

Start: 7:35 am

End: 8:27 am

The meeting started at 7:34 am. There were about 35 parents, EB board, 15 teachers and administration present.

❖ **President & Administration Reports:** (Updates from Co-President Phil & Katherine McManus)

- **October Movie Night:** Huge success and a fun night-- Raised \$1,200 for Pre-K / K grades.
- **Communication Lines:** Phil discussed first line is teacher, then another resource is Class Parent, then PTA
- **Book Fair:** Huge success;
 - Best book fair ever ! Raised a whopping \$12,5000 in sales (*Scholastic then gives us half that back)
 - **HUGE WIN** = \$6,000 book sales to be shared among Teachers-- Used for class enrichments/materials
 - Katherine mentioned Nancy and she thank parents for presence and participating in school community
- **Teacher wish lists** - Continue to encourage both teachers and parents. Utilize class parents to facilitate.
- **Support and Vote Today for (2) Teacher Requested Programs:** 1) Nesy ; 2) Exemplars
 - Katherine and our teachers mentioned why we need both programs to continue to be funded:
 1. **Exemplars**- Teacher Heather Meisner spoke about Exemplars, for grades K-5, a “student friendly” math word problem site with a bank of problems
 - Exemplars math problem solving encourages “open- ended thinking”
 - Enables kids the freedom to actually show their work in many ways, using/ choosing many strategies-- And arrive at same answer.
 - There are (3) levels: easier > more challenging > even other grade level questions- it assesses based on a child’s performance.
 - **Benefits:** It enforces early on skills needed in later grades for testing questions where asked to show work. It builds confidence in kids to learn multiple strategies and find best one for them.
 2. **Nesy**- Teacher Natalia Berger discussed.
 - Nesy is a reading program introduced last year.
 - In beginning, it assesses at grade level what kids should know- Comprehension, basic decoding.
 - **Benefits:** Kids can then unlock “islands” when done and aspire to reach other islands. It feels like a game on a computer and they feel “successful. A graph sees kids where they are and assesses them. Kids can do it at home and they don’t consider it “work.”
 - ICT, Gen Ed and G&T really all benefit from this program. SLT approved it, teachers want it and we just need the PTA to vote it in, can we pay for these programs.
 3. **Costs for PTA vote**- Exemplars- \$2,000- **Approved**- 26- Yes; Nesy- \$1,350- **Approved**- 24 – Yes
- **Lunch:**
 - **Revamped Healthy Lunch Menu:** This new healthy menu rolled out last year.
 - Getting mixed reviews; We are reassessing now, Concerns of some pickier kids not eating at all now vs. eating less healthier meals; Some parents suggested giving it more time
 - Others suggested a survey monkey to poll families to see:
 - a) how many kids bring lunch; b) how many kids buy lunch; c) If buying lunch, how many actually eat the lunch they buy.
 - **Next step make a decision**- Keep new or go back to old menu?
 - **Is there enough time to eat?**
 - Some parents mentioned they gave kids lunch as lunch lines/process takes long sometimes and then they worry they don’t have enough time to eat. Other parents talked about the socio-emotional development that takes place over a meal at a table.
 - Katherine addressed and mentioned there are no time shortages
 - Nancy, Katherine and other staff observe and rotate and oversee to make sure kids have enough time to eat.

- Katherine and teachers commented that this year, the change was made to have birthdays now celebrated at lunchtime to maximize learning time in the classroom.
- **Recess:** Parents asked can we flip/flop lunch and recess and/or improve on transition process?:
 - Katherine addressed- She mentioned kids come in a safe way when Coach Jose blows whistle
 - But some parents mentioned transition time seems much longer.
 - Katherine mentioned kids earn opportunity to come out and play if they respond to whistle properly.
 - Coach Jose is also consulting with his colleagues to see how they approach end of recess.
 - Other parents (some who've volunteered) and others mentioned they wondered if there is enough structured supervision at recess?
 - It seems a bit hectic at times. ***Safety best practices were stressed are of top importance.**
 - **Next suggested steps and requests for improvement :**
 - Some parents mentioned a formal committee should be set up with following goals:
 - Don't just ask for volunteers but rather, also come up with the following and publish:
 - A set schedule for volunteers
 - Set # of people needed each day for safety (minimum # and suggested #)
 - Outline the exact commitment they need from people , etc.

❖ **Other Program Developments and Updates:** (From Co-President Knar and Co-VP's Alison & Beth)

- **B&N Shopping Fundraiser / Holiday Social-** Dec. 3- Need help gift wrapping and drive attendance
- **International Night** - Jan. 21: planning is underway, need performers, sponsors, flyer to go out
- **Lice proposal:** PTA approved \$1500 for school-wide lice check. Propose a 2nd check after the Holiday break (*Next step- set in motion) and a 3rd time in the Spring.
- **Nov. Schoola Clothing Drive-** Items will be sold online at Schoola.com. % of proceeds to be paid to PS 198
- **Explored possible teacher lunch program PD fundraising** - discuss logistics, share feedback from admin
 - Got mixed reviews- will continue to explore that and other PD fundraising ideas in future
- **Student talent show:** Great idea suggested from new EB member Elaine.
 - Around April 19th or April 20th
 - Perhaps do a flyer/booklet cover design contest? (This is aimed to promote the event early)
 - Shared prelim feedback from admin – Having all talent areas make it a good community event- Caveat-- just be sensitive to “declaring winners and losers”- approach it more pragmatically.
- **Teacher Benefit Music Concert:** in Feb TBD. Ms. Fisk and parent Kristen handling with some PTA support
 - Faculty members would participate and some parents and make it an evening concert for families
- **Other PD fundraising ideas and/or 5th grade graduation ideas were discussed-**
 - One PTA member Elaine was thinking up new ideas to benefit all grades and/or PD for teachers.
 - **Personalized 52-card deck-** One parent Kristen suggested idea. Well received. Need volunteers .
 - Deck if playing cards and back card had pictures of various children and events from year. It's compact, low price point and easy to produce and fun to use. Charge \$15 or \$20 per deck and can raise good funds. Could be for 5th grade graduation and/or per grade.
 - **All Grades Yearbook-** Another idea discussed was an annual all grades yearbook but production costs might and price points might be high but not so many pictures per child per family. Received some push backs.
- **TD Bank Presentation-** Led by Randy at TD bank
 - Discussed many benefits & programs such as: Penny arcade free w/ account; free notary services
 - School book program rewards program (read 25 books and if have an account, they put \$10 in account), and/or for just \$100 min. you can open a checking account.

- Affinity program for our school- Open account using our PS 198 code and they give you bonus \$25 to start you off opening incentive and a % of account rewards can also go back to our 198 school.

- **Pasta Fundraiser:** very successful - raised **\$1,200**. coordinated by Knar.
- **Spring Fling Auction** – 5/19: Donations started to come in; Heidi plans another meeting after Thanksgiving
- **Pie Sales Fundraiser -3rd week this month:** Will be coordinated by Beth. With option to donate to shelter.

❖ **P&L- Treasurer Report & Annual Fund Updates:** (From Illya and John)

- Today the PTA formally ratified the updated budget with some unscheduled new line items that the PTA body formerly approved in the prior meeting, including items such as: Robotics \$9k, Substitute Teacher Budget (\$5K), Licenders, Afterschool coordinator and the below (2) new items from today.
 - **Ratified Budget Approved-** 17 - yes; 0 - opposed
- As mentioned before, PTA approved 2 new line items today: Nesity for \$1,350 and Exemplars for \$2,000
- **Annual Fund Update-**
 - Raised \$15K to date, up 25% from \$12K last month. Annual goal: \$65K.
 - **In order for us to stay on target, we need to raise \$40,000 by December 31st.**
 - Every little bit helps - the suggested donation per student is \$750 but donate what you can.
 - PS 198M PTA is a 501c3 non-profit organization, your donation is tax deductible. Email to families.

❖ **2015 – 2016 SLT Open Seat Vote:** (Discussion led by PTA Co-VP Alison, who’s also an SLT member)

- **The PTA voted on an open SLT seat today-** Holly Varsalona was elected. **17 – Yes; 0 - No**
 - Discussed what SLT does
 - Meets for 3 hours every month with teachers, administration and elected parent SLT members and together they develop comprehensive educational plan and go over how we’re going to improve our school- look at a lot of data and talk about how we are going to do it and what enrichments make sense

❖ **Upcoming School Events:**

NOVEMBER- 11/3- **NO SCHOOL-** Election Day; 11/3- Election Day Bake Sale being hosted
 11/4 and/or 11/5 - Parent-Teacher Conferences; **11/5- Next PTA meeting (@ 7:30 am);**
 11/3- **NO SCHOOL-** Veteran’s Day; **11/19 - EB Meeting @ 8:00 am;** Mid Nov - Pie Drive
11/20- Family Friday 8:15 – 9:00 am; 11/9 – 11/30- Schoola Clothing Drive
 11/20 - **Movie Night @ 6pm ;** 11/26 & 11/27- **NO SCHOOL-** Thanksgiving

DECEMBER- **12/3- Next PTA meeting (@ 7:30 am);** 12/3- B&N Shopping Event/Holiday Social 5 pm – 7 pm
12/4- Family Friday 8:15 – 9:00 am; **12/7 –12/11 Warm Hearts Warm Feet Sock Drive;**
 12/17- Winter Concert (Part 1) 12/24/15 -- 1/1/16- **NO SCHOOL-** Holiday Break

Questions: If you have any questions or ideas, please email pta@ps198m.org and let us know.

Minutes: You can find the minutes of prior PTA meetings on our website at: ps198m.org/pta-meetings
