

THE MINUTES OF DAYSPRING MONTESSORI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2023.

Starting time: 3:20 pm

Opening prayer: Mr. Harry Anamoo.

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A member noted an event on page 6 which was not captured in full. The secretary noted the correction. **Mr. Hammond** moved for the adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting and he was seconded by **Mr. Michael Aggrey**.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- ❖ The Chairman enquired about the extent of work on the wheelchair passage at the new site. The Principal informed the house that it had been completed and fully operational and that the Directors were considering terrazzo work on it for beautification.
- ❖ The Chairman sought to know about the National Standardized Test and the fees being charged for private schools while the public schools were not charged. The Principal indicated that pupils in Basic 2 paid GHC34.00 and GHC38.00 for pupils in Basic 4. He informed the house that public schools did not pay because they were captured under the capitation grant. The Principal reiterated the need for the school to take advantage of the program despite the cost, as the benefits for the school and the learners far outweighed the financial burden.
- ❖ The Chairman asked about the water dispenser discussed at the last PTA and why the decision had taken so long. The Principal indicated that it had been considered seriously at the level of the Directors and that the response is very positive.
- ❖ The Chairman asked about the punishment regime that was set to be introduced by the school and the concerns raised by the parents regarding its inconvenience. He also wanted a follow up on the concerns in relation to organizing school events on Saturdays and its religious inconveniences. The Principal noted that so far the rule had not been applied and the concerns had also been well noted. On the issue of the Saturday events he also indicated that management considered the issue as a serious matter as it also affected the Saturday classes and that a decision will be made before the next graduation.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

➤ Re-engagement of Mrs. Vida Amakye

The Principal informed the house about the return to full duty of one of the member of staff – Mrs. Vida Amakye who had suffered an ailment about two years ago and had made full recovery. He indicated that she rejoined the staff from the very beginning of the term after the doctors who managed her had given her a certificate of fitness to return to work. He expressed profound appreciation to the members of PTA and also those in their individual capacities who had contributed in one way or the other to ensure she recovered fully.

➤ **Funeral Announcement**

The Principal informed the house about the passing of the former Asante Twi teacher in the person of Owura Martin Owusu. He indicated that the final funeral rites would be on Saturday 27th May, 2023 at Adasawase-Anyinam in the Eastern Region.

➤ **New academic calendar**

The Principal announced that children will be spending 4 terms before the close of this year as a result of government's effort at readjusting the academic calendar that had been temporarily disrupted by Covid-19 restrictions. As a result the 4th term would be the first term of the new 2023/2024 academic year. He entreated all parents to help children cope effectively during this period by offering the best of emotional support to the children at home while the school plays its part.

➤ **Wheelchair service**

The Principal announced that wheel chair passage project initiated by the school at the JHS department to help the physically challenged students, staff and visitors to access the various floors without any inhibitions had been completed and fully operational. He also announced that construction of a ramp from outside the gates unto the compound to allow for easy access from outside the gates had also been completed. He also informed the house that the school welcomed donations of wheelchairs from anyone or any group to help the school make progress in this area.

➤ **Bus transportation of students**

The Principal announced that discussions are in place to have a rental company known as **Transit Car Rentals** to offer bussing services to students to and from school every week. He encouraged interested parents to contact the management for further enquiries.

➤ **Stationery**

The Principal informed the house that due to the unprecedented cost of stationery submitted by suppliers for this academic year, parents had to pay more for stationery this year. He informed the house that Directors decided to ease the burden of this cost on parents by spreading the cost over the three terms instead of having parents pay it at one go. He noted that as a result, the school encountered some initial challenges in the distribution of stationery but all challenges had since been resolved.

➤ **EDVES platform**

The Principal noted that the school management system, EDVES, had become an integral part of the report generation and online assessment by the teaching staff and learners. He indicated that the platform is gradually going through further improvement that will allow for a broader understanding of a student's performance in a particular academic term or year. He encouraged parents to familiarize themselves with this platform to help in monitoring the performance of the learners. He urged parents to contact the I.T support team whenever they had any issues regarding EDVES.

➤ **Class specific WhatsApp platforms**

The Principal stressed on the importance of the class specific WhatsApp platforms in tracking pieces of assignment, projects and other relevant information relating to a specific class or the school in general. He explained that the platform empowered parents to effectively be part of what had gone on in their child's class and that children would no longer go home and give wrong information about homework to their parents or guardians. He therefore appealed to parents to freely contact teachers via these platforms or privately through decorous conversations to resolve classroom related issues in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

➤ **The internet, social media, smartphones**

The Principal in affirming the need for children to be exposed to new technologies urged parents to ensure that supervision of the children in such instances is taken more seriously. He bemoaned how children are being exposed to child-unfriendly and age-inappropriate content all the time. He urged parents to discourage the children from creating accounts on social media sites until such a time that they are matured enough. He stressed how these sites affect the time that children may use to study. He noted that these cautions were as a result of some conversations and videos intercepted by the school involving some pupils.

➤ **A newly upgraded school's website in the offing**

The Principal announced that the current school website with the address dmis.edu.gh was in the process of being given a facelift and would be in full operation very soon. He also indicated that once it became operational the current school management platform, EDVES could be accessed directly from there.

➤ **Montessori demonstration for new pre-school parents**

The Principal announced to the house that the annual tradition of putting together a presentation on the Montessori approach for the benefit of new pre-school parents had been held on Saturday 28th January at the primary department of the school from 9am to midday.

➤ **National Standards Assessment Test (NSAT)**

The Principal informed the house that as part of the New Pre-tertiary Curriculum introduced by the government, pupils in Basic 2 and Basic 4 sat for the NSAT in December of 2022. He noted that the results had not yet been received and that anytime it became available he would make the parents aware.

➤ **In-service training for staff through PLCs and Peer teaching**

The Principal indicated that the school had dedicated one day in the week after school for Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions and specifically to our Peer teaching model. He noted that these sessions were meant to update and to further equip the staff to be more knowledgeable and effective in the teaching profession.

➤ **Disciplinary issues and behavior management**

The Principal highlighted the importance of discipline in any educational set up and the link between discipline and rewards and punishment. With caning having been proscribed, he noted that there had been several years of brainstorming on the most effective and sustainable ways of rewarding and punishing behavior in school. He highlighted some of the new techniques as detention or grounding in class during snack/lunch breaks and withholding a pleasant stimulus from the child. He informed the house that the

school intended to fully activate some of these behavior management techniques, to instill the needed discipline in the learners. He urged parents to be patient and supportive of the school during the implementation of some of these measures.

➤ **Robotics**

The Principal informed the house that robotics lessons were ongoing for children from KG to JHS 1 and that dedicated classrooms have been created at both the primary and JHS sections of the school to ensure easy delivery of lessons and learning. He also informed the house that Robotics will feature on the end of term report of the learners.

➤ **Health issues**

The Principal humbly appealed to parents to as much as possible keep children with infections at home to avoid cross infections. He also pleaded that when children have any special health conditions that school authorities need to be aware of, parents should kindly come and discuss with management so that appropriate remedies may be prescribed for the management of such cases and also in times of emergency.

➤ **Co-curricular activities**

The Principal stressed the importance of co-curricular activities such as social club activities, academic club activities, excursions among others. He indicated that all these offer avenues for the inculcation and development of equally important soft skills which are relevant for their age. He encouraged all students to join one academic club and one social club.

➤ **Classrooms out of bounds**

The Principal stressed on the school policy that discourages parents from entering the classrooms whenever they bring their children to school. He encouraged parents to leave their wards at the gate to find their ways into the classroom and that the classrooms are only accessible to parents or guardians during Open Days.

➤ **School canteen**

The Principal informed the house that beginning second term, the school would start running its own canteen services with a variety of menu. He informed the house of improved quality and quantity and that class teachers would be responsible henceforth for the collection of the feeding fees. He advised parents to try and make weekly payments towards the feeding of their children through their class teachers. He therefore encouraged all parents to ensure maximum patronage.

➤ **School fees**

The Principal urged parents to try as much as possible to pay up school fees on time. He urged parents to kindly take advantage of some of the opportunities the school had given for easy and convenient payment of school fees through the filling of forms among others at the Accounts office.

➤ **Preparations towards BECE 2023**

The Principal informed the house that preparations are ongoing for the current batch of BECE candidates and that subsequent to their first mock examinations the parents had been engaged in frank discussions to plan and strategize for the way forward. He also indicated that the BECE was scheduled for September.

He also informed the house that a group of candidates will be assigned a supervisor who will guide them and give them the necessary support as they studied towards the BECE this year.

➤ **2022 BECE**

The Principal presented a summary of the 2022 BECE results which is published below. He indicated that on the whole, there was a 100% pass from the results of the 30 candidates presented. He indicated that some of the children did extremely well while others also managed to do their best under the given circumstances. He however admitted that the results could have been much better. He indicated that despite the disappointment he was full of confidence about the quality and level of children produced by the school as attested to by the several parents whose wards had graduated from the school. The Principal also touched on the “thorny issue” of the system of grading and the favoritism of government policy towards public schools at the expense of private schools both in grading and placement of candidates.

GRADE	ENG.	MATHS	SOCIAL STUDIES	INTEGRATED SCIENCE	BDT	RME	ICT	FRENCH	GHANAIAN LANGUAGE	
									GA	TWI
1	12	5	6	3	3	4	24	3	--	--
2	13	6	14	7	10	8	5	15	4	--
3	4	8	4	12	13	12	--	4	4	1
4	--	6	4	5	2	5	--	6	4	5
5	--	4	1	2	--	--	1	1	1	7
6	--	1	--	--	2	--		1		2
7	1		1	--		1				--
8				1						1
9										1

TOTAL AGGREGATE = 416

AVERAGE AGGREGATE = 416 ÷ 30

NUMBER OF STUDENTS = 30

= 13.86

AGGREGATE	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES
06	2
07	1
08	2
09	2
10	1
11	2
12	4
13	2
14	4
15	2
16	1
17	1
18	2
19	--

20	1
21	1
22	1
39	1

➤ **The future Dayspring Montessori International School**

The Principal in conclusion expressed his “unwavering desire to build Dayspring Montessori International School into an institution that continuously supports life-long learning and not just an institution preparing learners for examinations”. He stressed that as an institution building competencies and capacities of children as a whole is very important to their success. He therefore encouraged parents to join hands with the school to achieve these objectives.

➤ **Upcoming events**

HERITAGE DAY	Friday 10 th March
REVISION WEEK	14th -20th March
EXAMS WEEK	21st-27th March
VACATION	29th March, 2023

REACTIONS TO PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Wheel Chair

Nii Teiko Tagoe commended the management of the school for the provision of wheel chair passage and he added that it makes the sense of inclusive education more meaningful.

BECE

Dr. Chris Quist commended the Principal for the detailed BECE results. He suggested that if it were possible litigation processes should be rolled out to seek justice for the affected children. He noted that children are taught that if they worked hard it would pay off and so if their hard work is been undermined by the system then the best option is litigation.

Mr. Harry Anamoo also added his voice to the bias in the conduct of the BECE and highlighted on the issue of the referee being the same as the player. He advocated an independent body to mediate between the GES and the candidates.

The Chairman also appealed to the Directors to intervene to seek the legal redress and that they can join other private schools to fight for the children.

Mrs. Afankwah also narrated how her ward who was member of the current batch of BECE graduates had aggregate 09 but she knew per her daughter’s standards and effort she could have scored 06. She also recalled that even though her daughter had not chosen any of the public senior high schools because she was going to a private school the system had still placed her. She also places the blame firmly on government for what private schools are going through.

She also commended the efforts of the school and offered high praise that despite what the results are showing Dayspring is a very good school based on her experience and the performance off her daughter

in the new school she found herself. She regretted the insults and fury that the results generated on the platform and urged parents to remain calm and trust the school to deliver quality education.

Mr. Daniel Ofori also enumerated the efforts that he personally as a director had taken in ensuring the best output from teachers to the children. He also stressed that as a school there was a zero tolerance on cheating of any form. He also indicated that even though the results have been far below the expectations of the school he was also satisfied with the numerous encounters he has had with graduates of the school and the performance in the outside world.

Jeremy Sarweh noted however that the subject analysis showed a certain inconsistency with ICT having a very high number of Grade 1 compared to the other subjects.

The Principal was also baffled and that even though it was not the ideal situation it would be difficult to explain.

Mr. Kojo Nyame Quarshie also narrated how a Nigerian student he had taught had Grade 1 in Twi even though she could not speak a word of Twi. He advised that the school should find means to petition consistently to the appropriate authorities and that ultimately things might change.

Mr. Christian Diabah also noted that there is a bigger conversation of the grading system which also needs to be looked at. He pleaded with the Principal to let any petitions or conversations with those in charge also focus on the biased and inappropriate grading system and how to ensure that grading is not based on school colours. He urged parents to now begin to target the real issue and that they all must be interested in what happens in the country and speak up.

Madam Leticia Okyere informed the house that based on the nature of her work, she has had the opportunity to enquire of people in authority about the unfair treatment of Private Schools despite their importance in the educational system. She indicated that she was doing her part in her own small way but she advised that the private schools come together to petition appropriate National Institutions such as the National House of Chiefs and they should be persistent and that based on her experience eventually their case would be heard and the right things would be done. She urged the bodies not to be intimidated by “the Higher Authorities”.

Mr. Gordon Saah noted that results are absolute and that the only evidence of someone doing well must appear on the paper. He believes that even as an adult working so hard and being denied what your efforts deserve can be heartbreaking how much more to a child. He urged the schools to come together and write a petition to the appropriate authorities.

The Principal indicated that there had been a recent meeting organized by the Ghana National Associations of Private Schools where all the concerns about grading and placements in relation to private schools were discussed. He informed the house that members had to pay some levies to help the association test the laws on these matters that have been raised. He expressed optimism that the discussions would yield some positive results.

EDVES

Dr. Chris Quist enquired why the grading system on the EDVES was using Grades A,B, C etc for the JHS students but the BECE uses Grade 1,2 3 etc.

The Chairman advised that it should be possible to have the system adjusted to reflect the correct grading system.

Christian (ICT teacher) responded that the grading system was approved from the GES.

The Principal also explained that the use of Grade 1, 2 etc was been phased out with the old curriculum and that the grading used on the EDVES platform was in conformity with the new approved grading system which was applicable to all students up to Basic 8.

National Standards Based Test

Mr. Ben Ayeh enquired what would happen to learners who did not perform well in the tests when the results are released.

The Principal indicated that the tests are for monitoring and to see if the standards that are set for a child in basic 2 and 4 are attainable and realistic based on performance. He noted that learners are supposed to exhibit some competencies and skills and knowledge so when the test is administered, the child's output would determine the kind of intervention to be offered.

School Canteen

Mr. Ebenezer Kondu wanted assurances that children who did not patronize the school canteen would not be discriminated against.

The Principal indicated that Directors have firmly taken the decision to improve on quantity and quality of food served and he was therefore encouraging as many parents as possible to patronize but he also assured that there would be no discrimination as the school is aware of various legitimate reasons why parents might not be able to patronize the canteen.

The Chairman asked for further clarification if it was optional or compulsory.

Mr. Nii Ayite Hammond pleaded with the Principal to state categorically whether the canteen was compulsory or not.

The Principal still encouraged as many of the children to patronize as it is healthy and of good quality and quantity.

WHATSAPP PLATFORMS

The Chairman informed the house that notice would be put on all the Whatsapp platforms to solicit for opinions on the rules and regulations that would guide the platform interactions. The views would be collated and if it will be adopted at the next PTA meeting.

ELECTIONS

The Chairman informed the house of the need to elect a non-executive member to form the full complement of the new Executive Committee which currently has 4 members. He noted that 4 would make decisions difficult and there is the need for the fifth member in case decisions go into a vote.

Nominations were welcomed and two members were nominated:

Mrs. Randa Afankwah a resident of Dansoman, a caterer and the manager of an event center.

Nii Teiko Tagoe a resident of Lapaz and a teacher.

After the election by show of hands the final results were as follows:

Nii Teiko Tagoe 14 votes

Mrs. Randa Afankwah 35 votes

The Chairman therefore declared Mrs. Afankwah as duly elected as a non-executive member of the PTA Executive Committee.

INCREASE IN PTA DUES

The chairman informed the house that based on budgetary projections for 2023,

Total expenditure GH¢ 25,600.00

Total income GH¢ 24,000.00

He noted that this would therefore create a budget deficit and that based on the forecast he was proposing an increase in PTA dues from the current GH¢10.00 to GH¢ 12.00. He therefore threw the decision to the house to solicit for opinions.

The house unanimously approved the increment by consent to take effect from the second term.

AUNT VIDA EXPRESSES APPRECIATION

The Chairman invited Auntie Vida who was accompanied by her husband to officially express her deepest appreciation to the entire PTA for the support in so many ways to aid in her recovery and rehabilitation during her time of ailment.

She read a letter expressing her appreciation and gratitude and the house applauded her resolve and bravery to return to work and wished her well.

OTHER MATTERS

Dr. Chris Quist enquired if the continuous assessment of 30% that was submitted to WAEC was factored into the grading system and that if that was the case, what are the processes in place to getting it checked and monitored. He was curious as to how pupils who write their BECE in other schools whiles in form two have their continuous assessment submitted.

The Principal noted that the continuous assessment is supposed to constitute the 50 % of the total marks for BECE candidates and that WAEC requests the marks through the municipal offices of the GES. He indicated that the assumption is that it is used although it has not been validated.

Mr. Daniel Ofori highlighted on the issue of how the children are using the washroom in an irresponsible manner thereby reducing the life span and quality of the facilities in the washrooms. He urged parents to talk to the children to maintain the facility and use it responsibly.

Mr. Maxwell Ampadu asked if there is an entrenched provision in the implementation of the new curriculum that would prevent other governments from tampering with its implementation in the future.

Madam Leticia Okyere noted that as far as she was concerned plans are far advanced to codify the new curriculum into law thereby making it almost impossible for future governments to tamper with its implementation.

Madam Comfort Owusu complained about her challenges with the language of communication at PTA which makes it difficult for her to understand proceedings and make relevant contributions. She also bemoaned the slow nature with which the management replaces teachers who are either not too well or have resigned.

The Chairman noted that with the language barrier it would be extremely difficult to choose a particular local language as there are people of different tribes. However he indicated that members are free to express themselves in any language if they wanted to make a contribution.

The Principal also noted that the school had always been proactive with regards to the replacement of teachers and that at any point in time there are substitute teachers available in case of any emergencies.

Mr. Christian Nyamekeh had a problem with reporting time and time consciousness and then appealed to parents to ensure punctuality of their wards.

The Chairman added that in terms of enforcement of reporting time when the gate is shut there must not be any staff member on site to be engaged by late comers.

The Principal stated there was no compromise on reporting time and he encouraged parents to inculcate this time consciousness in the children.

Mr. Christian Diaba expressed appreciation to staff and management for the great experience the children had in terms of the recently held excursion. He however bemoaned the departure time and urged future events to be strict bound to its pre announced departure times.

A Concerned Member inquired whether management would consider getting another speaker at the back for future meetings as those at the back could hardly hear the proceedings.

In the absence of any further deliberations **Mr. David Nii Armah Aryee** moved for the adjournment of the meeting. He was seconded by **Mr. Christian Nyamekeh**.

Closing prayer **Dr. Chris Quist** at 5:49pm.