

PS58 PTA
General Meeting: 23 January 2019
Meeting Minutes

1. Co-President Welcome (Adam Baruchowitz - co-president1@ps58pta.org / Linnea Olson – co-president2@ps58pta.org) - upcoming Grant applications/Cafeteria improvements

- Minutes from previous meeting reviewed and approved

2. Principal's update (Annique)

- Boiler project on schedule and most project work is being done in boiler room itself at this time with a focus on the demolition of the old system.
- The flickering of lights in the Auditorium and Gym has been reviewed by electricians, and a problem with the wiring has been identified. We're in contract with the School Construction Authority (SCA) and Division of [] to fix this problem.
- Please review the Parent Handbook for policies regarding sickness – since illness tends to increase at this time of year.
- Mid-year is good time to review your NYC school account, especially for discrepancies regarding attendance.
- Please be sure to dress children warmly for the cold weather (e.g., hats, mittens, scarves) to enable comfortable outside play.
 - Question: Is there a temperature cut-off for outside play?
 - Answer: It used to be 32 degrees (F), but is now at the discretion of administrators.
- Please email Annique, Katie or Mr C about ideas for upcoming parent workshops. We conducted one today about resilience which went well and are planning the next one on the topic of anxiety.
 - Question: Is anyone recording the parent workshops for those who can't attend?
 - Answer: No, but Joan usually posts any workshop materials on our website.

SLT Report

- The SLT spent its last meeting broken out into working groups focused on school goals.
- Oral Language: We worked on reviewing the projects already being done in each grade and identifying next steps regarding the development of a rubric for evaluating student progression on the continuum of oral language.
- Professional Development: Our current focus is incorporating diversity topics (esp. inclusivity) into our curriculum. The next step is identifying speakers to support teachers with this work.
- Parent Workshops: Currently collaborating with PS 29, 261 and 32 on workshops by sharing the costs of bringing in speakers on different topics of interest. We are conducting a workshop about social media this evening, and others will come soon.
- School Environment: We continue reflecting on the different aspects of our school manta and finding ways to bring them to life in school. We're focusing on "Respect Matters" in Jan, Feb and Mar by working with teachers to create a bank of activities related to this

upon which they can draw. Also, we have begun to include 5th grade ambassadors in our school tours, answering questions and highlighting things happening at school. We would like to use these ambassadors in the future to work with younger students as well.

- Facilities: Jordan Kaye has been working on a participatory budget proposal for the renovation of our school yard. That process is currently still in its first round.
 - [SLT Goal?]: Planning social media workshop and STEM presentation in Apr with a panel of parents and alumni (especially highlighting 5th and 9th grade)
 - Diversity: Teachers are now hosting “Lunch Clubs” on a variety of topics in which students can participate voluntarily. We recently completed a first round, and students enjoyed them. The plan is for teacher volunteers to host 2nd through 5th grade students on their lunch hour and facilitate conversation about a topic of interest (e.g., middle school process for 4th and 5th grade students, mindfulness).
 - DLP Committee: We are currently working on a language exchange by connecting families who would like to practice their French or English skills in order to support their kids at home. We’re also working on ways to raise awareness about the availability of the Committee to support families and receive new ideas.
 - Wellness: We are considering the expansion of Wellness Week to Wellness Month.
 - Green Team: We are planning classroom visits by the Team to sustain efforts on recycling as well as pest control.
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- Suggestion: Communicate to families the availability of lunch clubs.
 - Response: We are trying to create a “safe space” for students to address topics which may be controversial at home, but are willing to consider making a general announcements.
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- Question: Is there a pest issue?
 - Answer: We have always had our fair share of mice and roaches. We have an exterminator who comes every two weeks. The situation has been better for the past month or two, and we want to keep it that way. Steam cleaning of classroom carpets has improved the situation.
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- Question: Does the PTA pay for the exterminator?
 - Answer: No, it is part of the Facilities budget.
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- Question: What happened with the steam cleaning?
 - Answer: We purchased a steam cleaner this Fall and cleaned all the classroom carpets over the Holiday Break. The plan is to clean twice per year – during the Holiday and Summer breaks. Teachers have been very happy and thankful.
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3. Financial Report (Mo - treasurer-offsite@ps58pta.org)
- Financial activity for the past one month -- Sources of funds have increased \$32k (primarily from the Direct Appeal), and Uses have increased \$23k (mostly from Enrichment and Field Trips).

- The Konstella Amazon link for 2% cash back on purchases has stopped working because the partnership between the two companies ended, but we can still earn cash back (0.5%) for the PTA by using the Amazon Smile program.
- We are currently conducting a mid-year budget check-in with line item owners to confirm how we're tracking to plan and anticipate any adjustments that we may need to make in response to changes that have occurred since approving the budget at the beginning of the school year.
- We're also currently analyzing our month-to-month cash flow to determine the amount of working capital we need to have on hand, in order to guide with greater precision our next round of budgeting.

4. Updates from Committee Chairs

- Fundraising (Renee - fundraising-coordinator@ps58pta.org)
 - Direct Appeal

We have raised about \$100k and need another \$70k to achieve our goal. Please reach out to your classes and encourage participation.

- Auction Update (Nikki/Jess)

Scheduled for Saturday, March 16.

- Read-a-Thon (Amanda Pisino-Galante/Brett Blair)

Need to confirm a date for this event.

- Secretary Correspondence (Barbara - secretary-correspondence@ps58pta.org)
 - Konstella teacher/staff tutorial - January 28th
- Afterschool Report (Carolyn Pravda - cpravda@ps58pta.org)
 - Feb 5th camp day

n/a

- Mini Grants (Shelley Stein/ Negar Treister - minigrants58@gmail.com)

We are currently considering ways to make the grant process easier and working to determine how grants are typically used.

The new Amazon line of credit will facilitate the Mini Grant process for teachers by eliminating their personal float between purchase and reimbursement.

Also, we are working to involve the Administration in awarding Curriculum grants to ensure alignment with school-wide priorities.

- Arts and Culture (Michele Pravda/Cathy Diana – artsculture@ps58pta.org)
 - International Food Festival

We are planning many innovations for this year, including the organization of tables by continent, location in the Gym and a baking contest for kids.

- Operations (Amarah Sedreddine - vp-operations2@ps58pta.org /Carly Strelzik - vp-operations@ps58pta.org)
 - Supply subcommittee
 - Website

We are undertaking an initiative to streamline PTA operations, improve institutional knowledge in the face of annual officer turnover, and systematize the utilization of resources by teachers. We welcome volunteers to join this effort.

One dimension of this initiative that is currently being prioritized is the Supply Subcommittee, which includes in its scope everything that a teacher uses over the course of the year. We are trying to understand teacher needs, ensure that the resources we provide meet those needs, and ensure that we're utilizing these resources as efficiently as possible. We are currently implementing an initiative to make purchasing easier and less expensive by using an Amazon business account. Training will be conducted next week to introduce this innovation to the teachers and begin developing the supporting processes. We welcome volunteers with systems/process design background to help. The next step is establishing a process to ensure good governance with clear attributability to approved budget line items.

Another dimension that is being prioritized is the PTA section of the PS58 Website. We are aiming to complete the development of this section, which was never completed when the new site launched last year. We are also considering more formal support going forward through a dedicated web designer. We welcome volunteers with web development background to help.

- Community Events (Whitney Rallo/Anik Levy – vp-community@ps58pta.org)
 - Parents Night Out/Family Bingo

We are currently working to organize a Family Bingo event which includes a pasta lunch on a Sun at 12-2pm in the cafeteria. We are looking for volunteers to provide pasta dishes. The next step is to schedule and permit the event. We are considering Sun, Mar 24 (one week after the Auction) and planning to sell tickets to cover the cost of the event.

We have been considering a Parent Night Out and aiming now for end of April.

5. Wellness Council update (Becky Morrison)

- Becky is our new Council leader, taking the place of our previous leader who recently left the school.
- We are considering the expansion of Wellness Week to Wellness Month, expanding the way in which we leverage local vendors to offer healthy food give-aways at drop-off, garden-to-café program tastings at lunch, and healthy activities during gym classes and after school. We are also considering ways to expand lunch-time programming as well as offering some evening programs for parents (e.g., wellness topics of interest – perhaps in partnership with other local schools).
- We are beginning to make connections with other schools to (e.g., PS 261) which are interested in improving school lunch options.
- Talks were conducted last year for 5th grade on body topics (e.g., puberty) which were well received. We have an interest in continuing this and expanding it to other grades.
- DoE Water Jets Program: There is a program to install water dispensers in cafeterias for chilled, oxygenated tap water. One has already been ordered by our District Manager, and we're currently waiting for approvals to be processed. This raises the question about

the status of other water sources throughout the building. We learned that there is a program to install water filters throughout the school which we're exploring.

- We need to volunteers to join and support the Committee.

6. Open Mic

- A proposal has been submitted to install acoustic panels and a new speaker system in the cafeteria in order to lower noise levels and improve experience. The school has agreed to provide the labor for installation – the proposal budget covers only materials.
- Also, one of our parents (Pablo) did some work in the Auditorium on a voluntary basis since our last meeting to address the sound system. We reviewed in greater detail what's in place, removed gear that was not functioning properly, streamlined and connected the gear that was functioning properly and added some new monitor speakers – all of which has made a significant improvement. We still have work to do. For example, we recommend installing a piece of equipment which costs \$400 to protect the equipment we have (e.g., control feedback and power surges). Pablo has offered to provide sound engineering support on a voluntary, *ad hoc* basis for upcoming events.
 - Suggestion: Friday night activity with local artists, which might be an interesting alternative to CineBistro, to raise money for the proposed acoustic improvements.
 - Question: What are the next steps on the proposal?
 - Answer: We need to figure out from where the additional funds will come since they are not part of our budget.
 - Answer: We have either to approve an adjustment to our current budget and increase our deficit for the year or approve a new fundraising effort to raise the money. Any budget adjustment under \$10k requires one meeting to review and approve, while any adjustment over \$10k requires two meetings.
 - Question: Is there an expiration to the pricing in the proposal?
 - Answer: No, the pricing should remain stable. So, we have some time to figure out the funding.
 - Suggestion: Organize a dedicated event to raise the money for this initiative. Pablo has offered to connect us with a local band that would be happy to help.
 - Question: Are there limitations in terms of when we can conduct an event?
 - Answer: Any activity needs to be permitted and coordinated with others who use the school, as well as the construction team working on the boiler project.
 - Question: Could funding for these improvements come from the Afterschool program since that students who participate in that program would benefit so much from them?
 - Answer: This is a good idea that we will explore with Carolyn.

- Suggestion: There is a 4th Grade event coming up in March. We could take advantage of that opportunity to collect donations. A dedicated event would be great, but it might get crowded in light of the many other events that are already taking place. So, it might be better to leverage existing events rather than create a new one.
 - Motion to conduct a fundraiser to raise at least 75% of the amount needed for the current proposal. Motion made, seconded and passed unanimously. The next step is for the Executive Board to plan the event.
- We need a grant writer for various initiatives – starting with a hydroponic lab which is being sought by our Science department.
 - Suggestion: Have a standing Grant Committee or Subcommittee to address these needs going forward.