

PTA Meeting Minutes
October 15, 2013
8:30 AM Gymeteria

Summary: The second meeting of the PTA focused on the new teacher evaluation system with updates from Principal Lisa Siegman and teacher Michael DeShields; nominations and voting on one open SLT and two open MAL positions; voting on budget items including Wellness In School, Lunch Aid, a proposal from the Cooking to pay instructors and committee presentations from the 3Fund, Arts and Media and Strategy Committees.

Co-Presidents Opened Meeting 8:45 AM

- Agenda approved
- Minutes from 9/24 meeting approved

Principal's Report - Lisa Siegman

- A lot going on at PS3. New teacher effectiveness system - sheer quantity of work; very busy; composting; rebranding; rezoning discussions-- the school needs you [parents] more than ever
- Two "come-togethers" next week - ribbon cutting for the new kitchen and Harvest Festival featuring food from our roof-top garden, one example of parent/teacher efforts
- Susan Heldon (new science teacher) has been supporting upper-grade teachers with science
- Our budget tight this year, but teachers like Themis have been paid for by PTA
- What was once considered "enrichment" is now regular curriculum. Our kids need more support.
- School Safety - State Senator Brad Hoylman visited last week. We continue our push for a second safety agent. We need someone professional. Currently, Lisa comes down for dismissal but is not always available.
- Plea to Parents: NEVER USE THE EMERGENCY EXITS (noted someone exited door next to new kitchen). We have a huge communication issue. Please use the side exit only at appropriate times. USE MAIN ENTRANCE at drop-off. Misuse endangers us. Need real-time monitor on these doors, alarms just ring if no one is there to watch.
- We had one lock-down drill last week ("ghost-town") as required

Q: Morning routine? Why do we just use the gymeteria? It's very hectic in the morning.

Lisa: Jessica teaches at 8:20 am, earlier than before since we cannot use the gymeteria for indoor recess. We can use side exits at drop off to keep it flowing. It's annoying, but we are adjusting. The gymeteria space is easier to get out of in an emergency.

Q: Can we use other stairwell, especially in bad weather?

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Lisa: It's a slip hazard on play yard in bad weather. Kids can go upstairs as early as 8:15am. We just don't have personnel to manage multiple entrances. Please work with safety committee and come up with a plan. We are open to ideas.

Q: Why is class size especially in the third grade so large? I

Lisa: Size is not due to zoning. Two reasons (1) We just don't get enough money from the DOE to create another class. The costs of an average teacher's salary is \$74,500 multiply that times 1.2 for a cluster teacher, to cover computers, etc. The experienced teachers who like to work here are even more expensive. (2) Hiring freeze in District 2 We were only allowed to hire teachers transferred in--benefit, they are experienced, but they also cost more.

Q: Can the PTA help?

Lisa: The PTA cannot fund full-time teachers, but helps in many other way, i.e. some part-time positions like Themis as well as teaching assistants. budget constraints.

Parent noted that others should join the PAC to influence change.

Q: Does the PTA fund teaching assistants?

Lisa: Yes. The PTA does fund. We are down one, but we currently have 2 1/2 + Lupi

School Librarian Announcement - Jackie

- Bringing library into the 21st century with the new Destiny service which will make all public library catalogs accessible from home or even phone. Anticipated launch November.
- Parents helped fund
- Destiny is a partnership with other libraries. Kids will get special cards. Please look for a consent form which must be signed by parents for kids to access public libraries
- Also, join the Library Committee - Meredith Hays chairs mhays@mindspring.com

Teacher's Report - Michael DeShields

New Teacher Evaluation System

- State mandated system requires observation and measurement of student learning (45% of the overall evaluation). Assessments are 2x/year; K-5 only (no pre-K)
- Includes 3 formal observations of 45 minutes or 6 informal observations of 15 minutes each
- It takes Lisa and Regina 45 complete school days + time for write-ups and pre-work (Lisa's observations are very detailed and include a conference with teacher)
- Observations must be done starting Oct 1 through the 1st Friday in June

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A team of 8 was selected from within the school to set up the student learning assessments.

- The concern is that kids are spending their time being evaluated by state tests; not being taught

Q: What can we do?

Michael: Support our teachers! Teachers must import assessment scores by 10/31. Teacher burn-out rate is likely to be extremely high. Come in a read a book to a class, take kids for additional recess, anything to help teachers get an extra free period to work on the assessments.

The assessments will happen again at the end of year for K-2, but another teacher will have to score this round

PARENT NOTED: Parents can push back and create change. Get involved with the PAC. The PAC is pushing back the on time required, not method. We are questioning the way it's done. Another parent noted that parents should be clear about what they would push back on, as more in-depth evaluation of students (especially) isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Michael - We are learning a tremendous amount of information about our kids with the assessments. The information does help teachers drive instruction. If parents are pushing back against the assessment system in a wider forum, please do not express teachers' individual opinions in political forums, as they are not allowed to do so. Please talk to Lisa with ideas to relieve teachers.

The fall review is coming up. We must show that we not only align with the grade, but with the school. A second meeting will be set up for further discussion.

Each year we have the option to change it [evaluation] and try something new

Treasurer's Report - Nicole

Income - Marathon, 3 fund Drive, School store and Amazon.com

Primary expenses - Lenny and Bruce, Lice-enders, T-shirts and Totes for the parent-run school store.

Nicole Noted: We want input from parents. What do you want to see on the treasurer's reports? Let's make these more informative contact: treasurer@ps3nyc.org

Terry Spring-Robinson - Parent Coordinator

- Website is down; Dan fixing
- Please join the Communications Committee. If interested, please see or contact Terry Terry@PS3nyc.org.

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- Remember, Room 408 is the parent's room and the Lost and Found!

Nominations for School Leadership Team (SLT) and Member At Large (MAL)

Candidates presented:

- For SLT - Denise Collins and Kim Parker
- For MAL - Jessica Dillman, Becky Alford and Matthew Devlin

Voted on \$15,000 for Wellness in Schools to cover a second recess aide for Grove St Play Yard - **Approved**

Voted on \$3,000 Lunch Aid to assist kids making healthy choices, composting, additional support. Costs covers additional intern. - **Approved**

Q: Can't we get more parent volunteers [at lunch]? Parents get turned away and don't feel like they're needed.

A: Issue is consistency. Staff needs basic help. We want more volunteers, please sign-up through sign-up genius.

Marion - Cooking Room (Under Food Grow Play Committee)

Proposal presented; to be voted on at 11/19 meeting

- Marion is a grad of PS3 and her parents were founders
- Marion, Claudia and Zak opened room 510 as cooking room to teach science and cooking. It was a middle school science lab inappropriate for younger kids.
- French Culinary Institute (FCI) and the Institute of Culinary Education (ICE) helped to develop a formal curriculum and this is the second year of formal lessons.
- This year 11 teachers signed up - more want to come
- Marion and Claudia give 20+ hrs a wk of their own time for free
- We have 3-4 volunteer Instructors, all culinary professionals. Some are new at teaching kids. Kids tend to have more respect for an outsider than a parent in teaching these lessons.
- We want to pay our instructors \$15/hour for two hours' time -- "thank you" money. Most teach 2 hours per lesson, but work closer to 3 hours with prep and clean-up.
- The cooking room represents a positive program--one of the cool things that PS3 offers
- Marion will need a replacement to spearhead.
- The cooking room is set up as a 501c3 entity.

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Q: Do local schools provide instructors with credit?

Marion: No. No one is teaching childhood cooking.

Q: Can we see the Curriculum?

Marion: Yes, it's available online at www.cookingroom.org. Currently, we have no bandwidth for fundraising and PR.

Henry noted that the Executive Board has been speaking with Marion and there will be more discussion next week prior to voting on this proposal.

Committee Presentations

Dora Chomiak - 3 FUND

- Annual Direct Appeal
- Kick-off today (look for a backpack mailer) until winter break
- How you can help?
 1. Participate - goal is 100% participation. Look for donation forms
 2. Spread the word - parents, grandparents, family, friends
 3. Table in the lobby in the morning - we need morning volunteers to remind others
 4. Mailer - upcoming stuffing party, please stay tuned for more information
- 3Fund is set up a 501c3 entity and can accept matching from employers--monthly or one time
- Alumni drive will be held in the spring

Q: How does monthly work? Can I stop it?

Dora: We've updating the online platform so you can now set end date for monthly deductions.

Q: Can class parents help?

Dora: We are working with class parents, equipping them with tools they need to spread the word and boost participation

Henry - The 3Fund most efficient way to raise money especially now that the budget bar is raised.

Amy Egan - Arts Committee

- Presented a short film showing Lupi and Lenny and highlighting how some of the 3Fund monies are spent
- This Friday (10/18) the Arts Committee is meeting in Lupi's room

Jean Railla - Media Strategy

- Parent advocacy
- 3 things that make PS3 different
 1. Innovation - kids should love learning

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2. Independence - take into account different types of learners
3. Community matters - volunteerism, parents in the classroom; helping out; community makes a difference.

Note: Food, Grow, Play Presentation was postponed to a later meeting

Henry asked that the attendees read about upcoming events from the agenda.

Nancy Fey - The Square Dance will be 11/15; Volunteers needed

Nominees from the SLT and MAL election will be notified by the PTA Presidents

Meeting Adjourned 9:53 AM