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**The PTA of MS 158 General Membership Meeting**  
**Auditorium – December 17, 2019**

**Handouts** – Agenda, Treasury Report, Teacher Grant Requests Summary, Minutes, Attendance sheet, PTA snack sales volunteer signup sheets, Dial-a-Teacher flyers, District 26 “Breaking Bad Habits” workshop flyer, District 26 “The Dangers of Vaping” workshop flyer

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Saira Amin. She welcomed and thanked everyone for coming.
2. Parents were asked to review the November 2019 Minutes. Bonnie Bromberg motioned to approve the minutes, Vivia Yam seconded, all in favor voted, no objections. The minutes were approved.
3. **Treasurer’s Report - Vivia Yam**
  - Beginning balance was \$11,837.77.
  - Income consisted of snack sales, membership dues and Five Guys fundraiser.
  - Expenses totaled \$5,781.16. This included 16 Teacher Grant Applications (itemized list available) and snack sale supplies.
  - The ending balance was \$7,560.62.
  - Approval of Treasurer’s Report: Irulan Budabin motioned to approve the report & Bonnie Bromberg seconded, all in favor voted, no objections. The Treasurer’s Report passed.
4. **Principal’s Report - Mr. Henry Schandel**
  - Mr. Schandel is aware of the New York Post article that was published last week regarding the incident at the school. No specifics about the incident can be discussed, but he assures parents there are procedures in place to address bullying, harassment or intimidation.
  - There is line of communication and support for parents through the school support team and the district office.
  - Once an incident is reported to a teacher or staff member, there is an immediate procedure in place. The whole school team has to determine if the incident falls into violation 831 (sexual harrasment) or 832 (bullying and harassment).
    - The team consists of the Guidance Counselor, Dean and AP for the grade, to provide checks and balances.
    - The guidance counselor provides support for the victim or the suspect involved.
    - The Dean interviews the students, handles discipline, and enters the information into the DOE online system.
    - The AP does some management depending on the situation, and follows up with the Dean and guidance counselor, and is in constant contact with the Principal.

- The school has 24 hours to write the incident report.
- There are constant review meetings among the team and staff.
- The school has 5 days to investigate, but it usually takes less time than that.
- After day 2, there is a formal review of the incident progress up to that point.
- Sometimes the team decides on immediate student removal; sometimes law enforcement is engaged.
- If the incident involves sexual harassment, then a sexual harassment liaison is involved.
  - Once an incident is reported, an intake form is completed outlining the initial allegations, witnesses, etc.
  - The Dean and AP are involved, and a formal investigation is started as a school team.
  - Sometimes additional witnesses are added and need to be interviewed as well.
  - The guidance counselor is the At Risk Support staff for the victim or the suspect. She is available for immediate counseling.
  - The school's primary responsibility is to protect and support the children.
  - Confidentiality of the children is upheld.
  - The school team determines whether or not an allegation is substantiated and if so, whether it is a violation of 831 or 832.
  - As per regulations, written notices are sent to parents, with an invitation to meet at school to discuss. At our school, phone calls are made to parents of the children involved with the findings, with the option to meet and receive the letter at school.
  - Our school website will be updated with a link to the school behavioral code, Chancellor's regulations, and Respect for All liaison information, Mr. Epstein and Ms. McNamara.
  - The letter given to the victim includes a plan and supports.
  - The range of supports for the victim include meeting with the guidance counselor for short-term or long-term counseling, referral to SAPIS (Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists) worker.
  - For the suspect, discipline is applied as necessary, and support as well.
  - The level of discipline can range from parent conference, to 90 day suspension.
  - Sometimes the process can take less than 5 days, or sometimes longer, if witnesses not available for interviewing, or if more witnesses need to be interviewed.
  - Even if the suspect is suspended, there is built in 2 periods of counseling.
- In answer to a question raised about how the school handles ongoing issues to prevent them from getting more serious:
  - Homerooms have been instituted as a means for students to connect with at least one teacher.
  - Social emotional learning and support are the focus of the school to address overall well-being of children. Last year, we spent the entire year with the RULER program, teaching mindfulness.
  - Monthly grade assemblies are a place to educate students. The first one of the school year addressed Chancellor's discipline regulations, how to respond to harassment, and who to report it to.
  - Children often want to help their friends in trouble, and try to manage on their own.
  - As soon as staff are made aware of any problems, they are 100% there for the child, with discretion.
  - Children are always asked, "Who is the one adult at school they can go to?"
  - Mr. Schandel stated he has 100% confidence in the support staff that they can handle these problems.

- School support staff work together as a team to provide checks and balances, when problems arise.
- A parent stated that they felt that nothing was done and the problem escalated.
  - Mr. Schandel said that immediate action was taken once they were notified of any problem.
  - He understands that confidentiality and lack of communication can be frustrating.
  - All adults at the school are mandated reporters.
  - In addition to the school team, and the system in place, the district office was notified and gave support.
  - Problems don't always occur, but when they do, there is a support system in place.
  - Danielle Giunta, District 26 Superintendent, stated that she and the district office staff were glad to attend the PTA meeting and support the safety of our children.
  - David Wong, from SLT and CEC, stated he was assured knowing that all regulations were followed at our school.
- A question was raised about how the school addresses issues with children.
  - Mr. Schandel stated that he has weekly staff meetings, on Friday afternoons.
  - If staff members bring up issues regarding students, a referral is made to the guidance counselor and support team.
  - Students have access to teachers whenever they want.
  - Kids can come to the principal at any time.
  - Children have 100% access to support.
  - There is constant reminder for them to think of which adult they can turn to for problems, whether at school or at home.
  - The Parent Coordinator can also answer questions.
  - Understanding and respect helpful to protect confidences of those affected.
- A question was raised about what can be done for other kids at school who feel troubled by what has happened. Are we paying attention to kids indirectly affected?
  - Kids are learning mindfulness at school, on a weekly basis, which is a check in for the kids.
  - Mr Schandel stated he will think about what to do about this.
- Mr. Schandel stated that one positive is that this has provided us more dialogue about how to handle these type of situations. Also, it is not solely the school's job, but also the parents' responsibility.
- He appreciates the time everyone has taken to come out today.
- There are resources to help parents and kids, such as District 26 workshops given by Licensed Mental Health Counselors.
- Upcoming dates:
  - 12/23-1/1 Winter break - note no school on Monday 12/23
  - 1/9 Senior Photos
  - 1/10 College Awareness Day
  - 1/8 Brain Power visits the 7th grade
  - 1/8 "The Dangers of Vaping" workshop at MS 74 @7pm
  - 1/16 8th grade Cap & Gown measurements
  - 1/16 CEC Meeting and Town Hall meeting with Chancellor at MS74

## **5. PTA Co-President Report - Saira Amin**

- There was a raffle drawing for parents who submitted membership dues. The prize was 4 tickets to the Winter Concert.
  - We will have a shoe drive of new or gently worn shoes, in the new year, with the goal of collecting 2500 shoes. Flyers will come.
  - Snack sale will take place at lunchtime tomorrow, from 10:15am-12:30pm. Please send children with money. Volunteers would be greatly appreciated.
  - We will also be selling snacks and school apparel at the Winter Concert tomorrow @7pm.
6. Irulan Budabin motioned to adjourn the meeting, Deepti Arora seconded, all in favor voted, no objections. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.