

**PS 191/RSMA
PTA Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2019**

Welcome and Introductions.

Scott Feinblum (PTA Treasurer) welcomed everyone.

Scott introduced Principal Heron and mentioned that, earlier this week, the PTA executive board met with him. In that meeting, we shared our goals, objectives and PTA activities. Principal Heron was aligned with us and very supportive. We look forward to working with Principal Heron and continuing to build and expand upon what has been accomplished to date.

Principal Heron introduced himself and said that he wanted to take this position because wanted to be principal at a community school. He loved the small school feel and community associated with PS191/RSMA. He loved our school's diversity and commitment to social-emotional learning for all students. He described his education philosophy as: children do well if they can. He said that everyone wants to do well, and it is up to administration, staff and parents to help our students get over and through barriers to allow them to succeed. Often a focus of school is on college and career, but he would add a third "C" for citizenship because it is important that our students become active and informed citizens.

Fundraisers!

Scott discussed recent bake sale, which brought in about \$1000. Scott reminded everyone of the **upcoming bake sale on October 24, 2019**, and asked for volunteers.

Scott mentioned that the coin drive is now OPEN.

School Leadership Team

Kristy Sanchez (PTA President) and Aimee Chang (PTA Vice President) gave some background on the School Leadership Team (SLT). We voted to add Andrew Chu and Tasha Virden as new members. The first SLT meeting will be held on October 28, 2019. (For more information on SLTs in general, see <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/get-involved/school-leadership-team.>)

Damaris Carrion, PS 191's Parent Coordinator, presented.

Damaris spoke about the Department of Education (DOE) hiring process—the "C-30 process"—for a permanent assistant principal and principal. Currently both Principal Heron and Ms. Parkinson are "acting," or interim, placements. School leadership positions such as these need to go through an official vetting process approximately 90 days after starting. The SLT will provide feedback to the DOE so please share your thoughts with SLT members. The DOE will also be interviewing other candidates and superintendent makes the final decision. Mr. Heron's position has not been posted yet. Ms. Parkinson's Assistant Principal position has been posted. Damaris noted that Ms. Parkinson's Assistant Principal position is a new one for the school this year in addition to Ms. Perez's Assistant Principal position. Up until this year, the school only had one Assistant Principal.

Damaris also advised that she will send out a *Who's Who* Guide in the school with contact information for staff.

Teacher Announcements

Ms. Montezaiz, PS 191's dance teacher, announced that at the **Latino Heritage Night Celebration (Wednesday, October 23 from 5:30-7:30)** there will be dancing and audience participation!

Committees

Kristy and Scott discussed the PTA Committees.

Auction Committee: Scott and Colleen McDonough will be Auction Committee Co-Chairs. Next month, they will begin planning for the auction, which includes deciding on a theme, decorations, and soliciting donations, donations, donations and more donations. The auction is scheduled for May 15, 2020 and will be held in the school gymnasium.

Community Building Committee: Kristy chairs this committee and is looking for volunteers to join the committee. Kristy meets with parents at the other schools in the neighborhood to discuss bringing our schools together, whether through school events, festivals, sporting events, etc. Kristy mentioned that the schools in the area have formed a volunteer swap – where parents will volunteer at the auctions of other schools so that they don't have to work at their own school auction. We will be looking for parent volunteers from PS191 to participate.

School Culture Committee: Aimee, Kurt Weiss and Ingrid Johnson will be working on this, but are looking for more volunteers. This committee will manage various projects such as school-branded gear and events. Aimee provided background on the school and its culture and history. The PTA is the family engagement piece of the culture of our school and support family events. Friends of Makers and Artists is a group that came together to do larger-scale fundraising. This group supports Mandarin and Maker programs and is here to build the community and support the school.

Fundraising Committee: This Committee looks for ways to raise funds on a bigger scale. Please contact Scott if you have ideas for fundraising or leads for grants. Some donations come with so many loopholes that it can be extremely time consuming to access certain opportunities and hard for a small group with limited resources to justify the time it takes.

Community Engagement Committee: We need representatives talk to people in buildings surrounding the school. Through Friends of Makers and Artists, a poster is in progress. We need more family volunteers. Aimee said our school is under-enrolled, which translates into lower per capita funding. We want to see kids who start in the pre-K program stay throughout elementary school. We have been doing great work in this building and have not been on a PR blitz.

Follow up on Issues raised at the last meeting.

Middle School Lockers: Kristy spoke to Ms. Parkinson. The school does not use lockers, but the school is working with the students to help them figure out what they need to carry around all day and what they don't.

Afterschool programs: The PTA will be working with Principal Hernon to see whether we can get additional after-school programs, but the grants we have limit what we can do. (We currently have YMCA and Hudson Guild.) It is understood that it is one thing that the program is at capacity – it is another not to be told.

Open forum.

Someone recommended that we spotlight a teacher or staff member at every PTA meeting– who I am, what my teaching principles are, etc. Great idea!

We discussed the under-enrollment issue, and Kristy explained that there are certain DOE policies that allow people to choose a different school even though they are zoned for PS 191/RSMA. We want to share our

narrative as to why we stay – should we have a “parents who chose to stay” after Pre-K panel? DOE counts the school population as of a date in October and bases funding off of that. Because people leave this school, there is often a deficit from under-enrollment. Additionally, children who enroll after the October date do not count toward the funding headcount.

Wrap Up.

Kristy and Scott closed the meeting and said that Principal Herson holds our values and is focused on racial equality. We will meet with him on a monthly basis.