



MINUTES
MS 54 General PTA Meeting
May 14, 2019 8:00am
BTW54PTA@ms54.org

SPECIAL GUESTS: PANEL OF 8th GRADERS TO TALK ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL PROCESS

- See page 2 for notes

CALL TO ORDER & MINUTES

- Reviewed and approved April minutes

PRESIDENTS REPORT

- **Safety meeting (May 6) recap** – concerns about kids running around in mornings, and want to have more control and only have kids come in if they have a place to be.
- **Update on 108 construction** – Moving along as planned and on schedule in excavation mode; good partners; invited students to learn what they're doing from an engineering standpoint
- **SHSAT** – SHS are a good path for D3 kids because we are “blocked” from others that prioritize D2 – want to remove those barriers, create new rigorous HS seats, and have a transparent process. Booker polled school; did letter writing campaign; met with elected officials; testified at city council and assembly hearings. Stay updated via Facebook and Friday newsletters; get involved if you can no matter your stance. *(Tying back to the 8th Grade HS panel – of the 12 kids, 10 were going to SHS. Overall, 61% of Booker kids got into SHS this year.)*
- **Equity Team** – new steering committee with two teachers (Ms. Tsai, Ms. Johnson) and a parent (Dr. Judy Scott-Clayton). On June 7th, we have new parent breakfast, and we want to seem very welcoming to the incoming families – please come help if you can!
- **Lobby redesign update** – have new security desk; Ms. Kricorian has been working with students on mural
- **2019-20 EB/PTA/Auction/SLT** – Next month are elections; please step up and run for any position – reach out to co-presidents or nominating committee.
- **Bylaws change**
Voted to change by-laws to allow for two corresponding secretaries.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- **School update**
Finishing this year, planning for next year, and really welcome feedback.
Looking at ways to support incoming population with summer bridge program (funded by the PTA) and ways to support kids that need remediation or support throughout the year (requested funding for guidance counselor/support for students)
Looking at policy to collect phones at beginning of each school day – got mostly positive feedback so far, and exploring logistics of doing so.
Progress reports opened yesterday and available this week. Exploring possibility of keeping views open the whole time next year, but no decision yet.
School website calendar has been updated – have a look and update yours.

TREASURERS REPORT

- Treasury update
Proposed budget outlined (handout):
 - Raised expenses ~\$21K due more support services;
 - Reduced expected income from Auction (renamed “Community Fundraising”) for next year – the Auction as it has been is not sustainable so far, and are looking into doing an online auction and a community building event earlier in the year – need to figure out right mix of building community and raising funds from those who are in a position to help.

Unanimously voted in the proposed 2019/2020 budget

OTHER:

- Shop at Fairway – it's double points day!
- Yankees game is on Sunday, there are a few tickets left!

MS54 Panel of 18th Graders Talk About High School – May 14, 2019

9 of the 12 student panelists matched to Specialized High Schools (SHS) – the other three will go to Bard Queens, Manhattan Hunter Science (NYC public school) and Trinity (private). **All started SHSAT test prep in 7th grade** – either January, March, or after State Tests (May). Most toured between 5-10 schools, though many had friends that went to even more. For most, the process was stressful and exhausting due to extra load of tours, interviews, testing, essays.

Tips:

- Plan ahead and have a schedule so you know when you need to do things
- Do HW on the way to the tours, so you don't have a lot of work at night
- If getting too stressed going on tours, go only to the ones you're interested in
- Get enough sleep
- If you know want to go to a SHS, put in the hours to practice for the test, so you get faster and more accurate results – it's all about putting the work in
- When anticipating results letters, try not to stress – get sleep, focus on your 8th grade school work, and know everything will be okay

Recommended schools:

- SHS
 - o Despite specialties, they all have good curriculums throughout (*e.g. if they're strong in STEM, it doesn't mean they're lacking in Humanities*)
 - o Bronx Science specializes in STEM; Stuyvesant seems known for STEM but equally strong in Humanities; HS of American Studies at Lehman specializes in History; HS for Math, Science & Engineering specializes in STEM but smaller at ~100 kids/grade...
 - o Brooklyn Tech is accessible by the 2 train, and at end of sophomore year, can pick a major and take APs that match with your chosen field
 - o Bronx Science and Brooklyn Tech in particular are both big and diverse, like Booker... 60 Booker kids are going to Bronx Science next year
 - o The other three SHS – Brooklyn Latin, Queens HS for Sciences at York College, Staten Island Tech – may be too far to commute for UWS kids
- Laguardia
- Manhattan Hunter Science
- Beacon
- Millenium
- Bard (both Manhattan and Queens)

Worries:

- Going to such a big school
- Going to a small school and not knowing anyone
- Not having anyone to go to lunch with
- Not having a lot of friends going to same HS
- Whether they can handle the curriculum or change in learning environment

Performing Arts:

- Drama auditions are usually monologues, and it's important to pick one an age-appropriate one that you really like. Ms. Merkel will help you select; there's also an audition boot camp; some work with a coach at home; can also get ideas at the drama library. Be aware there is an hours-long wait with no food (*you MIGHT be able to bring food but don't recall anyone eating*) / no phones (*none allowed*)
- Voice auditions should be a song that shows your skills, not too easy but not too hard. They'll also have you clap back rhythms and sing back pitches.
- Art portfolios are necessary. Many take classes outside of school art. Be aware of differences between school portfolio processes/requirements – Laguardia art is different that Art & Design school.
- For Laguardia, you'll also be asked to write responses to 2-3 questions (e.g. "Why do you want to go to Laguardia?") Better to plan out what you are going to write beforehand.

Plan Bs:

- Bronx Science kid also got into WESS (*though wanted Beacon*)
- Another got Manhattan Hunter
- Another had Laguardia as Plan B
- Private (*which notifies families before Public, and can become Plan A*)