

PS58 PTA
General Meeting: 28 November 2018
Meeting Minutes

1. Co-President Welcome (Adam Baruchowitz / Linnea Olson-Schwartz)

- Minutes from 10/23 meeting reviewed and approved.

2. Principal's update (Katie DelloStritto)

- Boiler project: Progressing well. Finished thermostat and radiator upgrades on 2nd floor, moving soon to 3rd floor. Once work in the school building is complete, it will shift into the boiler room to dismantle the old boiler and install the new one. Project is slightly ahead of schedule and may finish earlier than anticipated. Boiler room work will require building to be empty after 7pm on many days, which may impact the basketball program -- working with Chris Grim to adjust. Permits with other outside organizations have been modified to limit gym access. Planning to request that school be closed over the summer and the work be accelerated, so the project is complete by the beginning of the coming school year.
- Turkey Trot: Raised over \$4,100 and collected 2,000 pounds of food -- more than any other school in NYC! Feedback from staff and students was positive. Fostered good conversations with students about what we were doing and why. Plan to continue annually.
- D15 Diversity Initiative: Will soon initiate a Youth Congress for the District. Stella Rojek (5th grader) will be the PS58 representative at monthly meetings -- bringing our ideas to the Congress and ideas of the Congress back to the school.
- Authors in School: Holiday Book Sale will take place in approximately two weeks to help cover the cost of this program, which has become an important part of the curriculum.

Q (Adam): How do we choose authors?

A (Katie): Two ways -- librarians work with one of our families which has contacts in the publishing industry and staff suggest authors which will complement the curriculum. We are also open to suggestions from the community and aspire to showcase diverse authors over the coming years.

Suggestion (Amarah): *Books Are Magic* is interested in facilitating author visits in local public schools and may be able to help identify authors as well as subsidize program costs.

- Suggestion (Anik): Had contact with local public school teacher who is looking for toys for autistic students.
Response (Linnea): May be able to direct Holiday Fair toy drive to this cause.

a. SLT Report (Theresa Sheperd)

- Five groups working on goals set as part of PS58's CEP (comprehensive educational plan)
 1. Family workshops: Two being developed. social media (for Jan or Feb) and girls in STEM (panel discussion with young woman engineers). In collaboration with two other local public schools (PS29 and PS261). PTA contributing to funding these talks.
 2. Responsive classroom

3. Developing oral language development opportunities on the classroom, possibly targeting 3-5th grades
 4. Staff professional development: Recent workshop on implicit bias.
 5. Integration with specialty teachers: Currently exploring how to work more closely with science curriculum.
- Initiative for Clean Team of Kids: Getting kids engaged (e.g., older kids teaching younger kids about cleanliness). Similar to Green Team. Teachers working on getting this group together.
 - Library:
Q: Why does Library access seem less frequent and consistent this year than usual?
A (Katie): The schedule of Library special classes is more frequent (i.e., regular special) for younger grades, less frequent (i.e., rotating special every 2-3 weeks) for older grades. Plus, the older grade Library special schedule was activated only recently -- since the roll-out is staged.
 - Konstella: Second year using new communication platform off to a strong start with adoption now approaching 100%.
 - Wellness Council: Working on expanding Wellness Week into Wellness Month.
 - French Book Fair: Successful in raising funds to purchase new materials for Language Workshop and DLP.

b. Playground update (Jordan Kaye)

- There is a “participatory budgeting” process in District 38 for a portion of Councilmember Brad Lander’s budget, which PS58 used in the past to upgrade its bathrooms.
- Jordan recently proposed that budget funds be allocated through this vehicle to renovating the PS58 playground. PS58 is one of the last schools in the district to have an exposed flat top playground area. So, there is good buzz about the possibility of upgrading it.
- Our current proposal is to beautify the area with trees, shade, seating, a new surface (e.g., astroturf), and a privacy screen between the playground and Smith Street -- drawing the most relevant ideas from a legacy proposal. We are not current looking to install playground equipment (e.g., jungle gym) since this idea encountered obstacles the last time this project was pursued a few years ago.
- We need to continue refining our proposal in order to get it on the participatory budgeting ballot, including a realistic budget estimate and a clear enough idea that people are excited to support it. Jordan has already contacted the School Construction Authority (SCA) about the potential cost. Then, we need to get the vote out in the Spring (sometime between March and May) when the participatory budget is determined.
- We will need to drum up support in the community to pass our proposal. For example, a big part of securing funding for our bathroom upgrade was a video with testimonials from our students.

3. Financial Report (Darrin Cirrilo)

- We’re entering the time of the school year when income begins exceeding expenses. For example, we have raised \$33k and spent \$15k since our last PTA meeting.
- In terms of fundraising so far this year, we have raised \$33k from the Direct Appeal, \$20k from the Costume Carnival, \$3k from Family Photo Day, and \$2k from the Rummage Sale.
- Our overall budget performance so far this year is in line with forecasts on expenses and slightly ahead of forecast on fundraising.

- Approve Clean Team addition
 - The Clean Team is seeking \$1,800 in funding for the purchase of a steam cleaner to clean all classroom rugs two times per year (i.e., winter and summer breaks).
 - Classroom rugs cost ~\$600 each and are currently refreshed on a rotating basis. Steam cleaning would dramatically extend the lifespan of these rugs and keep them cleaner during that lifespan.
 - This is a one-time capital expenditure which will be depreciated over 5 years -- affecting our current cash position, but not our operating current budget.
 - Motion to approve received and seconded, vote conducted, and budget amendment unanimously approved.

4. Updates from Committee Chairs

- Fundraising (Renee/Linnea)
 - Holiday Book Fair (Darcie Chileli-Eaton): Need volunteers for this year's event in the coming weeks and will post sign-up soon. Looking for leader to run this event going forward.
 - Direct Appeal updates: Campaign has been launched. New announcements will be coming soon.
 - Holiday Fair – December 9 (Jina Arbitman): Most tables filled, but some still available. Lots of new activities this year (e.g., face painting and crafts for kids, PTA merchandise sale, toy drive to benefit community). Request to spread the word (especially via social media) and encourage folks to attend.
 - 24 Days of Holidays: Legacy activity that's being revived this year. Local stores will return percentage of sales to PTA. Look for window signs and mention PS58 at check-out.
 - SoulCycle (Francesca Van Horne): New Spring fundraiser. Will rent a SoulCycle studio in Brooklyn Heights (i.e., 66 bikes for \$850), charge PS58 parents to participate in a special class, and return net proceeds to the PTA.
 - Auction Update (Nikki/Jess): Organizational meetings will start soon. Planning to extend the event (including open bar) from 3 to 3 ½ hours -- so it feels more relaxed than in past years. Event will be held at Bell House on Sat, Mar 16.
- Community Events (Whitney Rallo/Anik Levy)
 - Parents Night Out: Planning to organize new Parent Night Out event sometime in late January
 - Class Parent update: Idea proposed to organize holidays gifts for specialty teachers.
- Afterschool Report (Carolyn/Linnea): Registration for Winter trimester coming up on Mon, Dec 3 at 8am.
- Arts and Culture (Michele Pravda/Linnea)
 - International Food Festival: Proposed date for event is Feb 3. Plan to move event to gym and incorporate new activities (e.g., kids' baking competition).
- Operations (Amarah Sedreddine)
 - Effort this year to improve efficiency of school operations and ensure teachers get the most out of the funds we raise for them.
 - Supply subcommittee: First initiative is underway to rationalize how teachers use various funding sources to purchase supplies for their classroom. Currently looking for examples of how other schools manage supplies and then planning to issue survey of teachers in order to learn how they would like for us to meet their supply needs. We need parents with friends at other schools to discover their practices for managing classroom supplies and feed back to Amarah. Seeking to

improve teacher experience, gain costs efficiencies (e.g., to reallocate money from cleaning supplies to academic materials) and improve equity across classrooms.

5. Open Mic

- Kindergarten music
 - Q: AMAS will finish its residency on Dec 21. Will there be other programming during second semester? What will happen next year?
 - A: Materials for the Arts will take place in Jan-Feb in order to provide additional musical enrichment with Mr. Louie (e.g., making music instruments, singing lots of songs). Also, looking into options for next year (e.g., more programs that can be brought in for musical enrichment in lower grades, expansion of Ms Patterson's roles to include music and leverage her musical background).
 - Q: Staff participation in Mini and Curriculum Grant allocation?
 - A: Katie currently considering representative for each grade to participate in decision making going forward. Curriculum Grants have largely been allocated already this year (i.e., \$6,300 out of \$10,000), but Mini-Grants are still largely available. Suggestion to begin new decision making process mid-way through this year, rather than wait until next year. Suggestion to publish grant awards going forward to share information with teachers and community.