

GREENWICH
CATHOLIC SCHOOL



October PA Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2018
Meeting called to order: 8:40am

Opening Prayer:

Act of Faith:

O my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that Your Divine Son became man and died for our sins and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because You have revealed them Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Our Mission:

Greenwich Catholic School provides students with a life-long intellectual and spiritual foundation through a rigorous and innovative curriculum focused on faith, critical thinking, responsibility and service.

Our Motto:

ROOTED IN FAITH - SURROUNDED BY COMMUNITY - COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

Approve minutes of the June meeting: 1st: Nina Balestrieri 2nd: Jennifer LaPietra

PA Board Members: Nicole Hartman, Maria Elena Gaztambide, Magda Chrostowski, Meg DeCaro, Susan McKee

Excused Members: Diane Mannello, Christine Keen, Cristina Hamel, MaryRose Driscoll

PA Members: Melissa Kennedy, Matt Hershey, Kim Higgs, Elaine Guiffreda, Sarah Gengo, Jacki Brew, Meghan Novack, Stacy Mack, Karen Blair, Kathryn Stewart, Andrea Kopilak Andrew Lencyk, Nina Balestrieri, Kimberly Garcia, Maren Tripolitsiotis, Alexis Paksi, Julia Kemmerer, Janine Corticelli, Marisa McDonnell, Angela Wilson, Christa Smullin, Victoria Konfory, Wendi Smith, Terri Rohan, Mary Wilcox-Scelsi, Colette LesPerance, Romina Romano, Christa Frederickson, Ximena Perez, Raul Perez, Yvonne Lunney, Joanne Cavaliere, Tricia Caputo, Jen Koenigsberger, Jen LaPietra, Maura Lynn, Tami Allen, Marlo Tamilio, Truman Curtis, Katherine Blanding, Mary Beth Brown

Important Dates:

Oct 4th	Parent Curriculum Session 1 with Dr. Lisa Riegel, 7pm, Cafeteria
Oct 5th	Parent Curriculum Session 2 with Dr. Lisa Riegel, 8:45am, Cafeteria First Friday Mass, 10am Full Dress Uniform Early Dismissal, 12pm
Oct 8th	Columbus Day - School Open
Oct 11th	School Picture Day, Full Dress Uniform, Convent
Oct 12th	5th Grade Mass, 9am
Oct 15th	Book Fair 10/15 - 10/18 Community Service Fair, 8-11am Gym
Oct 16th	1st Grade Mass, 9am
Oct 17th	2nd Grade Mass, 9am
Oct 18th	4th Grade Mass, 9am
Oct 19th	3rd Grade Mass, 9am
Oct 23rd	Fall Open House, 9:30am
Oct 26th	First Quarter ends Greenwich Symphony for Grades 4 & 5 Kindergarten Mass, 9am
Oct 27th	Halloween Party, 5-7pm, Gym
Nov 1st	All Saints Day Mass, 10am Full Dress Uniform
Nov 2nd	First Friday Mass, 10am Full Dress Uniform
Nov 6th	No School
Nov 7th	PA Meeting, 8:45am cafeteria

President's Report:

We wanted to start out our meeting today with a bunch of "Thank You's". The beginning of school and the month of September are so busy and there is a ton of hard work that goes into getting the year off to a great start.

A giant Thank You to Jen LaPietra and her crew for all they did to bring our new families into the fold. Our Welcome Committee worked hard over the summer to reach out to all our newcomers.

If you haven't had a chance to meet any of our new families you must! We have an amazing group of new families.

We did something new this year where we combined the New Parent Cocktail Party with a Welcome Back Cocktail Party for the rest of the school on September 7th. A huge thank you to Cristina Hamel for Chairing this event! We had a tent set up in the courtyard between the lower and upper schools. The weather worked out and it was such a fun night of delicious food catered from Boxcar Cantina and margaritas to make it a fun filled Fiesta!

Next, we had our Annual Volunteer Fair, which we combined with the State of the School Address in the Gym. Thank you to all of you for offering your time and our wonderful committee chairs for decorating your tables and providing information for volunteers. If you were unable to make it that evening, but would like to volunteer for something, please let us know. There are plenty of opportunities. Just tell us what interests you and we will fit you in.

We also lucked out with the weather and had a gorgeous Sunday for our Back to School Picnic! Thank you to Trip for doing the shopping and his last year of hot dog cooking! Another thank you to Cristina for helping out with this event and arranging the bounce houses, Rita's Italian Ice and face painting. All the kids had such a nice time. Thanks again to everyone who came out.

For those of you who don't know, GCS has a garden on our property, down the hill behind the gym and next to the barn and dance studio. I would like to thank Meg Caraher and Diane Mannello for being our summer garden coordinators. Mr. Ronca manages the garden for the school, but during the summer to help him out, we usually have a sign up of GCS families to tend to the garden for weeding and bringing any fruits/vegetables to the Food Bank. We were able to bring 20 lbs of vegetables to the food bank. We had families signed up each week through Sign Up Genius which helped a lot this year. The weather was very unpredictable for the second half of the summer with an abnormal amount of rain, so we didn't have a huge turnout for our harvest period end of August like we usually do.

Besides the vegetable garden in the back, Meg Caraher has been asked to maintain the planting and garden in the front of the school for the rest of the year. We love the mums and Fall decor you added over the weekend Meg, so thanks again!

There are many more thank you's that we will get to through our committee updates, but first an important update for this week is the Parent Curriculum Sessions with Dr. Lisa Riegel. Dr. Riegel is a curriculum expert who has been working with our school since June. She will be here to discuss our school's curriculum work and help parents with important home habits that can help our children succeed in school. Please join us tomorrow night at 7pm here in the cafeteria or Friday morning after drop-off at 8:45am.

Another update is regarding the Parents Association By-Laws. We have updated the By-Laws and will be taking a vote on these changes in the November PA meeting. If you would like to take a look, you can find the on the GCS website.

Also regarding the GCS website, remember the teachers all have their homework posted on their webpage. You can add your email and subscribe to get the assignment updates, but please remember that the dates the teachers put for assignments determines the automation of the reminder, so sometimes there are not daily updates.

A reminder from Chef Bob that everyone has the option to pay for lunches monthly in advance. You can send or bring in cash and check.

Also, a reminder that yearbook prices will increase on December 31st.

VP Report:

Maria Elena Gaztambide:

Maria Elena introduced Lynda Withiam (alumni mom from GCS) and Liza Sama who are leading a beautiful event meant to unite the women of the parish, surrounding parishes and GCS for an evening to prepare our hearts and minds for Advent. This would be held December 5th in either the Convent or the Gymnasium, depending on the numbers we have

sign up. Advent by Candlelight is an evening for women. Women can hostess a table or co-hostess a table and you can invite family. Sister Danielle Baron is the speaker for the evening. This event gives women a peace during Advent that we sometimes forget during the Christmas season. There will be reminders and a sign up in eNews.

Maria Elena also discussed the parking lot issues. People are making the effort to follow the rules. Pre-K teachers requested that you do not get out of your car. If you need to get out, please park in the lot. Also, please don't park in church parking and walk them across. When you are picking up pre-K and an older child, you have to move your car along with the line. Also, when you are doing drop off line, you have to yield to the people coming from North Street. Also, if you are going into the parking lot, please park in the lot and escort your child up to the statue.

Maria Elena mentioned that a document was sent to all committees with the gmail and SignUpGenius passwords had a PA Board member assigned to each committee. Moving forward, this is the point of contact for your committee. Please reach out to that board member regarding updates and questions and CC them on all communication to your volunteers.

Magda Chrostowski:

Magda announce that for all committee chairs, the SignUpGenius deadline was Monday for getting all volunteers entered in. Even though we provide each committee with their own gmail account, we still need the volunteer names entered into Sign Up Genius for every event. This way the names are checked for Virtus Training with the front office and we are sending out the links to all the sign ups in an upcoming eNews to the school. This opens it up for other people who were not able to make it to the Volunteer Fair or the meeting to have a chance to sign up.

She also mentioned to please enter all information regarding vendors, costs/receipts, etc. into SignUpGenius so moving forward it's easier to pass on for the next year. If you have any questions about SignUpGenius and how to use it as an admin, please let us know.

Treasurer's Report:

Meg DeCaro distributed the new preliminary budget. She requested that we vote on it now as a preliminary budget. We have some events toward the end of the year and we are still trying to figure out how much they are going to cost.

A question was asked about subsidizing events. Meg responded that we put aside a chunk of money to help subsidize some of the events to help keep them affordable. An example of this was the Welcome Back Cocktail Party.

A question was asked about field trips. Meg responded that Field Trips are not part of the PA.

Meg mentioned that Arts Day, Curriculum, and Parenting Workshops are still being worked on. A question was asked about Angel Day. Meg responded that the cost of the ticket covers the cost of the event.

A vote was taken and the budget was approved.

Meg also passed around an Income Statement for the month of September. She mentioned that there are a lot of outstanding items that haven't come in yet. There will be more to discuss next month.

She also discussed the process for filling out expense forms. The forms are on the website and are available in the office. The PA has a mailbox where you can hand the expenses in. When you are shopping, you have to give the vendor the Tax ID form. The PA can't reimburse you for tax. Meg will then give the expense form to Pam Carragher's office and she will be writing you a check.

Old Business:

Apple Program – Nina Balestriere discussed the winners of the apple programs this year. We also had a surprise donation this month, two Elton John tickets. A winner will be selected at the teachers meeting on Monday.

Pizza Lunch – Nicole Hartman said that pizza is off and running, headed by our wonderful pizza committee of Kim Higgs and Meghan Novack. Thank you to these ladies who make the pizza lunches a huge success and a day the kids continue to be excited about. Thank you to all of you who have volunteered to help out at pizza as well. The kids love it (and parents too because we don't have to worry about lunch on Wednesdays), but they love seeing their parents there to help out.

Kim Higgs said they are still getting orders in. They now have a late fee. They have all the volunteers they need for the year and they have a sub list.

New Business:

Book Fair - Brigid Futch discussed the Book Fair. It is two weeks away. Set up is on Sunday October 14th between 10am-2pm. It is not a drop off. It is a perfect opportunity for middle schoolers to get volunteer hours. They will provide pizza. They are also having Books and Breakfast on Monday morning. It starts at 7:45am. Parent volunteers need to sign up through Scholastic. There will also be an evening event on Tuesday at 5pm. This year's theme is Clifford. There is also an e-wallet where you can put money on an online account. A packet will go out next week.

Faith-Service-Outreach - Kim Garcia discussed the St. Raphael's drive two weeks ago. They collected wipes, bars, etc. and took it over where they received a tour of the school. We are still doing a Thanksgiving drive for them as well. We will be collecting items for meals and winter accessories.

Kim mentioned that they are still doing Inspirica dinners a couple times a month. Everything is on SingUpGenius so you can pick the date and what you want to bring. It starts at 6:45pm and you will be done by 8pm.

We will be having a Community Service Fair on Monday, October 15th from 8-11am in second half of gym during the first day of the Book Fair. They will have about 10-12 organizations from the area and you can come see how to get involved in the community.

She also discussed the school wide service day in the Spring benefiting the Malta House. The Malta House is a place for young mothers where they give them life skill training and education. Throughout the year they will be doing little events to help raise money for the Malta

House. They will also be asking for cash donations at the Book Fair, in order to buy books for the Malta House. On October 15th, kids can bring in donations and the top two classes get a pizza party.

Kim mentioned that she is also looking to partner with local parishes and non-profits. They are trying to raise awareness for people who want to be involved in the area as well as promote the school. She discussed several local events in the next few weeks. All the details are on St. Catherines on the GCS website under Catholic Identify.

The FSO committee has also taken over the weekly rosary. It is now on Fridays. She encouraged everyone to attend.

Lastly, she mentioned that there is a prayer intention box in front of Jackie's office.

Halloween Party – Magda Chrostowski

The Halloween party is going to be Saturday, Oct 27th from 5pm-7pm. We will have our second Trunk-or-Treat starting at 5pm. We still need volunteers for that so if you would like to decorate your trunk and give out treats please do sign up. I have a signup sheet here or you can sign up via sign up Genius. Trunk-or-Treat was very well received last year so we are hoping for even more cars this year. Trunk-or-Treat will be only for half an hour so we can enjoy the festivities inside the gym. We are also going to have a Jack-O-Lantern contest so please carve your best creations and enter your pumpkins into the contest. We will provide the lights to light the pumpkins. Inside the gym we will have food, DJ, dancing, games, crafts, contests and a hunted maze/house. This event offers lots of fun so please dress up and join us.

Middle school children will be able to volunteer to help out and receive community service hours, only if their parents are at the party supervising them.

For anyone interested in helping us out with Halloween please let us know.

Angel Day - Jen Koenigsberger discussed Angel Day. She is co-chairing with Gina Ilardi and Maura Lynn. This will be our 25th Angel Day. You can sign up at the table after the meeting if you would like to volunteer. Jen is going to be working with Jen LaPietra to remind new families that they have to pay in advance. We get out at noon that day. If you are signed up to volunteer, you must stay to clean up. All of the extra food will go to Inspirica.

Back-To-Basics Benefit – Elaine Guiffreda discussed GCS's annual fundraising event, Back to Basics. It is GCS's largest fundraiser. Please save the date of Saturday, February 2nd at 7pm in the Gym. The first meeting will be in the next week or two. She is looking for a co-chair. They have different committees you can help with. The grade challenges will be a little different this year. She passed around a sign up. Noelle Debes discussed the journals that go out for Back to Basics.

Principal's Report:

Mrs. Kopas thanked everyone for their participation in all of the September events. She brought in Dr. Novia and Mrs. Meese to discuss the math program. She said that program they adopted came after many years of feedback that our math program needed be adjusted. They looked for a comprehensive program with the foundation that we had here that was also sustainable. Mrs. Kopas said that math is just as important in reading comprehension as language arts. You have to understand what the problem is asking and have the kids

verbalize, write and explain how they got the answer. She has heard feedback that vocabulary is difficult. She said, that is correct, but they need to learn this vocabulary when they are younger so when they get to higher level math they will know it. She also addressed the Common Core. The Diocese of Bridgeport has never adopted Common Core. When Common Core standards came out and they did a cross walk and looked to compare our curriculum to the Common Core. They took the best part of common core and put them into the Diocesan standards. They are not adopting the Common Core standards at Greenwich Catholic School. She said if your child is having trouble write a note in the book and the teachers will appreciate the feedback. She is asking parents to reassure the kids that we are all learning together. Mrs. Kopas had asked Dr. Novia to look at the math program over the summer. He had been teaching science with the Pearson book. He said that compared the new math curriculum with the Iowa test and it is all connected. He explained that the new curriculum is for a generalization and then they drill down to more specific questions. This is also teaching them to learn estimation. At the end of every lesson it is integrating five or six different skills.

Mrs. Meese discussed how this is a great way for children to learn executive functioning skills as well because they use real life examples. She said that she is telling her students that everything new takes time and then you eventually get it. She said she realizes the children are concerned with their grades on the tests, but there are so many other things that go into their total grade. Someone asked if they if we do old fashion drills to learn their tables. She responded that they are learning patterns to figure the problems out but yes, it is required that they memorize the math facts. Some of the children that are being challenged are the ones that are good at memorizing the math facts but they don't know how to use them. She said that she can see how much easier it will be for her third graders when they get to the middle school.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:15am