are working closely with Parks and Rec to make sure that future after-school transportation works. It won't bus you just anywhere you want to go. But if there is a concentration of students that need to go to Cora Kelly Rec, or George Mason rec, we could provide a route for that.
    - We need to come to a reasonable accommodation with parameters. Then be transparent with parents and say this is where we provide transportation to.
- Question: Redistricting and criss-crossing with transportation. How do we get less focused on transportation and more on programming (availability of programs on your own school, etc). We need to plan the transportation part with the rec programming.
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - We have seen a huge increase of families who take advantage of after-school activities, we don't have enough space for it. So we are talking about how we can use our school spaces to accommodate the after-school programming and increase the number of kids who can stay at their home schools. But have to consider the after school activities that the PTAs/schools provide that is not Rec related.
  - Lesson learned from beginning of school transportation issues: when you are introducing a new transportation process, that should happen in early SPRING. So you can have meetings with the PTA and present the plan and get the feedback so you can alter the plan appropriately. This year we should be getting a plan in February/March and soliciting feedback before the decision is made.
    - Head of Transportation Charles Stone gave an explanation of what happened from his perspective (he started the job in January 2018). He had been informed that community meetings had been held about the transportation plan, but the meetings were all about the redistricting, but not specifically about the transportation and walk-zones. He thought that there was already buy-in. Various delays pushed the transportation letters to go out in July.
- Seth Kennard: Update on the Rec center. We are going to be able to add 60 more slots for next year 2019/2020. We are giving them the cafeteria every day. Also have asked that they change the registration process, but no movement on that yet.
- Carrie Lewis: Concern about after-school (Baroody) and not being able to get our students, who want to participate in afterschool activities here at Barrett, over to Cora Kelly or other rec programs. The bus was canceled without another solution

for these families. What can we offer these families who want their children to be able to participate in after-school enrichment but can't because they can't get their kid transport.

- Dr. Hutchings:
  - We need to know how many families are impacted; can't provide an immediate solution.
- Question: What feedback mechanisms do you have for getting in front of demand?
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - We need to establish a strong partnership with Rec department. It hasn't existed in the past. We need to work with our schools to determine or creating an assessment to know who is interested in programing.
- Parent statement: Families who are in Rec, please get involved in the Rec Advisory board to work to make rec better. Just a once/month commitment.
- Question (new ACPS parent): I'm Hearing 2 questions: 1) How do we solve the problems of tomorrow? Your planning process for this first question sounds good. 2) How do we solve the problems of today, this is where we need to focus.
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - We have not done a complete overhaul of solutions we can implement today. We have been spending time figuring out where we are. We are finally in the moment where we can start dealing with implementing solutions. We are trying to meet families in case-by-case situations to address urgent problems of "today."
- Beth Keber: Encourage you to do something with the high school. The fear is it's going to turn into focus groups, into feasibility studies, and then five years from now still nothing is done.
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - Our final recommendation presentation is **this Thursday** to the board. The process started in 2017. The only difference that I brought to the table was to have a vision for the education (what are we educating kids to do). A connected high school network is what is being presented to the board. We have one name for the school, TC Williams; but many options. Already signing an MOU with NOVA for 400 students to do their classes there and graduate with AA and HS diploma. Looking to sign an MOU with Virginia Tech.
  - We need to find a way to get kids out of Minnie Howard so we can rebuild it.
  - Parents have access to Electronic School Board  
<https://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/> Shows all presentations to the board.

- Focus groups going forward will be about the programmatic structure.
- Trey Billips: We have issues in the immediate future CBES regarding the HVAC system, other facilities issues. But we are not a high priority on the CIP budget. How do we get noticed?
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - We know about your HVAC issues, you are being noticed. We are conducting building assessments this spring. This is different from the facilities assessments we have done in the past. The building assessment will be more comprehensive, looking at how the building operates and extra factors beyond “life span” of the HVAC system. This gives us more data, so when we do a ten year plan we have up-to-date information. Next year when we go through the CIP process we will have current data to go to the city with when doing the budget process. We will be able to say: This is what we need, this is why and this is what will happen if we don’t do it.
- Question: Who will be conducting the building evaluations?
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - It will be external (contracted). I do not like the state of our facilities, we have a number of buildings in a bad state. We’ve got to fix that. We need external people to come in and tell us what is going on with our buildings. We don’t have basic procedures in place in facilities management. We are prioritizing getting top facilities. Every school should be a welcoming environment that is warm, safe and dry.
- Question: Is the building assessment going to include air quality testing internally?
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - Yes, it will include the air quality, humidity levels, the building envelope (the drainage, the windows, how does the roof actually drain water, etc.) assessments. Facility assessments in the past have not been as comprehensive. The information will be made public. Holds us accountable.
- Brittany Balis: Is the water quality tested in the assessments?
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - Yes, we test for lead (was done last Jan) and other contaminants.
- Parent comment: Special needs children; her son has had a wonderful experience here. But, facility on the outside (playgrounds), it is difficult for little ones and special needs to use the playgrounds. Would like to see improvements there.

- Dr. Hutchings:
  - We are doing playground assessments this spring.
- Question: ALICE training has been adopted at ACPS. The active shooter is an issues that no one has an absolute answer to. As a district, we need to have a protocol, but some kids have anxiety. Are there any other programs that can go hand-in-hand with ALICE that can support kids in this?
- Dr. Hutchings:
  - We are trying to do age-appropriate training. What is age appropriate for a kindergartener vs. a 2nd grader, etc. It's not one size fits all "elementary" ALICE training. I hear you saying you want some support that goes along with it, I agree with that.
  - We are treating this as a life skill, an active shooter can happen in any environment. I'm hoping we can find ways for families to have discussions in the household as well. Where do you go if there was a disaster? Where is our meeting place? It's a tough conversation, but need to have it.
- Thank you for your time, your transparency. I am determined I do everything in my power to have the best school division for our.