

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

The Parent Teacher Association of The Neighborhood School General Meeting

Date: Thursday, December 20, 2019

Time: 8:30am

Location: TNS PTA Room

Type: Monthly General Meeting

Notice Provided in Advance: Yes

Agenda:

1. **Meeting called to order at 8:42am.**
2. **Reading and Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes from the [November 17, 2019 meeting](#). Motion seconded. Motion passed.
3. **President's Report:**
 - a. We must review our bylaws every three years. The PTA Executive Committee is currently reviewing our bylaws and will share recommendations for changes that we can discuss at the February general meeting.
 - b. The PTA Executive Committee is talking about issues of succession, how we set up smooth transitions year-to-year, and positions for next year's PTA. Stay tuned for more on that in the coming months.
 - c. As noted in the [December 16, 2019 newsletter](#), we are reducing our reliance on backpack mail for environmental and other reasons. If you have information you want to share with the school community, add it to the weekly email newsletter by emailing ptaparentengagement@tnsny.org. We will also be surveying parents about communication preferences over the coming months.
 - d. We have continued discussion about TNS being classified as a "potential" Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school, including working with leaders from other schools, a resolution for District 1 President's Council, and connecting with the Chancellor and the Superintendent about it when they visited the school. More about this in the Principal's report and the Advocacy Committee report.
 - e. The PTA is continuing to build bridges with STAR Academy (attending STAR PTA meetings, lending the popcorn maker, connecting on events such as around dyslexia, and working together to support the library). It's going well.
 - f. The next Community Education Council (CEC) meeting is about capital funding. If anyone has an idea about physical improvements for our school, please share it with the grants committee -- email ptagrants@tnsny.org.
 - g. We are continuing the PTA tradition of giving holiday tips to security guards, kitchen staff, custodian, crossing guards this year to show our appreciation.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** The latest financial statement will be shared on the listserv.
5. **End of the Year Fundraising Campaign:**

- a. We launched the Kinship Campaign to raise much needed funds for our school. We are going to extend the campaign through January. We need your help -- share with your network why giving matters so much (so we have art programs, teaching assistants, school garden, lice checks, and more!). Ask fellow parents about the campaign and remind them to give and promote it! Share with your child's aunts, uncles, grandparents, others! Share on facebook to help amplify the message in the TNS community! You can give on the TNS website, <http://tnsny.org/docs/contribute>, or through the [special Kinship Campaign site](#). As you will remember, we voted to set ambitious goals for contributions so we could meet the expenses associated with all the programming we wanted for the year and now we must see if we are on track to meet those goals. If everyone chips in, we can do it. Check the "pizza pie" in the lobby that tracks our progress!
 - b. Discussion: There was discussion about the value of sharing images when sharing on Facebook, noting that people should share personal photos but the PTA isn't using images of students because we don't have permission. There was also discussion about other ideas that may have fundraising implications (community sponsors and corporate sponsors for events like Art Day, and maybe having a grandparents day to engage grandparents in TNS) and how we can learn from professional expertise as we develop campaigns in future years.
6. **Principal's Report:** The Chancellor came to visit and met with some parents. Harvey Epstein helped set it up as part of showing the Chancellor the Lower East Side. Dyanthe set it up like our regular tour -- three fifth graders led a school tour and it was great. We highlighted the Library and shared how TNS and STAR Academy work together. Matt and Freddy spoke to the Chancellors as parents about TNS. And Dyanthe talked about the potential TSI designation. WWWe talked about the data we collect, the ways we assess progress, and the professional development work we are doing. Dyanthe asked about whether we can go to the state to explain how this data to state so they don't just look at the state tests to understand TNS. Dyanthe also spoke to the Superintendent, who expressed support for TNS and was very complimentary of the school, and wanted to talk about more
7. **Teacher's Report:**
- a. Teachers want to share their perspective on email communication to help manage expectations and make sure we are having productive exchanges. Sometimes, parents are emailing teachers with questions about things that have already been shared in email with all parents and it would be helpful if parents could check communications already shared before asking questions. Other times, parents are writing messages that they seem to expect can be reviewed immediately. Please don't expect teachers to be able to see messages sent the day you send them. Teachers also mentioned receiving angry messages from parents. Teachers request that parents be mindful in their correspondence.
 - b. Discussion: There was support and appreciation for teachers and gratitude for sharing these issues with us. We discussed the role that class parents might play to help answer questions from parents and the ways in which parents can answer their own questions (search their email, read the newsletters from teachers and the PTA newsletter, keep

links of information). It was also suggested that perhaps PTA or class parents could be in the lobby to answer questions like STAR Academy does. We also discussed the value of responding when teachers do send correspondence to parents such as curriculum letters (quick replies that acknowledge and appreciate are great!) and we discussed whether the PTA could issue a reminder or other ways to remind parents about civility in email communications.

8. Committee Reports:

- a. **Advocacy:** We met with a representative of DOE to better understand the technical details about the state system for ranking schools. The details are complicated. We will be talking to parents about the state exams in a series of meetings to answer questions about assessment at TNS and address issues that come up for parents about the state exams.
 - b. **Events:**
 - i. Lice checks happened! There's useful communications coming on how to deal with lice as a parent.
 - ii. Original Works pickup is this week. Jessica is distributing.
 - iii. School photos are being distributed through teachers. Check your email for info.
 - iv. Holiday Fair was a success! Thank you!! We had such amazing contributions from the community. It was intended to be a community event first, and as such, it was inspiring. A huge success and only possible with so many people doing so much. We raised approximately \$6500. We have expenses to calculate and we don't have the final net total or the comparison to last year's total yet. We learned some lessons for next year (we know our expectations for vendors fell short), but overall, it was a wonderful event.
 - v. Movie night is January 24.
 - vi. Spring Auction is a great event but takes some planning. The earlier we start, the less of a headache planning work will be. We are starting now!
 - vii. Kinship campaign was highlighted earlier in the meeting, but here's another plug to spread the word and remember about employer matching opportunities. Talk to your HR department at work.
 - c. **Garden:** Got the "Grow to Learn" grant again this year. Applying for another grant. Working on getting paperwhites in the classroom. See the bulb growing on the security guard's desk! Parents can help plant seedlings in February.
 - d. **Grants:** We are working to implement the "Reduce, ReUse, ReCyle: grant and working with the Arts Committee and teachers to implement. (There was a suggestion to also reach out to ECO committee about this grant.)
 - e. **Arts:** Reminder that January 25th will be a community wide Art Day. Artists of every type encouraged to participate. There will also be an auction of art -- \$50 for an 8x10 piece.
 - f. **Wellness.** Today is lunch time garden cafe tasting. Also, looking for a date to discuss "Wellness in the Schools" workshop.
9. **SLT Report:** We are spending time to develop that comprehensive education plan and continue to work on norms for the group.

10. **New business:** In response to a question about TNS Earth Day activities, it was suggested that parents check in with the ECO committee. ECO committee usually holds an event or activities.
11. **Meeting adjourned at 9:32am.**