January 2020 PTA minutes 1/14/2020

1. Call to order and flag salute
2. Special guest: Lieutenant Dan Henn
   1. Here to discuss incident at GL that happened last month. (Officer Dan was absent that day which is why he’ S not doing update). Threat was close to dismissal….forced to go into shelter in place due to abundance of caution less than worried about threat itself. While most scenarios have been prepared for, this was a scenario that needed to be figured out a bit as they wen since it was so close to dismissal. Realize its never going to feel like it’s a fast enough response with enough information but they do best to get out facts as soon as they can. Salt brook is closer to GL than NPHS. Statements and threats in this circumstance were dramatically overstated. (Have spoken to Mr Chango at high school about working on identification of issues less than reaction to active shooters.) Situation was elevated by student who identified initial issue. There ended up not being a credible threat. They work on assumption that all is fact until they find otherwise because past issues of active shooters have many times had advance indications of issue. Depending on issues there may be a district wide lockdown or shelter in place or it could be school specific. Social media— information being pushed out is generally assumptions based on students drilling, and they send parents info about what they believe is happening, but not because they are necessarily informed. Then the info travels. Info from school or police directly is only reliable info.
      1. Question: is there ac consequence for the person who may have exaggerated the threat? A: No because you don’t want to discourage kids from coming forward or under emphasize coming forward. Different people have a different tolerance level for circumstances and what the threat is. She did not falsely report what happened, but it was reported 45 minutes later to her mom, and then mom then called police which started a change reaction. First lesson: don’t wait to tell. But, what she reported itself wasn’t criminal. But it was what she believed to be truth.
      2. In two other situations recently, prosecutors office had a different opinion about criminal charges than D Henn. Ultimately no charges filed. Second one, different person, D Henn thought they would charge and prosecutor didn’t. D Henn felt they were very similar. Both social media based.
      3. Procedure questions: different between shelter in place and lockdown was confusing. Middle school went to cafeteria…they had already been dismissed. So they put them in cafeteria as a safe place to be
      4. Questions about people outside, kids walking home: where to go? Mr Firetto wasn’t here, officer dan wasn’t, Dan Henn was here as sub. Unfortunately was a day with unusual circumstances. Three places parents mostly congregate: two playgrounds and front door. Did best to communicate to people there to let them know it was ok to be outside.
      5. Kids going from NPHS to GL for hockey: coach called parents to be sure they knew where kids were: was handled well.
      6. Parents felt good that they handled as best they could and thanked Dan Henn. Dan feels the kids are well educated about drills and the students handle them well, and it’s a compliment to district that they have taught them and to students that they listen.
3. Approval of minutes— approved
4. Principal’s report
   1. Mr Firetto for Mrs Drexinger —
      1. Character ed: listen, lift lead — kids are into activities, trying to help each other out. Do activities w middle and high school. front hallway display: looking for positive things to make them feel better or a way to think about things for day, a positive affirmation…as they walk by they can grab something to carry for day and think about. If stressed, anxious etc….
      2. Teddy bear drive: a high school student is working to collect teddy bears for police department. If they meet with kids the police officer can give to kids to make them feel comfortable. Collecting at the schools. Doesn’t have to be New as long as clean. Will be sending info soon.
      3. Toys for tots went well
      4. Standardized tests; in view feb 5 grades 3 and 5. NJSLA: gr 3-6 may 11-15. Same at AWR and SB. Half days unless student gets extended time. Done by lunchtime. Have enough devices to do all together. Makeup right after. Science: fifth grade, May 5.
      5. Grants: drive for autism. Want to create a sensory hallway. Different things on floor and hallway, activities to do while going through to get energy out. Need to find a place where its not too far to walk, but not too distracting. AWR has one already.
      6. Teacher of the year nominations due 1/31.
      7. New curriculum initiatives to be presented at Feb board meeting.
      8. Staff changes: Hamilton returning feb 3. Ms Demich feb 19.
5. Teacher’s representative report Mr Firetto.
   1. Reported by Mrs. C Hubert (5th grade). See attached.
6. President’s message/announcements
7. Treasurer’s Report — See attached
8. Correspondence Report — Kerry Fitzgerald
   1. Mrs Drewes: thank you for book fair money. Mrs McKenna and class send a thank you. Mrs Smargiassi as well. Thank you for everything you do form a family. Thank you form Elizabeth Bland . Thank you from Mrs Shivers. Thank you for holiday lunch. Thank you from Mrs Leonard for lunch. 1H book fair thank you with kids signatures. 1P sent thank you as well. 1MP too. Thank you for lunch from Mrs Drexinger.
9. Committee Reports: See handout
   1. Reflections- Claudia Ortiz
   2. Sweetheart Dance— Maureen Reilly
   3. Spelling Bee- Urmi Banerjee
   4. Tiger Track — Debbie Merrick
   5. Fundraiser— Kerry Fitzgerald- March 2,27, white party. Meeting Tuesday Jan 21 about it at Kerry’s house.
   6. Yearbook cover contest — Kristina Yadlon
   7. Talent show: kori will be sending instructions about sign up. It’s not a drop off event!
10. Mr Firetto: cell phone use: iPhones and smart watches not to be used during school day (watch only used as watch). Will be asked to stop first, then confiscate devices. Kids are checking social media at school even though parents think they are not on social media. Want to remind parents to talk to kids about talking to strangers online, etc. School also teaches and will continue to teach about responsible use. Policy is to keep in locker.