

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

The Parent Teacher Association of The Neighborhood School General Meeting

Date: Thursday, November 17, 2019

Time: 8:30am

Location: TNS PTA Room

Type: Monthly General Meeting

Notice Provided in Advance: Yes

1. Meeting called to order 8:35am.

2. Introductions.

Those present introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on Oct. 17, 2019. Motion seconded. Motion passed.

4. PTA Co-Presidents' Report.

We attended an event held by elected officials that discussed Fair Student Funding (we only get 90% of the allocated school funding and we talked about legislation to fix that) and what it means to be designated a potential Targeted Support Improvement (TSI) school (we will discuss more about that later today). We are connecting with other PTA presidents at similar schools to consider joint advocacy.

We also learned that new assessments currently at certain schools may be extended to all schools. The Assessment is called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).

This may be a year that we have to do a lot of work to explain, advocate, and defend our approach to teaching and assessment. We will discuss more today.

4. Treasurers' Report.

- A. Reviewed Statement Activities. Bake sales are looking great, movie nights doing well. We are a bit behind in family donations compared to where we were at this time last year and we have a higher goal to reach this year.
- B. Discussion on bake sale items: There is interest in having items with sugar alternatives (agave sweetened or fruit). People are encouraged to bake and bring things -- sugar-free and gluten-free items are welcome. Discuss with Tatiana who coordinates.

5. Principal's report.

- A. We can no longer have cooking in the classrooms. Some classrooms have cooking as a core part of the curriculum and they are figuring out alternatives (e.g., preparing items in the classrooms and bringing them down to the kitchen oven)
- B. We partner with an organization called Hudson Guild, a Community Based Organization that provides mental health services. We have a new social worker to provide on-site therapy for our students, Ashleigh Hertzog. We are very happy with Ashley. She'll be introducing herself and her seeing eye dog to students soon.
- C. Please remember to help bring up water jugs to classrooms if you are able! In response to a question about why teachers have outside water, it was shared that the DOE tests our water fountains but teachers are waiting for third party testing report. Also, discussion on the lack of water pressure in the fountains -- there isn't much we can do in this old building about that.

6. Teacher's Report.

Teachers expressed they felt supported when the PTA set the time of the meeting to vote on the budget to 8am, allowing them to join. Next time we will get the word out earlier so people can participate. It would be good to do that again, perhaps for the SLT election.

7. Committee reports and other updates.

A. Advocacy

- a. The state evaluates schools by test scores and designates certain schools as needing Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI). Several schools in NYC with high opt-out numbers are being identified as potential TSI or CSI schools. We have been identified as a potential TSI school. We have a lot of questions about this designation -- about 30 3rd-5th graders at TNS take the test and a TSI designation means low scores for a particular subgroup of test takers (e.g., kids with disability or who are identified as economically disadvantaged), which means the potential TSI designation may be because of a subgroup that is literally only 1 test taker as if it represents the performance of the school for that population. Advocacy Committee is organizing a meeting with the DOE so parents, Dyanthe, and the PTA can learn more about what the designation means. There are a lot of questions and we will try to get answers. We are also connecting to other schools that have high opt out rates and may be similarly impacted by the state's approach. District 1 Community Education Council is also interested to help.

B. Fundraising

- a. Holiday Fair coming up! Box maze! Book fair! Arts and Crafts! Food! Sunday Dec. 15. We have great volunteers working for the event and sign up if you haven't already. Each classroom as a booth to support. Also, if you know potential vendors for the Artisan Fest that's part of the fair, talk to mattieu. We are reaching out to alumni to invite them by email, but also, reach out to alum you know and other friends and neighbors.
- b. Other quick updates: Picture day retakes and sibling pictures tomorrow (Friday); Original work orders submitted; Spring fling/auction group is meeting monthly and will be sharing info; lice check is happening soon
- c. Join us for community day on Saturday. 10-3. Don't have to be here for the whole time -- parents help in the classroom and the school and also join for art workshop.
- d. We are launching an end of the year campaign -- we need to raise individual donations to pay for teachers, library, dance, school trips, etc. We'll send out email, but more powerful than email is face-to-face communication. Please talk to parents you know. Invite your family to give. Spread the word. Help us meet our fundraising goal so we can keep funding the great programming for the school.

C. Grants

- a. We have registered as a vendor in the state systems in order file paperwork to be eligible for state funding for the PTA. We are also drafting new grants, but it is hard to find grants and sometimes the best way is through word of mouth. If you hear about exciting programs at other schools you might ask how it is funded to see if it is something we can apply for. If you identify a grant we should apply for, please let us know.

D. Arts committee

- a. We are holding "Art Day" on Saturday, Jan. 25th. Sign up to share your artistic talent or skills with students. Information in the newsletter, including a [google form](#) to sign up.

E. Diversity

- a. We recently had the Gender & Family Project of the Ackerman Institute talk to parents. Staff will participate in professional development with GFP in December.
- F. Tours
 - a. School tours continue. Join student-led tour tomorrow if available!
- G. Garden
 - a. We are planting daffodils, tulips, and lilies. We are starting a paper white bulb forcing program (“bulb forcing” means getting the bulbs to grow inside or off-season)
 - b. There’s a wonderful display outside the library based on an activity from Emily (science teacher) that connects literature, science, and the garden. A great example of what makes the school great. Check it out.
- H. Library
 - a. We need to fund the library every year. Will be meeting with the STAR PTA meeting in December and address joint support for the library.

8. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report.

The SLT is continuing to work on the comprehensive education plan. Also organizing the community day. Anyone can attend SLT meetings.

9. New business.

Volunteers identified to help put events on the school calendar. Thank you!

11. Meeting adjourned at 9:27.