

# NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

## The Parent Teacher Association of The Neighborhood School General Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, April 18, 2019

**Type:** Monthly General Meeting

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.

**Notice Provided in Advance:** Yes

**Location:** TNS PTA Room

Meeting called to order at 8:30am.

### Agenda:

1. Approval of [previous minutes](#)
  - Approved.
2. President updates
  - Library
    - TNS and STAR Academy parents met three times to discuss the library situation. At the most recent meeting, both Darlene and Dyanthe were present. Darlene explained the budget process and how it affected Cheryl's salary. TNS and Star parents worked on a petition to request the DOE's help in resolving this matter: <http://chng.it/qKCvzw9R8r>. Since there were still questions about school budgets, Peter has asked the district to set up an information session about how schools are funded. More to come.
  - Auction
    - Successful, fun event for the community and was a very profitable fundraiser for the PTA. On track to exceed revenue goals for this fundraiser.
    - Online auction had 94 bidders (up from 65 last year) and generated \$15,903, significantly more than in prior years. Live, silent, and online-only auction items all together generated \$26,935. We now need to collect payments and distribute auction items.
    - Thanks to the community for participating in this event and a huge thanks to the small handful of parents who contributed countless volunteer hours to planning the event, working the event, and soliciting auction donations.
3. Principal update
  - School food
    - Dyanthe shared an update about STAR wanting to switch back to the standard lunch menu. Large portion of STAR students qualify for free lunch, and school lunch participation at STAR seems to have gone down after switch to alternative menu. Home lunch is a burden for some STAR families. In contrast, since last month, there has been an increase in participation from TNS.
    - Meeting scheduled with parents from both schools, kitchen staff, and other admin staff for after spring break to discuss more.

# NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

4. School Food advocate and speaker: Andrea Strong and Q&A (8:40 - 9:00)
  - Advocating with DOE, mayor, and others for fresh food cooked directly in schools, menu designed and named for kid palate, as opposed to the current alt menu.
  - Negative effects of standard lunch menu: Generation of kids with life expectancy below their parents. Standard school lunch promotes “fast-food” diet that not only contributes to obesity and diabetes but also leads to unhealthy eating habits long-term.
  - Shared rollout plan in her kids’ school, which included a wellness program.
  - Discussed TNS/STAR situation with parents. More complex than stand-alone school, since our schools share a kitchen/menu and have different levels of dependency on school lunch. Hunger is a real problem/concern for some at STAR. Meeting between TNS and STAR after the break will offer more clarity on the issue.
  - Suggestion that tastings and nutrition education around food and the menu might help. Andrea will put TNS in contract with several non-profit organizations that can help, too.
5. Events/committee updates
  - Movie night, 5/3
    - Last movie of the year. [Volunteers can sign up to help here](#). Hope is that the spreadsheet improves visibility into volunteer efforts involved.
  - Garden/Eco/Wellness event, 5/9
    - These committees have partnered to throw one big event called “Healthy Planet Healthy Kids”.
    - Full schedule to be shared soon. Will include activities around sustainability, food, environment, wellness, throughout day, for different audiences: Tables in courtyard, science-fair-like, during the day. Garden in Cafe tasting during lunch. Garden party with foods and drinks later from 5-7. There will also be a family obstacle course and yoga and fitness classes.
  - Restaurant night, 5/14.
    - [Joe and Pats](#).
  - Spring dance
    - This may still happen in June, if someone volunteers to plan.
  - Diversity: Cookbook and Rice 'n Rhythm, 5/22
    - Music/food festival focusing on common threads (rice and music) across cultures. Families encouraged to bring and share favorite rice dishes.
    - There will be tables and stations with different activities, including an eco component (rice cultivation and how it affects our environment).
    - Committee would love more performances this year. If you know performers who might want to participate, reach out to Nikkie at [nikki@maebfilms.com](mailto:nikki@maebfilms.com).
    - Expanded this event to include STAR as well this year.
6. PTA mission statement
  - PTA exec board communicated recommendation that next year’s fundraising budget be lowered, given the huge effort and stress involved this year and in recent years, which

# NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

typically falls on a few shoulders, and the increased financial burden on families and feeling of fundraising overshadowing community-building.

- In lowering the budget, the focus should be what to preserve rather than what to cut. In support of this challenge, the PTA exec board drafted and shared a mission statement that aims to capture the priorities of current years. This statement is not set in stone, and the language can be revisited by the next PTA.

## 7. Treasurer's report

- Reviewed [summary treasurer's report](#). 21K still need to be raised, but 8K surplus expected at end of year.
- Committee heads encouraged to submit receipts for reimbursements sooner rather than later.
- Donations to classrooms are tax-deductible. Individuals who donated can ask Theresa for a tax letter. Just need to provide receipt.

## 8. Next year's budget

- Reviewed [budget process](#). Summary: Collaboration between current and next exec board, since next board will carry budget forward. Outgoing officers develop the budget, working closely with Dyanthe. After new exec board is elected, there will be a budget meeting on May 30 for new exec group to review school needs and revise and further next year's budget.
- In parallel, SLT and grants committee have put out teacher surveys to identify opportunities for PTA to offer further support. A group is also working on a survey to parents to capture issues most important to TNS families.
- Peter and Matt to head up the election committed. 3rd person still needed as formality. If you are interested in serving on the PTA exec group next year, please reach out to Peter, Matt, or one of the current PTA execs. 2 open spots for SLT next year as well.
- Some parents voiced confusion about the process and how priorities are chosen. Discussion about whether the budget process should be handled by the exec group primarily (the group bearing the burden of fundraising) or by the TNS community as a whole via a democratic process to make budgeting decisions reflect desires of the majority and to take hard decisions off shoulders of the few.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45am.