PS/MS 278 General Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2012

Board Member Attendees

Seana Wyman

Diane Hill

Carmen Carpio

Cassandre Collazo-Fjotland

Matt O’Shea

Marcee Deegan

Anne Shikany

Karen Jolicour

SLT – A pitch was made to get more parents involved in open SLT slots. Sheera, who is in her 13th year as a district 6 parent, pointed out that minority parents and/or parents from lower income families could help represent a large population in the school.

The SLT is a DOE mandated advisory board to a school’s principal made up of parents, faculty and the principal. They are charged with creating a yearly Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), which addresses the needs and the vision for the school within the allotted budget.

We are in a unique situation because with Ms. Guido as our principal we have a guiding force who actually cares about what the SLT does and doesn’t look at it as a mandated formality. There is so much to learn about the district, the zone and the school by getting involved.

TITLE 1 – Cassandre will be the Title 1 chairperson and was unanimously elected. Title 1 is a program created by the Dept of Education to distribute funding to schools with a high percentage of students from low-income families. Funding is distributed to the schools for programs that benefit those families. Ideas presented as possible events or programs were: WITS Family Fun Night – Self Defense Course – Zumba class. Mr. Klein’s Title 3 ESL students are thinking about other workshops for parents.

WITS – Anne Williams spoke to the group about the school’s Wellness in the Schools program. The DOE put a new menu in place before the start of the school year and the kids really didn’t like it. They are adapting it with to make it easier for the cook and with the goal of improving how kids eat. Anne says the psms278 kitchen is the cleanest and best run kitchen in any NYC public school she’s ever been. You could safely perform sterile open-heart surgery in there!

Some notes from Anne – Fruit is healthy but fruit juice is not. Peanut Butter and Jelly is not ideal but at least they serve versions that have no High Fructose Corn Syrup. On Café Day they made cider and applesauce and the kids went mad for it. In January they’ll have a day were they make tortilla soup. The next lab is going to be squash soup. In January there will also be a WITS Family Fun night. She asked that as many parents get involved as possible. There will be WITS staff but not enough to run it. The lunch experience is so much better when there are parent helper in there during lunch periods. Older kids are set in their ways so they are a big challenge but littler ones are still impressionable. Kids grumbling over WITS BITS nutrients lessons – Gatorade – Vitamin Water are NOT healthy drink choices. Trying to teach sugar content awareness so they start making better choices.

Anne has more influence when she physically goes into classrooms to talk to students. Ms. Guido says we MUST pick up the numbers of kids who eat school lunch. Too many kids still bring their own lunch. PS 18 is at 100% school lunch and we hover around 50%. Part of the problem some parents mention is that the line is slow and they get very little time to eat because of that. When they have there own the sit down immediately. Parental help in the cafeteria will help move things along and encourage the eating of the WITS menu.

Janet Winston asked if the recent “paying for lunch” might be negatively influencing the school lunch eating numbers. There is still too much “sharing” of lunch and snacks. We discussed sending something home to parents who have a lack of knowledge about WITS and nutrition in general.

Sheera suggested perhaps separating “lunch” from “snacks” that kids bring in. Diane mentioned that ps98 provides carrots and apple slices to kids for snack in their school and forbid the bringing in of other snacks in their K-3rd grades.

We need to make the monthly calendar of lunch more readily available. T=reach out on the school site and the Yahoo site for more volunteers in the cafeteria.

PRINCIPAL REPORT – Parent Teacher conferences coming up Wednesday afternoon and evening. Teachers are often available for longer meetings during prep periods – lunch periods, before school and after school if parents feel 10 minutes is not enough. Ms. Guido said she is also happy to meet with parents about report cards. At this point in the school year, Ms. Guido does NOT allow teachers to use the phrase “left behind” as a motivating tactic to parents.

There is a high school meeting for kids who are applying to competitive high school coming up. Carmen asked about the 8th grade breakfast and Ms. Guido touched on graduation dues and trip money as a topic for December.

The school is doing a coat drive for Hurricane Sandy victims. Old but in good shape coats and NEW hats – gloves and socks. Bins will be set up in the lobby.

We held a very successful tour of the school with 19 prospective families – 14K, 1 1st, 1 3rd & 4 for 6th grade. Thank you to the PTA parents who participated in the tour. The next tour is Wednesday November 20th from 8:30-10a. Parents are needed – Marcee & Carmen volunteered.

Carmen & Ms. Guido asked for more food donations for the family dinner because we lost a week do to the storm.

It is Open School Week also and the best days for sitting in are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Report cards will be given out Wednesday.

BOOK FAIR – Set up today at 2:20p. More volunteers are needed. This year we offer online shopping for the first time. Books ordered online will be delivered to the school – not to homes. Please be aware of the teacher’s online “wish lists”. Seana says that this year we must charge sales tax so please send your kids with enough money to cover the tax.

DUES DRIVE – 11/26 to 11/30. Letters with envelopes out at the beginning of that week and it was chosen to be far away enough from Christmas.

BOX TOPS – collections continue.

BASEMENT BOOK SORTING – Maybe during down time at the Book Fair.

PTA COFFEE HOUR – Can a NON EB member from the PTA run this? It’s nice for an informal time to share ideas driven on a personal level.

PICTURE DAY – The event was crazy but very successful. Freddy took pictures of every kid at Seana’s request so parents could decide to buy post fact and so no kid was left out. No date set for retake day.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Anne says we have $9,231.99 in the bank account. We need more Teacher Wish Lists and receipts for the ones already in. We made $2,710.00 on Picture Day this year. One wish list fulfilled is Mr. Klein’s ESL program with the Rosetta Stone American English for $500.

WEBSITE – We must try to encourage use of the site as an information distribution tool. Not all robo calls are going out successfully.

CLASS PARENTS – Cassandre is incorporating a sign-in list and the goal is a K-3 parent directory in place by the end of next week.

PICASA PHOTO SITE – Please do not upload more than a few pictures. The site is overloaded.

D6 PARENT LEADERSHIP SEMINARS – We may reach out personally to Josh to see if there is more flexibility – fewer sessions and perhaps 278 parents attending at another school.

Minutes approved from last meeting

Meeting ended at 9:36am.