



Gifford Middle School
SAC Minutes
March 16th, 2022

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Paul Tomlinson called the SAC meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.

ATTENDANCE. The following members were present:

- Paul Tomlinson, GMS Faculty and SAC Chair
- Erin Rains, GMS Parent
- Paula Dudley, GMS Staff
- Vickie DeGroat, GMS Parent
- Dr. Patricia Kawi, School District Staff
- Suzie Kulscar, GMS Parent
- Stephanie Hurst, GMS Parent
- Tosha Jones, GMS Principal
- Gina Whu, GMS Parent (via Zoom)
- Jennifer Cumming, Community Representative (via Zoom)

MINUTES. Vickie DeGroat moved to approve the SAC Minutes of February 23rd, 2022. Erin Rains seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

PRINCIPAL UPDATES- Tosha Jones, GMS Principal

- **i-Ready Diagnostic** i-Ready diagnostic testing is wrapping up for the spring session. This is the third i-Ready diagnostic for reading and math this year. To encourage students to do their best and complete the diagnostic, Superintendent Dr. Moore started a competition between the middle schools. As of Tuesday, Gifford Middle School was in the lead. The winning middle school will be announced on March 28th. Gifford Middle will still have its own school-wide i-Ready celebration on Friday, March 18th.
- **Garden Club** : Each week more students are rolling up their sleeves and getting their hands dirty as they help the GMS Garden Club beautify the campus. The Secret Lives Garden Club of Indian River County met with GMS assistant principal Tisha Blidgen and did a walk thru of the campus. The organization decided to do a financial donation to the GMS Garden Club. The GMS Garden Club is currently doing a beautification project on the southside of the 900 building. This area is an original part of the former Gifford High School campus. In May, during Teacher Appreciation Week, the Gifford Historical Museum wants to partner with Gifford Middle School to hold a ceremony, or a “garden party” in this location to honor teachers that taught at Gifford Middle 6, Gifford Middle 7, and Gifford High School. Participants will be able to see the refurbished sundial in the garden, which was dedicated in 1969 to the last graduating class of Gifford High School. Guests will also be able to tour the legacy room in the Media Center.

- **Afterschool:** Afterschool activities will resume after spring break. Every subject area is covered for tutoring on Tuesdays and Thursdays. After school bus transportation is still available to students who need it. During spring break administration will advertise the tutoring program on Facebook to encourage more students to come for help.
- **SAW testing:** On Tuesday, March 15th, Gifford Middle School did their second Stop And Write (SAW) exam. The school basically does a mirror image of the FSA Writing exam to prepare students for the test on April 5th. The school also uses these practice tests to review the testing schedule and to work out any issues. Students have done the practice writing tests with the same teachers in the same location twice, so students know where and who to report to for the FSA Writing exam. The writing tests are graded by the Language Arts teachers and students are given feedback to improve their writing. Students also reviewed examples of other student's writing and reviewed the FSA scoring rubric with their Language Arts teachers in class to help them better understand what is expected on the FSA writing test.
- **8th Grade Events**
 - **Gradventure** for 8th grade students is on May 6th. The last payment for Gradventure is due on Friday, March 18th. This is the first time in two years that Gradventure has been held. Sebastian River Middle will also be attending Gradventure on May 6th. There has been money donated to a Gradventure Trust to assistance deserving students who want to attend and meet the behavioral and academic requirements. Teachers have also sponsored students who could not otherwise attend due to cost.

Graduation Ceremony: Graduation ceremonies will be held for all grades on the last day of school, Friday, May 27th. The 8th grade ceremony will be held at 1:30.

OLD BUSINESS: STEAM – Due to a scheduling conflict, Tisha Blidgen, GMS Assistant Principal, was not able to attend the SAC meeting on February 23rd to review the GMS STEAM program with SAC. She was able to present information on STEAM to the SAC committee on March 16th.

Tisha Blidgen explained that during the 2020-2021 school year, the STEAM program was taught through wheel, which means the STEAM classes were part of the elective rotation. Gifford Middle started the 2021-2022 year with the intention of fully integrating the STEAM program into the curriculum. However, due to curriculum requirements and other issues, Gifford Middle had to scale back that goal. However, every nine weeks the Reading and Critical Thinking teachers do a STEAM project with their classes. Every student has reading so all students are participating in the STEAM project. Electives classes like art are also helping with the STEAM projects. The last STEAM project was shown off at the district science fair this year.

Because it is a heavy lift to get started, the robotics component is being incorporated into the after-school program. When students return after spring break, John Schwenger, GMS Math Coach, and Brandon Grimison, GMS Science teacher, will be starting the Robotics Club. This club will meet on the enrichment Wednesdays. The reading classes will also complete a final STEAM project during the 4th quarter.

Moving into next year, Tosha Jones, GMS principal, stated that during the summer the plan is to embed STEAM fully into the curriculum. However, using strictly the wheel rotation is not feasible since the district is doing away with block scheduling and going back to the traditional straight seven periods. However, there is a possibility that there may be a STEAM elective class for students to take next year.

Gina Whu, GMS Parent asked if there will be a teacher to head the STEAM program?

Tosha Jones stated that we have teachers on staff that have expressed interest in leading the STEAM curriculum/classes. Also, a district career fair was held recently and there were many applicants who attended with degrees in STEAM/STEM. However, there are certain protocols that the school must follow when setting up classes and scheduling. Tosha Jones had the first scheduling meeting with the district to talk about teacher allocations, scheduling, and which electives to add or drop. If Gifford Middle has the allocation for the STEAM position the school would take it.

Gina Whu asked what else might be a hindrance to getting the allocation?

Tosha Jones responded funding is the numbers one hindrance to getting the allocation. The size of our student population determines the teacher allocations. At the scheduling meeting, Tosha Jones said she predicted 560 students and currently we have 569 projected. Gifford Middle School should be ok, however, if we have an influx of students it might help in getting additional teacher allocations.

Gina Whu asked what funding in the past made STEAM even possible?

Tosha Jones stated that Melissa Sleeper had, over the years, been able to get grants to purchase equipment for the STEAM program. That equipment is still at Gifford Middle because it belongs to the school. Gifford Middle has robots, drones, circuit boards, and 3-D printers. The school needs someone to teach the class. Once all the schools finish their scheduling/staffing meetings they will have a clearer picture of their allocations. That information should be ready for the SAC meeting in May.

Tosha Jones also responded that the best way to help get teacher allocations is help increase Gifford Middle School enrollment. Because of school choice, Gifford Middle is at its lowest enrollment ever. Enrollment is the key to everything. Increase enrollment means more allocations for teachers and support staff. Gifford Middle has just over 500 students enrolled, and that number should be closer to 800 enrolled.

To help with increasing enrollment, Superintendent Dr. Moore announced a new AP program for Gifford Middle School. An advanced academic academy would have students leave Gifford Middle School with up to five high school credits. Students currently can earn high school credit for Algebra, Geometry, and Spanish I. Under the new plan students would also be able to earn credit in Biology and US History. However, Biology and US History require students to take an End of Course exam which is 30% of their final grade.

NEW BUSINESS.

Dr. Patricia Kawi -SDIRC Coordinator for Parent and Community Engagement

- Dr. Patricia Kawi offered to hold workshops at the school that would support parent engagement and meet the needs of the school. If parents are interested in holding school-based workshops, Dr. Kawi stated she could connect us with community partners and run those workshops at the school. This allows stakeholders to work directly with those closest to the school.
- Parent Engagement Advisory Council Meeting on April 28th is working on writing the district-wide Parent Engagement Plan. Parents can attend the meeting in person or online. The meeting begins in the TEC at the J.A. Thompson Administrative Center, at 6:00 pm and will last to 7:30 pm. Superintendent Dr. Moore is scheduled to attend. Please see Attachment A for more information.

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business, Suzie Kulscar moved to adjourn. Vickie DeGroat seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Tomlinson adjourned the SAC Meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Tomlinson

GMS Social Studies Teacher and SAC Chair

School District of Indian River County

Next Meeting
February 24th

Voice, Involvement, Presence Parent Engagement Advisory Council (PEAC)

Together we make a
difference



Visit indianriverschools.org
Office of Student Affairs, Advocacy, & Access
or use the QR code to learn more



TIME: 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm
LOCATION: 6500 57th St., Vero Beach
J.A. Thompson Administrative Center
or Microsoft Teams
CONTACT: Dr. Kawi
patricia.kawi@indianriverschools.org