

## MINUTES

### MS 54 GENERAL PTA MEETING: 2/15/17

The meeting was called to order and presided over by co-presidents Jerome Kramer and Katie Miller.

Quorum was achieved.

#### Co-Presidents Report:

- Vote on motion to approve minutes from the January PTA meeting.  
Approved.
- Tutor Fair Update:
  - Final tally was \$14,500 of pure profit for the school.
  - 16 tutor companies were present and their information is available on the school's website. There is one additional company's information on the site as well.
  - A handout with information about all of the tutor companies that were present, was made available at the PTA meeting.
- Project Cicero book drive
  - Drive will take place from 3/6-3/9
  - Families are encouraged to donate used books during that period.
  - Teachers from lower-income schools may choose books for their school libraries at no cost.
- Central Park Tai Kwon Do:
  - CPTKD began a six-week residency for five 6<sup>th</sup> Grade gym classes to alleviate overcrowding for classes that share the space.
  - Students are responding favorably to the program.
- School Improvements:
  - A parent volunteer has been working on replacing blinds in MS54 classrooms, as needed.

- Upcoming Assemblies:
  - The PTA is working to arrange for Justine Fonte, who presented to MS54 parents on the topic of “Parenting a #Millennial in the Age of Digital Sexuality,” to present to the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students and separately to the staff.
- Teacher/Staff Thank Yous:
  - Ms. Desantis thanked the parent body on behalf of the Science Department for funding for the recalibration of science equipment.
  - Liz Goldfarb thanked the parent body for the Amazon Gift Card and for supporting the library.

### **Principal’s Report:**

- School Update:
  - Progress Reports for the third marking period will open on 3/1.
  - Many students are carrying unnecessary items/papers in their bookbags, which should be removed so bags are not as heavy.
  - Teachers have been told that students should only be required to do independent reading over the February vacation, and should not be assigned any additional work. Parents should email Dr. Elster if their child is assigned additional homework for the break.
  - The school is in need of additional parent volunteers for Wellness Day (3/2) to present on a topic related to wellness.

### **Treasury:**

- Budget update:
  - Bank balance as of 2/15/17 is \$575,477.21
  - Total income is \$371,540.75
  - Expenses are \$341,190.50
  - Positive net income is \$30,350.25

- Copies of the semi-annual budget report were made available at the PTA meeting.
- Transfer of funds update:
- The PTA is moving \$250,000 of the reserve funds into a money market account.
- A vote was taken at the January PTA meeting to transfer these funds to a Capital One savings account, but it has been determined that the interest rates at that bank were not sufficient.
- TD Bank offers a higher interest rate of 0.5% APY.

Vote on motion to approve transfer of \$250,000 of reserve funds to a money market account at TD Bank.

Motion was Approved.

### **Fundraising:**

- Annual Appeal Update:
- The PTA reached its fundraising goal for annual appeal, thanks in part to the 1/30 Phone-A-Thon.
- Parents who have not done so already were encouraged to donate.
- Auction Update:
- Parent Richard Kind did a robocall on 2/15 to encourage parents to attend the school Auction.
- Auction donations are still greatly needed. Parents were encouraged to donate and to spread the word.
- Fairway Cards:
- Parents were asked to please use the card when shopping.
- Fairway is currently offering free online delivery, and the school will receive credit if shoppers enter the code MS054 at checkout.
- Fairway cards were made available at the PTA meeting.

- Amazon:
- Parents were asked to use the Amazon link on the school's website prior to shopping
- Fundraising initiatives:
- Rock Night

A Rock Night fundraiser is being planned and will consist of live-band karaoke performances with the band composed of teachers and the students as singers. Date TBD.

- Basketball Tournament

A 3 on 3 tournament with parents (similar to the one that was done with students) is being planned as a fundraising opportunity for the basketball program. Date TBD.

**Guest Speaker- Terence Houlihan:**

**Survival Tips for Parenting Your Teenager: "It's All in Their Heads!"**

For the past 20-plus years, Terence Houlihan has been a counselor and teacher to adolescents and counselors-in-training. He is also an international speaker who has presented to parents and delivered training seminars for teachers, counselors and principals on the developmental changes associated with adolescence. Tonight he will be discussing effective strategies for raising tweens and teens in light of the latest research on adolescent development.

***The presentation/slideshow will be made available on the school website.***

Question and Answer Session with Terence Houlihan:

Q: How much greater is the percentage of "body image bullying" for girls than for boys?

A: The rates for both appear to be the same.

Q: Do you have any tips on how to alleviate the number of "asks" to complete the same task, and ways in which to work on teenagers' time management skills?

A: Be consistent. Hold them to whatever agreement you have made, i.e. "I am only going to ask you three times." Parents should encourage children to put reminders in their phones. Parents must be honest with their children, i.e. going to look at their social media accounts only if the kids know they may.

Q: If a parent takes a “time-out” for him/herself when a discussion with his/her child is getting heated, how do you reengage and continue the conversation after?

A: You cannot control your child’s response, but you can have control over how you begin the discussion. Parents can ask: “Are you ready to talk to me?” If the child is not ready, have him or her set a time. Parents need to teach children how to resolve conflicts, and conflicts cannot be resolved when someone is feeling stress.

Q: How do you know when therapy may help your child?

A: In my opinion, therapy does not hurt anyone, but teenagers will not talk unless they want to. It is usually more helpful when parents attend therapy, because it allows for the viewpoint of an objective person.

Q: Are major power struggles a natural part of teenage years, i.e. refusing piano lessons?

A: Yes. This stage is almost like the terrible two’s and three’s, but there have to be some non-negotiables in the family. Children should be required to provide a logical reason for why they are saying no to things.

Q: Do you have advice on how to manage the difficulties that arise from having teenagers of different genders share a room?

A: You have to focus on time management when sharing the space.

**Next PTA General Meeting:**

3/14, 7:00 pm- MS54 teachers will discuss the upcoming state tests.