

PS110 - PTA MEETING

DECEMBER 6th 2017

In Attendance:

Mrs Cano Amato, Principal

Annie, PTA Co-Treasurer

Amy Chalkley, Parent Coordinator

Shelly, PTA Secretary

Tiffaney, PTA President

16 Parents

Mary, PTA Co-President

SUMMARY

SPECIAL SPEAKER - DR SELASSIE

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT - MS CANO

Ok, so just a couple of announcements:

PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Pre-k registration will begin on February 5th, 2017. That's for children born in 2014.

Kindergarten registration opened on November 28th and will close on January 12th. If you are already here for pre-k you still need to register for kindergarten. There is not an automatic movement from pre-k into kindergarten. If you want the dual lingual program you need to make that known on your application. We'll ask you if you your child as a french speaker. Please take that seriously. As I said at the last meeting, your child will be assessed. One year we found that the majority of the kids, that parents said were french speakers, did not speak french. That was a real impact for school personnel because we have to pull classroom teachers to assess the children. When we say that your child speaks french they must have a basic knowledge of working french. A story will be read to your child, in french, and he or she must answer questions about the story in french. It's not simply a knowledge of colours or numbers.

Ms Raciunas was at the gifted and talented coordinators meeting yesterday. As I said at the last meeting, testing process will begin January 3rd through the 19th here at school for

grades K through 2nd grade. Pre-K testing will be January 6, 7, 13,14, 20 and 21 at select locations. When you register they tell you where to bring your child. We don't do Pre-k testing here in the school. Your child is tested both on a verbal and a nonverbal assessment. I get lots of questions about how to prep your child. You shouldn't prep for the test. If a child is naturally gifted and talented that's what you're seeking information on. Because these gifted and talented programs are geared towards children who are naturally gifted. If you prep your child like at the pseudo SAT classes and your child passes that test and then you expect your child to be able to go to that class to study, I would take a step back. All of that is already online and information will go home in regards to when your child will be tested.

Most importantly is that the kindergarten process is open. Because it is all done through the office of school enrollment, I tell parents to have a great deal of patience in the process. It becomes harrowing down the road. You just have to go with the flow and remain as calm as you can. I know that it can be stressful when you are trying to look for a school for your child. It is a stressful process and it is done by priority. I think that there are ten priorities now. The only thing that this doesn't impact is the french. We will take french speakers who are out of zone in order to meet that 50% that we are already trying to get.

Q: Does the school take into account out of zone kids that are already here for pre k?

MS CANO: I didn't even here about that. Why, because they are already here?

TIFFANEY: It is on the form and it is something that they take into consideration.

MS CANO: Good question, I will have to look into it. See how great the DOE is, I wasn't even notified.

Q: How does it work for non french speakers in the dual language program?

MS CANO: We call by priority. Believe me, we get hundreds of non speaking children and it's strictly by priority. So you are called by priority. Everyone will be reprioritized from pre-k into k. Obviously, if you're zoned and you have a sibling here then obviously your chances are greater but I can tell you now that not every non-french child that wants a seat in the program, gets a seat. It gets very intense down the road. The other thing is that children applying for gifted and talented also want a space in the dual language program. The gifted and talented program only goes out until almost the end of the year. So I tell parents just to wait it out. I called parents at the end of August or beginning of September because seats opened up. I think that this year we called parents even after the school year had started. Three days had gone by and seats opened up. The only thing that I am going to

say is that if you are making decisions about schools, please let us know. Some parents don't call and we are holding seats for children that never show up and that is difficult.

Q: Is the priority for in-zone siblings the same for the dual language program as for the english program?

MS CANO: That question has a lot of nuances to it. It is the same, unless you are a french speaker.

Q: For older children, do you ever take in older english speakers that have been studying french outside of the school?

MS CANO: That's a really good question. This is what we are finding, some parents will tell us that the child didn't get a seat in the early grades but that the child has been studying french. The child will be assessed. But case in point, a second grader, whose parents wanted him to get a seat. The child passed the assessment and a seat was given to him. But now the parents are discovering that this is much more than they had anticipated and the child is struggling trying to go on a french dual language track and an english track. Don't forget that children in the dual language program are getting two languages and trying to cover two curriculums in half the time. It gets pretty intense. I think that you really have to think about that.

Q: A question about languages, my son came home counting to ten in Italian, which is great but why isn't it he learning spanish? Millions of people in the country, even in the city speak spanish.

MS CANO: Very simple, we are tapping into staff members' expertise. I taught spanish here.

Q: It's not the parents that can chose what language their children learn?

MS CANO: If you would like for your child to speak spanish then I have to find someone to teach spanish and that means that someone loses a position here. It's a cluster program so all kids pre-k through 5 get Italian. We don't have a spanish program here.

Q: Who determines that?

MS CANO: I determine that along with the school leadership team. I did not reach out to parents. When we created the program I reached out to the teachers. The Italian teacher offered to head up the Italian program. She created the entire program. I have teachers on staff that speak spanish, they don't want to teach spanish.

Q: Spanish is a little easier to learn and a little more practical.

MS CANO: We can have that discussion down the road but I want us to be very conscious of the fact that if we move teachers around that means someone has to go. When we are

juggling things, I am trying to create programs that offer our children all kinds of different experiences but ultimately, I also have to be mindful of staff positioning. It's not a simple thing, like, oh we want to have spanish and then I hire a spanish teacher.

Q: You don't have to speak spanish to teach it.

MS CANO: I can tell you from being bilingual myself, I would never hire someone to teach a language here that they weren't fluent in. I speak spanish.

Q: And you don't want to have spanish in the school?

MS CANO: I don't have enough hours in the day to do what I need to do. The logic around offering all languages to the children including french is to expose them to world cultural and the diversity of languages here. I wanted to do chinese at one point but that was difficult getting the students and the staff.

TIFFANEY: First of all, we need to move on. But I want to explain that we aren't required by the DOE to have a second language. The fact that the kids are being exposed to Italian is because we have a staff member that can teach it. We aren't going to get rid of a staff member so that we can offer spanish. We are a public school. We are not guaranteed a language.

MS CANO: As a matter of fact, typically, the study of a second language besides french dual-language, that doesn't happen in the sixth grade in New York City. We were fortunate to be able to create something that no one else had created when we started it. We were able to tap into our resources. Ms Avalia created that program from zero. There was nothing out there. We spent a tremendous amount of effort because she was willing to the work to do it and to present something a little different. So that's how it all came about.

Any other questions in regard to this? Ok, thanks and I hope to see you all here on Saturday.

TREASURER'S REPORT - ANNIE

I just wanted to give a quick update on where we are in our budget and what we have been able to do in terms of bringing in revenue this year thus far and also where we are at regarding expenses.

As a reminder our projected total revenues for the year was 130K. Our goal is to raise 130K this year and our projected expenses 132k. So we have a fairly balanced budget.

What we want to be able to do is to try raise the same amount of money as we are spending each year regardless of what we have as a reserve. We do have a bit of a reserve which is good because it helps with cash flow. We don't always spend the money at the same time as the money is coming in. The reserve is also for any emergency or unexpected expenses that we may have.

So thus far, we have raised \$60,281 about 40% of that is through direct giving, which is about 29K which is really really great. Many people have made donations to support the efforts of the PTA and to support the school. It is slightly misleading because we happened to have received a large anonymous one time gift. Which is great because it wasn't part of our projections so that's sort of a little bit of an extra. Also about 15K of those funds are from last year's events that just came in this year. So I would say that our revenues from this year are about \$58,500. We also brought in about \$10,500 from the fall fest which was about \$4,500 over projected and \$4,500 more than last year. So that is really great.

On the expense side this year so far spent about 67K. So we've spent slightly more than we have brought in thus far. About 13k was from last year for a grant expense that was from last year so that will be booked towards last year. So our expenses this year are at about \$55,500. This year the biggest expense thus far was for the art teacher and for support staff. If anybody would like more detailed explanation I can answer any questions.

Someone had asked how much we had raised through Amazon smile. This year we've raised about \$325 which is actually pretty good because we had budgeted \$200 for the entire year. People are using it and this is a good time to remind people to use it while they are doing their holiday shopping.

Any questions right now? Ok, thank you.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - TIFFANEY

To piggyback off of what Annie just talked about, our second annual holiday fund drive kicked off on Monday. We as a PTA don't do a lot of hard asks. Essentially, we spend about \$290 per child. This holiday fund drive is just a push before the end of the year and if you haven't had a chance to give now is the time and we are a 501c3 company so this is total tax right off. So again, for your child who goes to this school, the PTA spends \$290 per year or 29\$ per month. During this week we are giving away a raffle prize of a two hour

party at Videology for any parents that give \$290 or go out to new york charities and give 29\$ or more per month. I'll be honest, we give \$30 a month because I give a lot of time. So that's what we give but you can also give 5\$ a month.

We are looking for 100% parent participation and so far this year we are at 22%. Last year we were at 27% at the end of the year. The numbers are kind of bleak. It could be just to stop by the table. We are outside all week and you can give 5\$. It will count towards participation. Again, I feel that if you are showing up you already know how much we need the money. It's not like we are PBS or public radio or something and always in your face like no more music until you give us more money. We will keep on carrying on but what we have to do is so much harder because we are so dependant on having these events and scrounging for money. If we had even 50% participations our lives would be so much easier.

I am sure that Yuli will touch upon this when she speaks. Our lost and found, we sent out a letter about this. There is a school in District 14, PS23 - 38% of their population is homeless. There are homeless shelters all around the school.

We made the decision to send our lost and found items that we've had since September and October. We are packing those up next week and taking them to people who really need them. Usually we sell them on Schoola but these people really need help. Whatever they don't distribute through the school, they will give to the homeless shelters in the neighborhood. We are also having a toy drive right now. There is also talk of having a book drive for PS23 as well. It's a crazy time of year and something that we need to get our heads wrapped around. We are weeding out our library right now and those will go to PS23.

Q: Can parents bring in books?

We will send out a notification. We have a basement that has boxes of books that have food stuck on them. We will give some instructions like gently used books. We just don't want to send them crappy books. We want to be very thoughtful in our actions.

The Multicultural Holiday Fair is on Saturday and if you have not yet signed up to volunteer please do so. We have two or three rooms that we can't do right now for lack of volunteers. We have so many holes. If you have a classroom chain of emails please see me after the meeting. I will take your email and I will right a very very desperate email that you could send out to the parents in your class. Again, it's the same people who do these

events every time and we don't get to hang out with our kids at these events. We don't get to enjoy the fruits of our labors. So please spread the love and offer to volunteer.

If you need to bring your kids, put them to work, taking tickets. Kids love to help. Give them the opportunity to do that.

In the past we have had to make the call to shutdown rooms. We have almost shut down the fishing room, if we don't get volunteers by tomorrow evening we will need to shut down. Which is a really awesome game for the little ones. Again' I feel like I am preaching to the choir.

Any other updates from committees.

MERCHANDISE - MARY

Along with the holiday fair the merchandise committee has all new merchandise that will premiere on Saturday. We will have beanies and new shirts in all new colors. So come check it out.

FUNRAISER GALA - FLEUR

About the end of the year gala, I am one of the co-chairs with Sandy. Last year we were at Brooklyn Zoo. This year a wonderful parent has donated their space for the Gala. It has lots of car parking that people are happy about and it's close and it's free. Unlike the Brooklyn Zoo, we can run the bar and keep the money from the sale of drinks for the PTA. We will be able to put lots of staff members at the bar because last year it was really hard to get a drink so that will be good.

This year we will also be doing Charity Buzz which will happen in addition to our live auction that we will do. This is a separate thing that can raise quite a lot of money. It is for experiential things or very hard to get things like a unique portrait by Dan Witz or a meet and greet with the CEO of Apple, those kind of things go for like \$10,000. Charity Buzz takes a cut and we keep the rest. If any one knows anyone that has great connections or has a special talent please see me or speak with Tiffany.

We are also talking with another auctioneer to see if they can give us a better deal. Last year was great with 501 Auctions but they did charge us \$4,000. So just want to see if we can get a better deal.

We are thinking of maybe going with a themed gala to make it a little bit more fun. Apparently the themed galas in the past have been more fun. Possible theme was, has anyone seen Big Little Lies, we wanted to do the theme that they do at their gala which was Audrey and Elvis. Something to unify so that we can theme everything a little. We don't want to turn anyone off because they think that they have to dress up or something.

Tiff: So just a little more about Charity Buzz. It is separate from our auction. So someone had tickets to SNL with a backstage tour and it went for \$15,000. What Charity Buzz has is a network of really rich people who want to buy something that you can't get on Ebay. Fleur's husband head creative at Spotify, when the people at Charity Buzz heard this they went crazy and they said that it could go for a minimum of \$6,000.

This has nothing to do with our gala and the things that we can bid on there. We will let our parents know that this is out there but this is a different thing. Bronwyn is running the Charity Buzz side of things. We are looking to get 5 to 10 events or experiences and we are looking to raise 20 to 30K. We are trying it out and Bronwyn has worked for nonprofits that have used it before and it is very little work on our part once we find these experiences. We will let our parents know that it is out there but this is for people that are looking to buy their kids internships. It is crazy. Other schools are using this and are making a whole lot of money, like 300k or 400k a year with this.

ADVOCACY - YULI

This is new to me so i have been doing a lot of research. I've been going to the CEC meeting and it's been interesting and the last one has been great because there were a lot of parents there, parents from PS 23. The PTA president of PS23 is a single mom of two kids living in a shelter. She told us that she went to the dollar store and got bunch of little halloween things for like 42\$ and brought an ipod to the school to play. That is what she is working with. We heard a lot of their issues and asked what we could do. PS 84 has done a coat drive for them already. We decided to help out with our lost and found. A lot of these kids don't have clothes or they come from traumatic situations and soil themselves and the teachers bring extra clothes for them while they wash and dry their clothes. The principal has raised money to get a washer and dryer for the school so that they could do this for the kids. It makes me appreciate what we have here and what can we do to help our district. Especially in this current national environment, I think that on the ground that we should protect our communities and our CEC is a good way to do that. If we can form an active coalition with the CEC, other PTAs, and other schools maybe we can make some

real change in our district and hopefully this can be a road map for other districts and this can bring diversity and equity to other schools.

On that note, I have gone to CEC2 meeting, that's district 2 in Manhattan. They have got it down. They have a diversity committee, and a communications committee. I have contacted some people from the CEC2 and we will have a meeting. I will pick their brains to find out how they got to where they are. Right now their main focus is on making the middle school applications more equitable. So, the screening process there. Like if you need to go to an open house and a parent can't take off of work and so they get automatically taken off the list. They are looking at those kind of issues. What they have done in the past is make the selection process of application more transparent. A lot of middle schools don't even tell you how the selection process happens. It might be attendance or grades or an interview or an obligatory open house. So it isn't necessarily fair yet but it has been made transparent. So just things like that that we are aspiring to.

So the next CEC meeting is on Thursday December 14th at 6pm in Bushwick at PS 147. It's a great school. The meeting will be there you can bring your kid. It's always kid friendly. This one is special because it is the presidents council meeting. All the PTA presidents from the schools will hopefully be there.

If you'd like to come to the next CEC2 meeting, it's next Monday at 6:30pm at 333 7th Avenue.

If you'd like to come to our school SLT is on Monday the 18th of december at 4pm. It's a great way to see what's going on higher up.

This will all be posted to the portal.

TIFF: I drive if anyone wants a ride to the CEC meeting. I always go.

GREEN WELLNESS - HANNAH

Last month we sent out a survey asking about your opinion about school food, specifically about whether we should revert back to the traditional menu or stay with the alternative menu that we've had for three years.

We received over 200 surveys and it was an overwhelming to continue with the alternative menu. There were some parents that voted for the traditional menu and the main concern that they voiced was that they wanted their child to eat more. They thought that with the traditional menu that their kids would have more choices that they liked.

I think that where we go from here, the green wellness committee wants to work on finding ways to encourage kids to eat the alternative menu, how to reduce food waste. Some families voiced concern that the kids didn't know what was being offered and they wouldn't want to eat the food because that they couldn't identify it. Also with Ms Cano we are trying to find a way to let kids know what they are having for lunch everyday.

Simultaneously with Lisa and Fran, we held some focus groups and pulled 12 students from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th . We had lunch with them. It was so awesome to hear what they had to say. They all had very specific opinions about lunch. They all expressed what they know. It was informative and it was super awesome. On the menu that day there was a delicious cucumber salad with balsamic. I thought it was delicious. Until we prodded, it was untouched by all the kids and once we asked them to try all the kids ate it and said that they loved it. I guess my bottom line is that as the green wellness committee moves forward we will find ways to make this more successful and get kids to eat more.

The Green Wellness committee will meet next week and there are many parents that checked the box to be contacted to discuss this further.

There were about 100+ comments which was super helpful. Getting parents involved to encourage kids to eat, to try new things, is always good. We will continue the conversation.

TIFF: When we went to the alternative menu, 4 years ago. It was assumed that it would sell itself and it hasn't. There was a big push to get the alternative menu. I think now once we get everything figured out that we really do a pitch to educating our kids about what is being fed to them and hopefully get parents to support their kids to try something new. I really think that a lot of it is educating our kids and our parents.

Nada had a conversation with Eric Adams. He is Brooklyn Borough President. He was diagnosed. He went to a plant based diet and he no longer has diabetes. So he is now more apt to fund schools that are offering healthy food choices for kids. Which is sad in

some ways because maybe some schools don't know that the alternative menu is out there. This is the direction that we are going in and we are ahead of the ball game.

Anything else? Thank you so much for sticking around and I appreciate the little guys for being so patient. Can we just, before everyone leaves, approve the minutes.

All in favor. Ok thanks everyone.