

PS 166 THE RICHARD RODGERS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS & TECHNOLOGY

132 WEST 89th STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10024

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PTA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, October 17, 2019 8:30AM in the Cafeteria

APPROVED AT November 21, 2019 Meeting

- I. Call to Order
Co-President Ms. Rachel Polimeni called the meeting to order at 8:34 am.
A QUORUM was established.
- II. Approval of the Minutes
A MOTION to approve the minutes from the general membership meeting held on September 12, 2019 was made by Ms. Daria Kim. The MOTION was seconded by Ms. Gelinas. The minutes were passed unanimously.
- III. Parent ID cards - Ms. Nina Collmer reported that the IDs are only given to parents. It's to give faster access and to help with safety in school. She asked everyone to check the FAQs on the school website for questions regarding getting a card for the babysitter, or if your card is lost and so on. With regard to having a second safety agent, Ms. Collmer presented that D3 has said that they are committed to having two safety agents per school. However, she added that we don't have that many incidents to be high on that list.
- IV. CEC announcement - Ms. Casselman reported that there is a meeting tonight at PS180 from 6 pm to 7pm where they will discuss proposed changes in NYC G&T programs. Parents and community members can attend and give their opinion. She suggested that people who can't attend can access the CEC website for their contact details to email them with comments. Another parent, Ms. Lind, noted that it's important to read the report on the elimination of G&T because it's more about making it more available to all the schools than eliminating it completely.
- V. Special Election for Communications Secretary - Ms. Kathryn Oblad reported that she is the nominating committee. The PTA had someone for the post of Communications Secretary that had been elected in June but since she left school they don't have anyone for that position. Ms. Oblad announced the nomination of Ms. Amie Ray. There were no additional nominations from the floor, so nominations for Communications Secretary were closed.

Ms. Amie Ray introduced herself and since the office was uncontested, a MOTION was made by Ms. Madelyn Storms to elect Ms. Amie Ray to the position of Communications Secretary. The MOTION was seconded by Mr. Weinberger. MOTION was passed unanimously.

VI. President's update

- 1) Events update -
 - a) Ms. Polimeni thanked Ms. Sally Cooney for the welcome dinner.
 - b) Lice check is PTA funded, it is 3 times over the year. Just had one and now the other two will be after December break and after April break. Thank you to parent Ms. Tiffany Boyer for coordinating lice check day.
- 2) Recent PTA-funded purchases - Over summer
 - a) Chromebooks and Chromebook storage towers were purchased for each of the fourth and fifth grade classrooms. These Chromebooks will be used for online research and to type and edit papers in the classroom.
 - b) Sensory Pathway stickers, recommended by the school's Occupational Therapist, were purchased and will be installed in the second floor hallway. These stickers consist of arrows, lines, and shapes that children can crawl, jump, and twist around for a sensory break from classroom activities.
 - c) Amplify Science Kits - The school purchased these hands-on science kits for grades 1-5, and the PTA supplemented the school budget by purchasing for Kindergarten. Kindergarten will be getting their kits soon.
 - d) In an effort to ensure that all children are fully understanding the texts they are reading, and not just decoding them, the school recently implemented a Whole-Book reading assessment. The PTA funded these assessment materials.
- 3) WITS, residency updates, CMI update -
 - a) Pricing for the Wellness In The School program increased. WITS will be visiting our school to provide a healthy cooking class to all students in January, and will also be visiting the cafeteria four times over the course of the year for healthy food tastings.
 - b) Third graders will be starting a Metropolitan Opera residency in January, where students will write and perform an original opera. Fourth and fifth graders will start a new residency this year, partnering with the NY Historical Society and Liberty Science Center for in-school classes that bring the social studies and science curriculum to life.
 - c) The Child Mind Institute (CMI) is a highly regarded national non-profit organization specializing in mental health disorders in children. They also receive a grant to partner with schools to provide training in developmentally appropriate classroom and behavior management techniques. Through CMI, three PS 166 teachers will be having classroom management training. Six children will be called out for 8 weeks in a row to participate in a detective club which is there to help kids to get in touch

with their feelings. There will be positive behavioral management workshops for parents.

d) Safety meeting updates -

- i) With regard to the mosquito problem in the recess yard, because it is a NY Parks Department property, we cannot take any action ourselves, instead we must call 311 and make complaints. There is no standing water and so not many solutions. In the Reading Garden, our custodian has ensured that there is no standing water, but will not be spraying because of the potential for harmful effects of the chemicals on children. Mr. Gustov has looked into the delay in the alarm that went off on Welcome Dinner because of the gas leak. The school is installing new alarms to ensure that there is no delay.

VII. Assistant Principal Ms. Anav Cohen

- 1) Ms. Cohen discussed using whole book assessments to assess reading comprehension. She reported that she is working on making the assessments more streamlined through all the grades.
- 2) She presented that every classroom library had books that were outdated or falling apart and it was important to update the libraries. As a TC school there is a need to be in line with their requirements. She reported that \$86k was spent on this by the school and that the PTA contributed additional funds to support these libraries. However one class was left out. Only this class is missing the supplemental library. Ms. Cohen said she was hoping to get the required funds for this from the parents.
- 3) Ms. Cohen noted that in the past, she observed that classroom TAs were spending most of their time printing and copying, and that needed to change. The school has developed relationships with Hunter and other teacher training programs, and are now looking specifically for TAs who are interested in pursuing education. The school also wants to invest in these TAs so that when there are openings one can have them placed for those positions.

VIII. Parent Coordinator Ms. Deborah Markewich

She welcomed everyone and spoke of how well the coffee talks went because of everyone being there.

- 1) Ms. Markewich indicated that Class 4-408 doesn't have a class parent representative.
- 2) She discussed the letters for NYC schools account and told everyone to open their accounts to correct mistakes if there are any. She also informed everyone that now families can have more than one account if needed.
- 3) She reported that the MySchool account's G&T application has opened. If people are applying for G&T their MySchool account will tell them the day of testing.
- 4) Fourth grade students applying to Center School should apply through the MySchools account.

- 5) For the upcoming Picture day she asked everyone to send money with kids or to order online.
- 6) Kindergarten Story Book Character day is October 14, 2019. Kids will get to dress up in their favorite book character costume and get that book with them. They will get their photos taken and then parade around the block with their parents.
- 7) With regard to Mosquitoes she reported that the Community Board representatives have come 3 times to check the recess yard. They haven't identified standing water but have said that they will come back if there is a specific area that's a problem area.

IX. VOTE on 2nd grade classroom library -

- 1) Mr. William Kolb put in a general call for volunteers.
- 2) PTA made a contribution of \$41,280 towards classroom libraries via last year's paddle raise and additional contributions voted on by the general membership. Mr. Kolb announced a vote for \$9000 to fund one second grade classroom and below-level book kit for the second grade that were not covered by previous funding.
- 3) He also reported that PTA hasn't started fundraising yet and will be doing so once fall fest is over.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Eli Lazar to give \$9k to the school for the classroom library. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shayne Lazar. 2 abstained Max Alvarez and William Kolb. Motion was passed.

X. Committee Updates

- A. Grants and SLT - Ms. Kristin Savov reported they meet once a month to work on creating the school's comprehensive education plan and are in the process of finalizing it. It will be online by November. She presented that the school has improved dramatically and is one of the top performing schools in NYC. We received a \$200k grant for technology update last year. Columbia university students will be coming in as assistants during Science time in classes. She also reported that she has applied for grants for the school gardens.
- B. Green Committee - Mr. Josh Weinberger spoke for the committee and reported that they meet on the second Tuesday of every month. He thanked everyone who participated in the pesto sale and reported that they sold out quickly. He informed everyone that the coming Saturday they will be gardening and planting daffodils from 10 am to 12:30 pm. District 3's district-wide Green Committee is starting a "Garden Train," communally sharing best practices between schools that have gardens and those that are looking to start or improve theirs. Fridays are for textile recycling, which in addition to being good for our environment also raises funds for the school.

- C. Inclusion Committee - Ms. Natasha Price Cipolli spoke for the Inclusion committee. The Inclusion Committee meets the last Thursday of every month at 8:30 am, with the goal of creating an inclusive environment for all children, including those with special needs or allergies. Ms. Cipolli also acts as a volunteer special needs support representative for District 3, and welcomes parents to contact her with any questions about navigating the system and requesting support for their children.

XI. Upcoming Events

- A. Fall Fest - Ms. Storms reported that it is on Saturday October 26, 2019 (Rain date is Sunday, October 27, 2019). The playground and the street will be used for fall fest. She reported that this year they will be having Haunted house with a Doll House theme, Gaga, face painting. Trader Joes is sponsoring so there will be a lot of food coming from them. For chess Mr. Corbblah will be there, so kids can challenge him. There will be a Costume Contest for adults and kids. She asked everyone to sign up for volunteer jobs. Reminded everyone that it's not a drop off event and security will be there throughout the weekend.

XII. Adjourn

Next meeting is on November 21, 2019. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Chandini Prakash, Recording Secretary

