**PS/MS 278**

**General Membership Meeting Minutes**

**04/25/2014**

1. **Welcome**
2. **March 2014 minutes and approval**
	1. March Minutes were reviewed and approved by the general membership
3. **Treasurer’s Report**
	* + 1. We currently have $34,000+ in the bank.
			2. However, we have about $10,000 in checks we need to cut (incl. $5000 for the library) plus upcoming Spring Fair expenses.
			3. We are in good shape but need to be cautious because we need to fund the 92nd St. Y next year, possibly extend it to the 5th grade, and may need to fund other programs as well.
			4. Ms. G. will not know what the budget is for next year until June. There is a chance that there will be more cuts to the budget so we are trying to plan accordingly, hope for the best but plan for the worst.
			5. **Comment 1:** A member requested that for next meeting we be given a detailed report on cash flow – specifically the amount of money coming into the budget compared to our expenses paid out or that will need to be paid out.
				1. Board agreed to put this on the agenda for next month.
			6. **Comment 2:** Another member requested that we take a vote to extend the 92nd St. Dance program to the 5th grade at this meeting. She explained that it would only cost $2000 and the Wellness Committee has a grant for $1000 for which it would like to put towards this program. So the PTA would just need to match the other $1000.
				1. Danielle F., PTA Co-president, explained that we can’t put this to a vote yet because we don’t know what other programs we made need to fund, or help fund, should Ms. G.’s budget be even further reduced.
				2. There is a concern that because Mr. Quinto is leaving at the end of this school year, his line could be cut which could seriously hurt the school’s ability to continue providing the music program.
				3. If that happens, Ms. G. could decide to keep the line for the music teacher and cut a different line instead, such as the Art Teacher. The PTA feels that it might be easier/less expensive to find a program such as the 92nd St. Y that offer art at the school rather than a music program.
				4. All of this remains to be seen and we are reluctant to vote on any future expenses until we know for sure what the school will be dealing with for the coming year.
				5. In addition, any decisions we make to fund programs is not just for next year but rather a commitment for every year to come, assuming that Ms. G’s budget will not be reinstated.
				6. Vote was tabled until PTA receives more information from Ms. G. about next year’s budget.
4. **PTA Nominating Committee – nominations for EB**
	1. Danielle F. explained that a nomination committee has been formed, chaired by PTA Co-president, Kristine Keating, to recruit nominees for next year’s EB.
	2. Elections will be held during the May General Membership Meeting: May 21st, @ 6:30 PM.
	3. If anyone is interested in being on the nominating committee or running for office, they should contact Kristine directly – psms278president@gmail.com.
	4. A few members have already put their name in the hat:
		1. Annie Shikani is interested in running for President
		2. Seana and Cassandra are interested in running for co-VP (together)
		3. Nelle nominated herself for VP
	5. **Comment 1:** A member asked if we could explain the different roles of the EB. The different roles (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Translating Secretary, and Treasure) were explained. It was further explained that:
		1. Anyone on the nominating committee could not run for office.
		2. All positions could have Cos (e.g. Co-president, Co-VP, etc.) in order to share the burden and have back up, except for the Treasurer.
	6. **Comment 2:** We should have had a handout of the by-laws and a written description of the different roles available at this meeting, in both English and Spanish.
		1. This oversight was acknowledged and we apologized for not having that information available.
		2. It was noted that all of the information is available on the website and in the main office but the member felt strongly that not all parents have access to the internet and that we should make a point of getting the information out to the larger community.
		3. It was agreed to backpack the by-laws and description of EB member roles home so that more members can be aware of the upcoming elections and run for office if they are interested.
	7. **Comment 3:** If you run as a team, are you committed to that team or can you also run as an individual?
		1. Answer – you need to choose if you are going to run as a team or individually.
5. **PTA Dues Drive**
	1. The PTA Dues Drive letter has been drafted and will be going out next week.
	2. Parents can write a check or make a donation online @ <http://psms278.org/donate>, which is finally activated now that our 501c3 status has been reinstated.
	3. **Comment 1:** A member questioned the use of the word “dues” and thought there might be a better word we could use. It was explained that this is language from the DOE but that perhaps we could consider other terms such as “Annual Giving” for next year.
6. **Principal’s Report**
	1. Ms. G. is nervous about the school’s Title I status and how that will impact our future funding, specifically the Title I funds the school receives.
		1. 100% of the school lunch surveys were returned which is excellent because Ms. G. is convinced that we go dinged last year because not everyone turned in their forms, specifically people whose income would have maintained our eligibility for Title I funds.
		2. Based on the surveys, we believe we are at about 62% (meaning 62% of our population qualifies for Title I).
		3. If we fall below 60%, we can lose our Title I status.
		4. Ms. G. is waiting to hear from the DOE. She expects to hear in a few weeks.
		5. If we lose our status, we will lose all of the Title I funds, $260,000. It is all or nothing, as opposed to last year when the amount was reduced (from $350k to $260k).
		6. $192,000 of the Title I funds the school currently receives goes towards staff salaries, which is why she is so nervous about this.
	2. Kindergarten Connect Update:
		1. The school received 250 applications and made 50 offers for kindergarten.
		2. All students who were identified as Priority 1 on the application have been given a placement for kindergarten (= 20-24 students). The remaining came from Priority 2 (students from the zone). Plus they have 92 students on the wait list, of which 37 are in Priority 2 (students from the zone).
		3. If a sibling is going into 6th grade, the kindergarten student did not get priority. Ms. G. has received several phone calls from parents whose younger children did not get a placement at 278 because of this policy.
		4. Ms. G. has lobbied to change this policy because she thinks it is outdated. At the time the policy was established, the vast majority of Elementary Schools were K-5 so if a child was going into 6th grade (middle school), the younger sibling was going into a different school. But today, there are about 20 K-8 schools so the rule should be changed for these schools so that students’ younger siblings still get the sibling priority even though their older sibling is entering middle school.
		5. Some parents called to say that their child was placed in PS 18 even though they didn’t select PS 18 as a choice. PS 18 is run like a dual language school but on paper is a monolingual school. Ms. G. does not know what that will mean for the incoming kindergarten students who don’t know Spanish.
7. **Spring Fair**
	1. We need volunteers! Please reach out to Suzie or Annie if you are interested in helping out or know someone who is.