

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
9/30/15

1. Call to order, welcome and reading of our Mission Statement. Sign-in sheets, class parent letters, info-sheet of ways to donate and budget sheets were provided.
2. Reading/Approval of June Meeting Minutes
  - Didn't happen
3. President's Report
  - Introduction of the board members
  - Happy National Hispanic Heritage Month! (bi-lingual attempt and distribution of Hershey's kisses)
4. Principal's Report
  - Ms. Guido and Ms. Reyes welcome everyone and introduce themselves.
  - The school's budget is fine, classes are fully staffed.
  - The science curriculum (grades 5/6/7) is chunked in middle school in preparation for Regents.
  - The school started a pilot program teaching Spanish in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
  - The 'Music in the Brain' program is starting.
  - Siona is still teaching the violins.
  - We do have band and chorus.
  - In October Miss Carina starts the dance program.
  - We also have CHALK, a Columbia affiliated program.
  - The school is looking into utilizing an app called 'Go Noodle' (for use during inclement weather?).
  - Our recess policy was explained (kids will stay inside only in case of rain or if temperature dips below 32 degrees Fahrenheit).
  - This year we are trying out a different model of recess for our Kindergartners. Ms. Reyes and Ms. Guido explained that teachers will take out the kids to play before sitting them down for lunch.

Parent Question: How many trips do the kids go on?  
Answer: The children go on at least 2-3 trips per year.  
Parent Question: What's SEM?  
Answer: Ms. Guido explained our School wide Enrichment Model.  
Parent Question: What is SLT?  
Answer: Ms. Reyes and Ms. Guido explain our School Leadership Team.

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
9/30/15

5. Treasurer's Report

- Presentation of the Budget:
  - Kristin presented the entire budget and explained each category in detail.
  - No questions for category 1
  - No questions for category 2
  - No questions for category 3
  - No questions for category 4
  - Danielle Strauss motioned to vote on the proposed and presented budget and Juan Batista seconds it.
  - Vote:
  - In favor: 48, opposed: 0, abstained: 0

6. SLT Report

- Introduction of the SLT members (some present, some absent)
- CEP (Comprehensive Education Plan)
- CEP Parent Compact was highlighted in today's meeting (stapled to the agenda), membership was asked to read it at home and to please give feedback.
- Wellness Goal:
- Kristin explained and mentioned our school being awarded for our Wellness Program as the runner up for NYC, the award being handed to our school representatives by Chancellor Farina.
- We do have monthly workshops at the Allen Pavilion (Maggie Velez and Kassandra Fjotland sit on the council at the Allen Pavilion, hence our collaboration).
- We need parent volunteers to oversee recess & cafeteria.
- We will try to work out Cafecitos (the upcoming was cancelled due to weather forecast).
- There is going to be a mural painted on our school's wall by our students.
- We are a water culture school (awareness and also getting a new water fountain)

Raffle Time: Nr 31 and 41 won.

7. Old Business

- There is no old business – we are a new board and plenty of new members, starting fresh.

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
9/30/15

8. New Business

- Class Parents:
  - Short explanation in English and Spanish, Maggie Velez is the point person to approach.
- By-Laws:
  - We want members for a by-laws review committee, call for volunteers
- Title 1 Committee:
  - Extra support for our title 1 families
  - You do need to be a title 1 parent to be the head of the title 1 committee, but you don't have to be a title 1 parent to be on the committee.
  - Call for volunteers
  - A vote on the Title 1 Committee is coming up in October.
  - Title 1 means you qualify for free lunch
  - Title 3 means you are an English learner
- Walk-A-Thon: (for the arts)
  - The Walk-A-Thon will be on October 19.
  - Our students will receive a packet with a pledge sheet and information and will have time to collect pledges/money up to 2 weeks before and after the event.
  - Short mention of the 'Crowd-Rise' portal online and its great potential
- Picture Day:
  - We have negotiated a new deal with our old vendor (Freddy) and parent volunteers for this event are needed.
  - More information coming in October
- Adopt-A-Tree:
  - Danielle Strauss introduced our school beautification efforts under the leadership of Dave Thom. Our tree guards are parent built and donated so are the flowers. Adopt-a-tree was explained and there are 600 bulbs of daffodils that wait to be planted at this event. The kids will plant them in our flower beds, but we will need plenty of parent volunteers to help.
- Cooking Classes:
  - Cassandra Fjotland coordinates cooking classes within our Wellness Program, please come see her.

9. Adjournment

**October 16, 2015 PTA General Meeting Notes:**

**Principal's Report:**

Mr. Pena, the new Dean of Students was introduced at the meeting. A few parents mentioned their concern at what they viewed as a trend where teachers were disciplining the whole class for the actions of a few students. Mr. Pena assured parents that this practice is not the school's policy and to let him know if there are any further occurrences. Mr. Pena also made it clear he was always open and available to speak to any parents regarding questions or concerns.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Kristin presented the treasurer's report which included a print out directly from the bank that corresponded to the amount of money tracked and recorded in the PTA ledger. The records match. Kristin is very thorough, and she is also open to answering any questions or explaining policy to our parent community.

**New Business:**

Kristin also asked if there we any interested people in forming a "By-laws Review Committee." After review, some of the PTA by-laws could potentially be voted on and updated to better suit our current school community.

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
11/18/15

1. Call to order, welcome and shout-out to the organizers, helpers and contributors of our community dinner.  
Short explanation about the Title I committee elections. Nominations from the floor:
  - Kristin Borhofen, kristin278@gmail.com
  - Elena Rodriguez, ggragal4@gmail.com
  - Cassandre Fjotland (chair), glenncass2504@yahoo.com
  - Sandra Meadows, sandrajsm@gmail.com
  - Maritsa Poros, [maritsa.poros@gmail.com](mailto:maritsa.poros@gmail.com)

Vote for committee members: yes: 32, no: 0, abstain: 0  
Vote for chair: yes: 32, no: 0, abstain: 0
2. Reading/Approval of Meeting Minutes
  - Didn't happen, but we will blast them online via the website and vote on them in our December general meeting.
- a. Welcome to Chef Anne
  - Chef Anne loves our school. It's her 5<sup>th</sup> year making healthy food for and with our kids. And yes, the food served at this meeting really is the food our kids get served.
3. Treasurer's Report
  - We filed our taxes for this year.
  - Community dinner numbers: income: \$816, expenses: \$194,33, profit: \$621,67
  - Kristin walked everybody through the budget.
  - Kristin walked everybody through the ledger.
  - Treasurer provided a print out of our bank account.
  - Proposed new membership item: hire a person for simultaneous translation. We do have the equipment, but it needs a skilled professional to operate/translate at that speed. The cost would be \$100 per meeting.  
The proposed budget item for the remaining 7 meetings comes in at \$700.  
Vote: yes: 30, no: 0, abstain: 2
4. Principal's Report
  - Ms. Reyes welcome everyone and thanks everyone for turning in their lunch forms.
  - Unfortunately the school is in danger of losing all our Title I funding for the next school year (the school will find out around March 2016). We are currently at 53% of students eligible for free lunch – the citywide cut-off for Title I funds is at 60%.
  - It is an all or nothing scenario, but the school administration has already an outline for a 'plan b' in place.

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
11/18/15

5. Parent Survey (mentioned suggestions):
  - Second giving push in spring?
  - Picture Day at the end of the year?
  - Walk-A-Thon in spring?
  - Are there ways to expand the Book Fair, opening it up to parents in the beginning and bring friends and family?
  - Extra childcare for Book Fair and Teacher Conferences?
  - Bake sales and community dinner – in spring there is only a bake sale, but we would love to be able to stem a community dinner in spring as well, but that needs participation, because it is a lot to organize.
  - More pre-planning?
  - Kristin mentioned the possibility of a teacher-distributed booklet with sign-up sheets for the different events throughout the year.
  - We could also put up all events on the website and enable sign-up via that avenue.
  - Yearly calendar with highlighted opportunities to volunteer
  - Expand to local businesses for food donations for community dinner.
  - Do we need a point person for our volunteer bank?
  - Cafecito in the evening?
  - Workshop for homework help? Evenings?
  - Workshop for how to cope with stress?
  - Walking group? Afternoon?
  - Volunteer prep, if possible?
6. SLT Report
  - New computer program I-Ready
  - Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), academic goals
  - Wellness Council meeting update:
    - Monday, November 23 at 7:30 am, drop the kids off for breakfast in school or bring them with you to the meeting. Next meeting after this: Monday, December 14 at 7:30am.
    - The parent workshops are predominantly in the mornings, because of the Allen Pavilion's schedule, by which we are bound.
    - The February workshop (about handling stress) could be potentially in the afternoon or evening (follow up).
    - Mural – needs more volunteers, please sign-up.
    - Training for recess and positive communication with the students: December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:30am
    - Water project – there is a flyer coming up.
    - December is our vegetable promoting month.
    - 'No place for hate' school – we would like to integrate that even more into our community program from the Anti-Defamation League.

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
11/18/15

- Grant was approved for afterschool middle school fitness and self-care for continuation.
- School dances come forth out of this program.

7. Adjournment

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
12/18/15

1. Call to order, welcome and shout-out to the organizers, helpers and contributors of our breakfast today.
2. Reading/Approval of Meeting Minutes
  - This will happen in the January meeting, since we haven't yet managed to have them all translated and made available for everybody.
3. Treasurer's Report
  - SLT Update (by Maggie Velez)
  - We are constantly working to further our academic goals for our students.
  - Homework load – we started a discussion about how much homework needs to be done and how best to support struggling students.
  - What are age appropriate time frames for homework?
  - Homework has to be given (per DOE) to reinforce what was learned during the day, but should not be used for getting through content.
  - We have a pilot program in 7<sup>th</sup> grade only, called "I-Ready". It's a math and ELA program that pinpoints deficient areas and provides added support, as well as pinpointing students who are ahead of the curve and providing more advanced materials to them. We are currently trying it out in 7<sup>th</sup> grade (Ms. Demiri) and if it proves to be effective, we can bring it to the rest of the school.
  - Library access during off hours is currently being discussed.
  - Picture policy: Not everyone signed the release form, so we need to be mindful when we take pictures, not to post any of them online if they show children/people who haven't signed a release form.
4. Principal's Report
  - AP (assistant principal) search
  - Level 1 is done, level 2 (interview) is done and level 3 (background check) is being done, but Mr. Reilly is still acting AP.
  - Safety Report Update
  - There are different documents for the safety procedures: one for the general office, one for the safety guards and one for parents (print out was provided).
  - Emergency evacuation locations were provided and explained.
  - Shelter-in is trained and the children know exactly what to do in a soft or hard lockdown situation.
  - A concern was raised about the door of the PTA office (not locking properly?). This needs to be investigated/remedied.
  - We have sweepers to check the building and a phone was installed in the basement.

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
12/18/15

- Ms. Reyes is proud of the level of parent involvement and of our students and their many talents.
  - Title I Funds
  - We are not giving up the fight on Title I qualification. Ms. Guido and Ms. Reyes are fighting to get us grandfathered in somehow.
5. Treasurer's Report
- We currently have \$84,823.82 in our bank account.
  - Budget & ledger were provided
  - Quick overview of changes in budget was given.
  - All our money is accounted for – BRAVO Kristin!
  - We have suggested to move Read-A-Thon to June and are awaiting the administration's decision on it.
  - We can talk about possibly upping the budget line for hospitality (food & beverages & childcare) at our PTA meetings.
  - Walk-A-Thon Update: We haven't closed the event just yet (expenses), but hope to have everything at the ready in January when it will be announced and celebrated with prizes and parties for the students.
  - Chef Anne did a veggie tasting for 500 students on a slim budget.
6. Old Business
- Picture Dap Update
  - Annie was absent, but Susie reported that we are currently waiting for the first batch of pictures to be ready. It was a little difficult dealing with the vendor and we have to discuss a possible change of vendors in the future.
  - Survey Feedback
  - We already have feedback from some 80 people, but we would love to have more input and possibly volunteers from our parent community (more surveys were provided).
  - By-Laws
  - We are in the midst of re-reviewing the by-laws to accommodate our school community (copies were provided and are also available online). We are looking especially to the transition process of our PTA board and are hoping to make that a little easier on everyone.
  - If you have experience in this area your input is greatly appreciated.
  - Teacher Per-Session Request
  - Flyers were sent out to the teachers to gather ideas what they would be willing to offer for after school extra programming.
  - The Per-Session program is financed via the PTA through a grant that we wrote.
  - Teachers and their interests:
  - *Ms. Kaufman: theatre*
  - *Mr. Olivares: after school acoustic guitar*

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
12/18/15

- *Ms. Lucarelli: nutritional eating (middle school)*
- *Ms. Paynter: after school active program 'Go Noodle'*
- *Mr. Cheeseman: soccer program*
- *Ms. Sanchez: Donor's choice I-pod touch for the math program*
- *Ms. Alperson: origami*
- *Ms. Brady & Ms. Lucarelli: field hockey for girls (middle school)*
- Parent input
- Robo Fund – they work with LEGOS (robotic Legos). This is a private contractor coming in and this program will cost parents \$256 for 8 weeks (90 minutes instruction per session). We are in the process of getting people signed up. The day in question would be Wednesday, but if high demand could be extended to Thursday as well.
- Chess and robotics were advocated for.
- Can we bring coding to the school?
- Maybe Zumba? Or Yoga?
- After school Spanish classes were wished for.
- Open Floor: What are other potential sources of found money?
- Possible teacher publishing Amazon promotion idea (Jeffrey)
- Shoparoo – Nely explained the app and encouraged parents to use this app as an easy way to make money for the school.
- Schoola – Sandra explained how this program works (clothing donation). We need a plan to get this up and running.
- Shari (absent today) has an idea of event nights for the parents (dinner, raffle etc), but will have to elaborate in January.

7. New Business

- No Place for Hate
- Skipped
- Parenting Classes Spokesperson to discuss upcoming events
- There is a child development program on how to turn 'bad behavior' into good behavior and how to relate to your child even when you are stressed and how to better communication and how to teach responsibilities. This is run by Inwood Community Service (located right across from IS 52 on Academy off Broadway). Free of charge.

8. Upcoming Events

- Next General Membership PTA Meeting: 1/20/16 at 6:30pm
- Career Day, 2/3/16 (Snow Day reschedule would be 2/25/16)
- Movie Night, 2/26/16
- Dates to upcoming events were provided on today's agenda.

9. Adjournment

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
1/20/16

1. Call to order, welcome and sign-in sheets provided.
2. Reading/Approval of Meeting Minutes
  - Minutes reading and approval possibly at the end of this meeting, only when time permits (which it didn't).
3. Membership Votes
  - a) By-laws Change
    - We want to move the PTA EB meetings from Tuesdays to Thursdays.
    - The next incoming board can determine their own meeting day at transition.
  - Vote: Yes: 21                      opposed: 0                      abstain: 0
  - b) Title I Committee Family Engagement Event
    - Cassandre informed membership about the event in general (Friday, March 18, 6-9pm). The budget line for this year's event is \$1200.
  - c) Food and Beverage Costs for PTA general membership meetings
    - We want to expand the budget line for food and beverages at the general membership meetings by adding \$800 to it.
  - Vote: Yes: 27                      opposed: 0                      abstain: 2
4. President's Report
  - Annie lobbied for more parent support and engagement.
5. Treasurer's Report
  - Kristin walked us through the budget.
  - The membership worries about losing Title I funds and frugality
  - Walk-A-Thon: soon to be closed out and winners to be announced and prizes to be handed out.
6. Principal's Report
  - Tipps & tricks to avoid testing stress were provided.
  - Idea for 'after test amusement' was brought up and may be something for the PTA to fund/organize.
  - In case anyone wants to vote out of testing, the letter needs to be in before the testing starts. If opt out letter is too late, the test will be considered 'failed' if not taken.
  - There is a new provider for the state test materials – Pearson is out.
  - If you opt out, the child has to do a 'black-line standard portfolio'.

RAFFLE: Winners: Rosa (#9), Kristin (#11), Erik (6)
7. Old Business
  - Translation Services for PTA General Membership Meetings

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
1/20/16

- We do have a potential person for this simultaneous translation task in mind. To be updated later.
- Skipped
- Parenting Classes Spokesperson to discuss upcoming events
- There is a child development program on how to turn 'bad behavior' into good behavior and how to relate to your child even when you are stressed and how to better communication and how to teach responsibilities. This is run by Inwood Community Service (located right across from IS 52 on Academy off Broadway). Free of charge.

8. New Business

- a) Calendar soon to be updated.
- b) Upcoming Events
  - We need volunteer support for the following upcoming events:
  - SEM celebration (January 27)
  - Career Day (February 3)
  - Spring Fair Captains' Meeting (February 10)
  - Movie Night (February 26)
  - No Place for Hate Events
  - Book Fair is coming up in March

SLT update

- Went through budget in anticipation of losing Title I funds.
- Homework load was discussed.
- Special Education, we are looking for ways to support our kids even better.
- SLT is open for participation to the general membership. An invitation was extended. Please contact Shauna.
- We have a great reading list by Mr. Peskie + Mr. Riley available on our website.

Wellness

- Great workshop on Food & Mood was had and made available on our website.
- Food policies are in place for class parties.
- The 'Body Image Talk' is coming up on February 4 (Allen Hospital)
- The Water Project was highlighted. Every child may bring their own container and refill it at our special fountain with filtered water.
- Musical Aladdin is coming up on Friday, January 22 (SEM Ms. Kaufman).

9. Additional Member Items

- Sharree suggested an adult function, raffle style (mentioned an event she attended named 'Tricky Tray').

PTA of PS/MS 278  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
1/20/16

- Cassandre suggested Yoga or Martial Arts (also, there are still volunteers needed for Family Engagement Night)
- Karaoke Machine? Maybe for those cold season indoor recesses?  
Probably more man power needed for this.
- Potential obstacle course, as seen in Y gym? Not enough space available.
- A person for movement was researched, but came in at \$15.000 per year, was deemed too expensive.
- Showing 'Roots' as an alternative to the usual movies? Or documentaries?  
Alternatives?

10) Adjournment