

# NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

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

**Date:** Thursday, May 16, 2019

**Type:** Monthly General Meeting

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

**Notice Provided in Advance:** Yes

**Location:** TNS PTA Room

Meeting called to order at 8:35am.

### Agenda:

1. Approval of [previous minutes](#)
  - a. Approved.
2. Principal updates
  - a. Library
    - Background: Historically, TNS and STAR have split Cheryl's salary. This year, STAR didn't cover their half, but Dyanthe reached a solution with DOE. Going forward, if STAR decides not pay for half, it's likely that Cheryl would be part-time just for TNS.
    - No updates. Waiting on school budgets in June. But Dyanthe is optimistic about a good outcome.
    - Parents have formed a cross-school library committee and are working together on this topic. Recently looked last 5 years of STAR's budget. Most STAR parents likely weren't involved in, or aware of, the decision to cut this funding. Jenny to make it possible for interested TNS families to get more involved.
  - b. Prose PD day
    - June 18th will be a day of professional development for staff. No attendance for students.
    - Dyanthe will send out a list of all non-attendance days in June, since there are multiple.
  - c. Curriculum night
    - Taking place on the 29th and 30th. This is an event for parents only. Childcare TBD.
    - 4 - 7pm: Studio in a School art show, featuring art and projects by our children. Parents will also participate in projects.
    - 5:30 - 7pm: Presentations about TNS curriculum.
  - d. Third-Street Music
    - Open house on the 18th. Opportunity for children to try out instruments/areas. For TNS students, first year is free, second year is reduced.
3. Presidents updates
  - a. School food

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- At last month's general meeting, expert guest spoke at length about school food and the alt menu. It was an active discussion, also covering STAR families' feelings and concerns.
  - Since then, Jenny spoke to at least a dozen STAR families. Some STAR families talked about not knowing about alternate options (pbj, cheese sandwich) on days when main option is not appealing. There may also be a small but vocal group behind the STAR reaction.
  - Both presidents suggested it's mostly miscommunication and misunderstanding and that there's a need for more interaction and positive communication across the two schools, taking the Garden committee as a good example.
  - Next steps: Meeting with superintendent schedule for Friday (May 17), including PTA presidents, a few other TNS parents, and a few STAR parents.
  - Ultimately, the decisions is up to both principals, but the PTA encourages TNS families to share their thoughts and feelings with Dyanthe on this.
4. [Treasurer's report](#)
5. 2019-2020 budget
- a. Outgoing PTA exec group has [proposed a budget](#). It is now open for discussion. The next exec board will be elected in 2 weeks, followed by more discussion and amendment of budget. Final vote likely at June PTA General Meeting. Important: Families must attend to participate in the vote.
  - b. Theresa is hosting a meeting on Monday, May 20th, for families to ask questions and learn more about the [budget process](#).
  - c. Main changes in budget:
    - Reduced event fundraising by 24k to lower pressure on the people who lead these efforts, given the large time commitment and difficulty in getting sufficient volunteer support.
    - Cut STAR health programming. Theater programming about changing bodies for 5th grade before they go off to middle school.
    - Fund only 1 teaching assistant instead of 2, possibly to be shared across both K classes that don't have a DOE-funded para. Adding a second assistant would have increased the budget by 20k.
      - Discussion about reality in other schools (usually no second adult in K classrooms) and the fact that student teachers help here.
    - Cut lice checking, which was considered ineffective.
    - Cut water bottles in classrooms, which was implemented after lead testing returned poor results. School has replaced water fountains and resolved this issue in the meantime.
  - d. Discussion cost of art, tendency for cost to roll from one year to the next, and the importance of art in the eyes of several families present.

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- e. Discussion about whether there are alternatives to cutting the budget, and whether the cuts change the pressure on the PTA in terms of time involved, etc.
  - Parents offered ideas, from forming small group focused on alternate solutions to focusing on cultural changes/community building at TNS to encourage greater awareness of need and participation. Several parents agreed with importance of community building.
  - Rene confirmed that there's lots of room for improvement but cautioned that the reality of the majority of TNS families is they can't/don't attend PTA meetings and volunteer. Also mentioned a survey to increase awareness and get sign-up that received only 26 responses.
- 6. Events/committee updates
  - a. Election committee
    - Election is May 31st at 8:30am. Have nominations for most positions. People are free to self-nominate at the meeting. More communication to come.
  - b. Rhythm n Rice 5/22
    - Schedule for 5/22. Volunteers still needed, also for bringing rice dishes. Meeting schedule for Monday, May 20th.

Adjourned 9:45.