**PS/MS 278**

**General Membership Meeting Minutes**

**11/19/2014**

1. **Welcome and reading/approval of October minutes**
	1. October Minutes were read and approved by the general membership
2. **School Safety Plan Presentation**
	1. Ms. Reyes passed out a copy of the school’s “Parent Guide to School Safety and Emergency Preparedness” and discussed the main points in the plan.
	2. The most important piece of information in the plan is the school’s plan for evacuation should there be an emergency. Ms. Reyes stated that the rest of the plan is self explanatory.
	3. If there was a problem with the building but not necessarily the immediate neighborhood, all 278 students would be evacuated to PS 98.
	4. But if the emergency was in the area surrounding the school, and we needed to evacuate the kids to a school further away, the problem the found was that none of the schools could accommodate all of the students. As a result, unfortunately, the students would need to be split to different schools by grade. The kindergarten students would go to PS/IS 263 (202 Sherman Ave.) while the 1st – 8th grades would go to IS 52 (650 Academy St.).
	5. If we needed to evacuate the kids completely out of the area, all students would be accommodated by PS 189 @ 2580 Amsterdam Avenue.
	6. In the case of an evacuation, students will be accompanied by a school official to the new location.
	7. **Most important – parents must have ID to retrieve their child. If they don’t have ID, the police will not allow them to take their child.**
	8. A question was asked – what happens if no one comes to pick up the child. The answer was that school officials will stay with the children until they are all picked up.
	9. It was also stated that in the case of an emergency and evacuation, a phone call blast will go out to all parents telling them where to go to pick up their child.

Other Safety Issues

1. Ms. Reyes mentioned that some parents are refusing to sign in with the Security Guard when entering the building. She stated that the school must know who is in the building at all times, even if the parent is just coming in for a few minutes to drop something off. This includes going into the PTA office at the front entrance. Parents must sign in and please not give the Security Guards a hard time. They are just doing their jobs. It was also noted that this is a citywide rule from the DOE.
2. If anyone has any questions about school safety, they should email Ms. Reyes.
3. **Principal’s Report**
	1. Ms. Guido reported that the new school report cards were out and posted on the website. The DOE/Chancellor has done away with the letter grades but if they hadn’t, 278 would have received an A this year.
		1. **We received an Excellent in almost every category**! – 95% of our students did well in every grade and 91% of former 8th graders passed the 9th grade.
		2. In ELA we surpassed the city and district averages and were rated “Good”.
		3. In Math we received an “Excellent”.
		4. We also received particularly high scores in serving students with special needs.
	2. A question was asked about regents classes offered in middle school. Ms. G. explained that they used to offer Math Regents but when they converted to the common core they found that the Regents exam required the full 8th grade curriculum and there was a concern that not enough students would pass. They didn’t want to set anyone up to not pass the 8th grade. Students would have needed to pass the State exams plus the Regents exam plus the grade. Plus, if they didn’t get an 85 or better on the Regents Exam, they were not going to get HS credit anyway.
		1. However, they now feel that there might be enough emerging middle school students who could handle the enhanced work and are seriously considering bringing the Regents Math option back, for a specific select group of 6th graders. The curriculum would be “chunked” for these students in order to cover the common core curriculum for the state exams plus the Regents material so that they students would be prepared to take the exam by the 8th grade.
		2. The school does not receive any additional funds to do this.
		3. They are also actively discussing introducing the Science Regents curriculum. This would also be “chunked” for a select number of students and it would start in the 5th grade.
		4. Ms. G. stated that the Chancellor is further saying that a language may become a requirement for Middle School so they are trying to figure out how to fit that into the curriculum as well, and which language to offer. Ms. G. feels strongly that you cannot offer a language just 1-2 days/wk. That it would have to be daily. The question is, what would they have to give up in order to fit this into the curriculum?
		5. 278 offers science and social studies daily now in the Middle School. Not every school does this.
	3. A flier will be back packed soon inviting parents to visit the classrooms for **Open School Week** on Mon. 11/24 and Tues. 11/25.
	4. **Staffing** –
		1. Mr. Manzoni, the Tech Teacher, is currently on medical leave but will be back in February. There is a sub covering these classes now who seems to be working out.
		2. Mrs. Passy of class 401 went on maternity leave last week. They hired a ATR (absent teacher reserve, Ms. Manzalli, who is contracted through Dec. 5th. Ms. G. is actively looking for another sub to take her place. In addition, the ICT teacher, Ms, Barman, finally started in class 401.
		3. Ms. G. asked parents to spread the word that she needed a sub to cover the 4th grade class and that this will most likely turn into a FT position as soon as Ms. Passy’s maternity and family leave ends.
		4. Ms. Everett, the Music Teacher sub, was offered the position and she enthusiastically accepted the job. The kids seem to love her and she seems extremely energetic and happy to be at 278.
4. **President/Treasurer’s Report**
	1. The **Walk-a-thon raised $25,000 this year**! We surpassed our goal of $20,000.
		1. Crowdrise was the deal breaker. It was a HUGE success.
		2. Money is still trickling in but by December we should have the hard numbers and budget to present.
		3. PTA is now working on putting together the prizes for the kids who raised the most money and the pizza parties for the classes that raised at least $1000.
	2. **Community Dinner raised $900**
	3. **Book Fair** raised $7500 which is money that goes straight to the school.
5. **Old Business**
	1. Approval to lease a **photocopier** for the school and PTA was approved at the last meeting.
		1. We hit a snag in the contract because they Xerox wanted us to show credit but we didn’t have a credit rating due to our small budget. However, after extensive negotiation, they approved us which will allow us to establish credit for the future.
		2. Annie is working out the logistics but we should have the machine set up within the next 2 weeks.
6. **New Business**
	1. Danielle F. passed out a revised flier listing all the ways the community can raise money for the school, incl. Farmigo, Amazon Smile, and Shoparoo.
		1. **Farmigo** – buy farm fresh food from local farmers. Food is delivered to the school on Wednesday afternoons at pick up. 10% of proceeds over $500 will go to the school.
			1. Danielle F. is going to find out if there is a pick up option for working parents who cannot be there at pick up.
		2. **Amazon Smile** – When ordering from Amazon, click on the link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/27-2675233>. A portion of your purchase will to the PTA bank acct.
		3. **Shoparoo** – Take a photo of your receipts. Use the app to save the image. Shoparoo send money to the school.
7. **Upcoming Events**
	1. **Career Day – Jan. 28, 2015**
	2. **Movie Night – Feb. 6, 2015**
8. **Committee Updates**
	1. **Wellness Council**
		1. Wellness Council received a grant to start a fitness program for Middle School students
		2. The council is trying to strengthen the Class parent network.
		3. The Walking Group has been suspended until the Spring.
		4. The Wellness Score Card is getting passed around to evaluate ourselves on how we are doing in wellness. We are finding gaping holes in the area of health education. So they are starting a Kindergarten – 6th grade self esteem program as well as trying to incorporate a health component into the science curriculum.
		5. In order to provide student with more academic support, they will continue the Math Facts program at lunch time. In addition, they want to start a Reading Team where they will one-on-one reading with students. However, the Wellness Council feels that they need more than one period a day (lunch) to provide all of this support. They want these programs to be incorporated into the school day, e.g. during Technology Class time
		6. They are working on meeting their goals to provide students with special needs additional support and are looking at different ways to measure their outcomes.
		7. If anyone is interested in being a part of the Wellness Council, they should contact Kristin.