

**PTA General Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2016; 5pm**

Attended: Ruth Wong, Co-President
Amy Chen, Secretary
Lily Liu, DL Mandarin Teacher/Interpreter
Shu Lin, Gen Ed Teacher
Tony Monsanto, Treasurer
Naomi Pena, Co-President
Carrie Orr, IA Assistant Principal
Kadi Ann Moore, Title I Representative
12 additional parents representing 15 students

Welcome to attendees – seating configuration changed to a round table format.

Principal's Report given by Carrie Orr, IAAP. One announcement: PS20 will become Peanut-free. She will confirm whether that also means the school will be Tree-nut free.

There were Afterschool concerns voiced by some of the Chinese speaking parents in attendance. They don't feel their children are receiving adequate homework help from the Henry Street AS program. A mother of a Spanish DL student said that they don't provide assistance with Spanish homework or projects that involve cutting with scissors. Another parent discussed that his 1st grader didn't understand her math problem and did not receive any afterschool help with it. Counselors aren't equipped to help with homework. Other parents and teachers expressed concern that there was not enough time devoted to homework. Tim, the Henry Street coordinator, was invited in to offer his feedback. He clarified that they are not a homework completion site. They are not responsible for making sure home work gets done. Their grant funding depends on providing other enrichment activities. They can only provide 45-60 minutes of homework guidance. He encouraged parents/grandparents to speak with the afterschool counselors individually for extra homework focus.

One parent raised the possibility of replacing Henry Street. One parent offered to be a liaison between PTA and Henry Street. Other parents recognized that HS does offer a valuable service to working parents who may not be able to afford afterschool care costs. Currently, there is discussion between administration and PTA about another Afterschool to be held onsite at PS20 that would bring in additional homework/DL services. This would be a paid option. It would include Mandarin tutoring which could begin as early as next month. Full afterschool services would begin at the start of the next school year. More information will be forthcoming.

IAAP said that homework should be something that can be done by the child independently and teachers should provide support that allows students to complete homework independently. She suggested a meeting with teachers during parent engagement. A Spanish DL parent suggested that we have a comprehensive workshop about "American style" learning – so that parents proactively learn and become familiar with what to expect from their student's

homework, how to check it, how to stay timely, how to support the particular challenges of Dual Language homework. This led to a larger and wider conversation of the role of homework in schools. There is a movement and some schools are eliminating homework entirely because it is too stressful for a healthy learning environment. She didn't think that would happen at PS20, but, an understanding of homework expectation should be addressed by the entire school community. Administration and staff are talking of different ways to handle homework. She will meet with the Principal on this topic to plan a future discussion which includes parents. Clearly, homework is a hotspot for many families. And Principal will join the discussion of the role of afterschool, homework, and how our school day schedule (start and end time) impacts afterschool staffing availability.

There were also frustrations due to helping students with Math. There was a strong request for math workshops offered school wide for parents. We will explore future workshops that help address these challenges.

Some recommendations also mentioned:

1. Dial-A-Teacher with help offered in many languages. Ruth proposed arranging for a Dial-A-Teacher representative to come to PS20 and offer grade specific workshops for parents. This was done last year and was quite helpful to attendees.
<http://www.uft.org/dial-a-teacher>
2. EngageNY site. Common core (ELA and Math) support with videos.
<https://www.engageny.org>
3. Kahn Academy. Videos with math help. <https://www.khanacademy.org>
4. Monthly Family Fridays with a Math focus, FF with a Homework focus.

Though many of these options require access to and comfort with technology, we will arrange for workshops for how to support math and homework that does not require a computer.

One teacher suggested a return to Friday morning math presentations to help families help their students – showing many different approaches to solving math problems. Her experience has shown her that it is a language problem that many of the Chinese families encounter, not a problem with understanding math or numbers concepts. The grandparents have a very strong grasp of number concepts.

Homework information and helpful resources will be added to the PS20 website.

Question was raised about Class Parents as a vital link between class and families.

Meeting minutes from October's general meeting were reviewed and Ruth invited feedback. There was none. Moved on to Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer's Report.

Figures from last month's report were inaccurate due to double counting on Book Fair profit. The explanation -- If you take profit as Scholastic Dollars (to be used for additional Scholastic

books and merchandise), you keep 50% of the profits. If you opt for cash, you receive 25% of profits. We opted for cash which required paying back Scholastic \$2697.34 from the profits of the September Book Fair. Last month's figures reflected numbers consistent with a Scholastic Dollar's form of profit.

New corrected figures were presented as:

Balance as of 10/19/2016	\$21,952.33
Payment back to Scholastic	(2,697.34)
Reimbursements for expenses	(391.19)
Proceeds from Election Day Bake Sale	514.00
Balance as of 11/16/2016	\$19,377.80

Parent asked what PTA funds are used for. Tony described various types of expenditures from previous years such as child care during PTA/school functions, staff appreciation costs, 5th grade graduation costs, Spring Fling fund raiser, translation services, workbooks.

Meeting ended at 6:15 when the room was required for another activity.