

PTA General Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2017; 5pm

Attended: Ruth Wong, Co-President
Naomi Pena, Co-President
Amy Chen, Secretary
Tony Monsanto, Treasurer
Daniel Abedon, Title I
Tina Mo, Parent Coordinator

Afterschool

Tiffany and Tim from **Henry Street Afterschool** presented information and updates. 2 weeks ago, they started their Cycle 2 which is all about creativity. They have formed partnerships: 3rd-5th grades have had soccer program on T, Th,F; K-1 have been working on sculpture with Abron Arts Center; PS20 has partnered with Nike working on basketball skills. They are hoping it will grow into a fuller fitness program. 5th graders have rugby on Mondays. There are upcoming holiday camps (open only to Henry St. Afterschool participants) – big one coming up over Spring Break 4/10-4/14 from 8am-5:20p. There will be info forthcoming on Mid Winter break offering. For Summer camp, there is a lottery scheduled for May 19th for K-5 only and participants must be present on 5/19 to enter the lottery. There are 75-100 seats. First come, first serve. Very competitive. Even if child is in afterschool, **there must be an adult representative on site to participate in lottery**. If there are siblings in OST, the other sibling (except for PreK) is automatically allowed to participate. Tiffany will be available to answer questions.

Principal's Report

Principal and Asst. Principal were unable to attend. Principal's Report was given to Ruth who presented the following announcements:

- 1. Talent Prep** is another new afterschool program at PS20 that focuses on Mandarin homework and enrichment. Going well, but still ironing out logistics. Parents are encouraged to contact Principal, Sarah Pinto with any concerns. Tina Mo, Parent coordinator wants to emphasize that parents are not allowed to go up to the rooms to pick up children earlier than usual pick-up time. They must use phone in lobby by security to call up to the room and someone will escort child down.
- 2.** PS20 just received an Arts Continuum grant – a partnership with School for Global Leaders and Marquis Studios that supports students' social and emotional development with emphasis on anti-bullying. It starts this week. They will send an artist in residence to use movement, poetry, and theater to reinforce their understanding and recognition of respect for 4th and 5th graders, because of our partnership with School for Global Leaders, it will continue into Middle School.

General Business

Ruth opened up the meeting to address parent concerns and expectations for PS20 and asked how the PTA can better reach the family community?

A parent learned, after receiving his son's first report card that he hadn't been going to science class because of school holidays. The lack of continuity has shaken his son's love of science. He asked if we can create/operate on a school cycle (similar to what he's seen at Independent Schools like The Dwight school -- a cycle that is based on the first letter of child's last name) so that students schedules aren't as disrupted by school holiday schedules that often fall on the same day of the week (Mondays). Teacher appreciates the legitimate issue and is glad that it has been brought up. She responded that it is challenging because of elementary school structure and specialized subject teachers teach all grades not just a class. Parent was praised for raising this issue which had previously been under the radar. Teacher said this can now be brought to the Principal for community problem solving.

Tony Monsanto raised the opportunity to define and communicate a school identity and vision. Having a leading principle. He proposed "Respect" as a possibility. Among students, towards staff and administration, across cultures, etc. Ruth said that the Principal is asking parents to form a committee to craft a mission statement that defines the school – also to create a parent handbook in line with our vision for PS20.

Parent noted that his child did not come home from school with any kind of evidence that his class recognized MLK day. Teacher responded that her classroom was set up to reflect segregated 60s (whites vs colored only restricted parts of the classroom). She shared how that has unfolded and impacted students. Parent reinforced how that lesson is resonating at home. So while they haven't specifically addressed only MLK, they are taking a wider view of civil rights and the consequences of racism. Parent recommended that we stage a school wide civil rights effort. Another parent recognized that we have a multi-cultural school but that we are in our separate pockets. We need to bridge these separations within our school. She proposes that we form a Diversity committee that can address and spread unity throughout the school. Tony is encouraging parents with great ideas to make it happen – commit the time and energy to make it a reality. Another parent suggested a school "Olympics." PTA will put him in touch with Ronnie Filippatos who wants to stage a "Multi-Cultural Field Day." Another parent commented that there should have been more of a pronounced presence about cultural diversity for MLK Day in our lobby. Teacher wanted to point out that our Lunar New Year celebration will, for the first time, be school wide – not just within DL program. All children will come home with a Red Envelope.

Dan Abedon recommended that parents bring their good ideas to their Class Parent representatives. There was acknowledgement that we are just getting started on harnessing this parent enthusiasm. Parent also recognized that teacher seems overwhelmed in classroom and asked if we can have parents assist in classrooms. Brainstorming on possible solutions like creating a side by side model within the actual classroom while also recognizing the restraints of budgeting realities. We must bring it to the administration's attention to problem solve and

identify possible resources. Discussed how parents can support the classroom. We need to increase our profile so that we attract more students, more funding. If DL is our selling point, we have to shore it up – attract students to increase funding. Parent asked if we can partner with other DL middle and high schools so that graduating DL students would have a foreign language certification (like a junior International Baccalaureate diploma) that confers their fluency in more than one language. Joann on SLT committee urged him to attend/observe an SLT meeting. He was also encouraged to bring in these ideas and point to other specific schools that have these examples so we can send a representative to visit and learn. He asked if there was some kind of opportunity to partner with the UN as a way of supporting and solidifying our international quality at PS20. Another parent recognized how much we are growing as a PTA. Tony stated that all of this requires attendance and realistic/solid participation by parents/families.