

McDonogh #35 Parent Teacher Organization Meeting

Wednesday, December 5, 2018, 5:30 p.m.
McDonogh #35 Library – 4000 Cadillac Street

Attendees: PTO Officers: Treschere Washington (President), Lynn Pittman (Vice President), Trenise Pittman (Corresponding Secretary), Dave Cash (Recording Secretary); Courtney Taylor (Parent Liaison); parents

President Treschere Washington called the meeting to order at 5:46 p.m.

Introductions and Purpose

All those present introduced themselves. President Washington said she would like to hear from parents who attended the last two meetings with the Executive Director.

President Washington said she wants to know what we can do to stop what is happening to McDonogh 35 to get some of the results we want.

Ronald Magee said there is a meeting with John Brown, president of the Orleans Parish School Board. He plans to present to Mr. Brown evidence of collusion and conspiracy to make Orleans Parish a completely charter district. He wants to know why the five (now one) non-failing schools directly under Orleans Parish School board (and never under Recovery School District) must be chartered.

Trenise Pittman asked what Mr. Magee's information has to do with stopping this school from becoming a charter school.

President Washington said her main concern is students in the building right now and what they need to get what they need.

Courtney Taylor said if we can't stop it, she wants to know what we can do to have input with whomever is coming in.

Valetta Bethune said that every time we say what we want, that does not take place.

Several parents expressed concerns that the district and operators and have been meeting with the same small group of parents, just so they can claim they have talked to parents.

Courtney Taylor said a parent at a recent meeting was very upset that district representatives were talking about the superintendent's decision, as if it was already made. The parent was upset, wondering why a meeting was being held to get parent input when a decision had already been made.

Ronald Magee said that we should not be focusing on the superintendent, but rather the school board, who has the real power.

Trenise Pittman expressed concern that a meeting with John Brown is happening tomorrow and that parents weren't invited. Many agreed that parents should have been invited.

Trenise Pittman said we will never be on the same page until all the stakeholders are on the same page.

President Washington said there will always be a PTO president and an Alumni Association president and that those two should always be talking to each other. She also expressed anger that the Alumni Association held events during homecoming on the McDonogh 35 campus, when the students here are fighting for a home to come to.

Johnell Williams, who is a parent and an alumna, shared that many of the students she knows at McDonogh 35 are not prepared and are not motivated to go to college. They don't have a teacher they can communicate their concerns to. She said her concern is what is happening with the students in the school right now.

Courtney Taylor said the counselors, faculty, and staff in this building work their behinds off every day.

Lynn Pittman reported on a meeting with Ms. Chapman held since the last PTO meeting, in which administration responded to PTO concerns:

Where is last year's Title I money?

They do not know where the Title I money is.

We would like to receive a monthly financial report of revenues and expenditures, as well as the school's FY18-19 budget.

We can meet with Mr. Clay and Mrs. Chapman to see the budget, but it will not be made available to everyone.

Where is the \$2,000,000 released by the school board?

The \$2M covered salaries and building expenses.

How can we get AP, honors, and gifted classes for all grade levels, starting immediately?

We need an organizational chart.

Because there is a test at the end of the courses, it would be best to start AP classes in the fall so that the kids have the entire semester to learn the material and prepare for the AP test.

What is your plan to communicate with parents, students, faculty, and staff about changes in staffing at the school?

Weekly newsletter/blasts.

What is the organizational chart of the school?

We were only told that Mr. Clay is at the top of the chart, Ms. Chapman falls under him, as well as Ms. Gibson, Ms. Caston and Ms. Pichon.

Why are grades being inflated?

To stop teachers from using grades as tools to curtail behavior issues.

Dave Cash suggested tabling our agenda for this meeting and adjourn, since we seem to be more interested in commiserating than following our agenda. He expressed frustration that this meeting was yet again an exercise in reaction instead of taking action as a PTO to make things better for the students in the building right now.

Several people agreed.

Lynn Pittman suggested that each parent in attendance suggest a project. Several people suggested ideas and a lively discussion ensued.

Lynn Pittman moved and Courtney Taylor seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Carried

Respectfully submitted: Dave Cash, Recording Secretary.