

MS54 PTA Executive Board and SLT Nominees for 2019-20

Laura Adams / PTA Co-President

My daughter, Ellie, is in sixth grade and loving her first year at Booker T. My younger daughter, Lucy, is in fourth grade at Success Academy Upper West.

I've spent the past 20+ years of my career in communications roles in the retail, media and advertising industries, and am currently on the advisory board of a charity-tech startup. My responsibilities have included media relations, change management, internal communications, crisis management, and executive coaching.

I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to apply my professional skills to various roles at the schools that my children have attended over the years. I've been a class parent at one school or another since 2012. I served on the executive PTA of PS 163 as the VP of Communications. At Success Academy Upper West, I established the Class Parent Leadership position, where I've organized and overseen the efforts of 50+ class parents for the past five years, which has been tremendously rewarding.

Here at Booker T, I've been class parent to class 607 this year and took on the role of co-recording secretary this January. I've enjoyed the opportunity to see first hand the tremendous efforts that Chris, Jerome and all the other members of the executive PTA take on in order to allow our school to function at the highest possible levels, both academically and as a community.

I look forward to the possibility of contributing to their efforts next year.

Chris Giordano / PTA Co-President

I am the proud parent of two New York City public school students; a 7th grader at Booker T and a sophomore at Stuyvesant.

As PTA Co-President, I have been involved in Booker T's SLT, School Wellness Council, School Safety team, accessibility initiatives, lobby design, social media and web-site strategies, financial forecasting and fundraising. Additionally, I helped launch the school's Equity team and Civics Day, organized a district wide town hall on Mayor de Blasio's Specialized High School admissions proposal, and collaborated on fundraising strategies for giving between school communities.

I also serve as Secretary of the District 3 President Council's Equity Committee and I'm a member of a high school admissions committee formed by CEC3 that has met with elected officials about the issues our community faces gaining access to college prep high schools.

Additionally, as part of Community Board 7 task forces, I have analyzed capacity utilization of District 3 schools and submitted recommendations for NYC's upcoming charter revision.

I hope to have the opportunity to continue to serve on the Booker T Executive Board.

MS54 PTA Executive Board and SLT Nominees for 2019-20

Jerome Kramer / PTA Co-President

I'm in my fourth year at Booker T., with a rising 8th-grade daughter here as well as a rising-10th-grade alum. It's been my honor to serve the school and PTA, including as co-president for the past three years. In that capacity, I've provided oversight and leadership for the many volunteers who participate in the PTA's efforts; worked on behalf of our budget; nurtured school community; and advocated for the school on neighborhood, district, city and statewide levels.

Our PTA has supported the school's many terrific academic, arts, athletic, extracurricular and fundraising programs. Among the things on which we've been particularly focused this year have been Booker's outstanding new Equity Team, developed in conjunction with the DOE-wide initiative; Booker's embrace of District 3's middle-school diversity initiative; and the conversation around the mayor's proposal to change the admissions process for the city's specialized high schools, which have traditionally been the next steps for many Booker T. students. We've also continued to keep the community apprised of the progress on the construction project across 108th Street from our campus.

Among the community-building initiatives to which I've been instrumental are the dynamic Wellness Committee's excellent annual Wellness Day, and the inauguration, this year, of our Civics Day, where we were successful in inviting a number of electeds, civil service representatives and others to speak to and inspire our students about their roles in civic life. We bring great speakers to our monthly PTA meetings to serve the parents as well. Meanwhile, we have made efforts to step-up Booker's communication functions, supporting a redesigned website and the development of a more-robust presence on social media, so that members of the school community, as well as folks related to it, know more about the great things that are happening here.

A former journalist and publisher working in media and communications, I'm the founding editorial director of Documentary Notes, a documentary arts-facing e-newsletter. I hope to continue participating in Booker T.'s growth as an outstanding middle school. I hope to serve you and appreciate your support.

Juhi Chawla / Co-Treasurer

My name is Juhi Chawla, MD. I have an incoming 6th grader and a rising 8th grader at MS54 and thus am quite invested in the financial well being of the school. I am a Child/Adolescent/Adult Psychiatrist who has been running her own private practice for 17 years. I manage the finances of my own practice and that experience would help inform my work as co-treasurer of MS54 if I am re-elected for the position. I have been the co-treasurer for the 2018-19 school year and have enjoyed learning the process of raising and helping to allocate the funds that the PTA uses to support the many worthwhile and necessary programs for our children. I look forward to continuing to serve in the co-treasurer capacity if re-elected.

MS54 PTA Executive Board and SLT Nominees for 2019-20

Olivier Courrone / Co-Treasurer

Olivier is the father of Taizo, a 6th grader at MS54, and Aya, a 3rd grader at PS166. He is the manager of his son's soccer team. At work he leads a dna sequencing center, which is a several million dollar operation. He holds a PhD in astronomy and a MBA from Columbia. He competes in long distance triathlons as a hobby.

Kyle Clayton / Co-Assistant Treasurer

My daughter Astrid will be in 7th grade next year. I am interested in volunteering on the PTA board for 2019-20 to help MS54 build on the strengths that attracted our family here.

About me:

- I have advocated for great public schools as PTA co-president and SLT member at PS165 and PS75 in the past.
- This year I volunteered at MS54 as an Assistant Treasurer on the PTA board, focusing on grant writing and applying for corporate matches based on families' donations.
- I studied biochemistry in college but now work at a local software company. Creating STEM learning opportunities in public schools is an interest of mine.
- Hobbies: chess and comic books. Sometimes that means I have more to talk about with 11-year olds than with other adults, but I'm ok with that.

I'm looking forward to working with other MS54 families over the next two years to make sure Astrid and her classmates get the most out of their middle school experience!

Colleen Welker / Co-VP of Fundraising

I have a daughter entering 6th grade and a son who will be in 8th grade in the fall, and one child in elementary school. I would like to remain a member of the PTA and focus on fundraising at our school. I think this year we have lots of ambitious plans to enhance our fundraising opportunities, and I'd like to stay involved to help maintain some of our core programs while exploring new ones. Professionally, I am an employment attorney, currently working as in-house counsel at a media company. I am hoping to leverage my organizational and interpersonal skills to continue to build the fundraising efforts at our school in order to benefit our children, their education, and our community.

Kelly Anson Riess / Recording Secretary

As a current Co-Recording Secretary on the MS54 PA Executive Board, I would love to continue this role next year. I have two sons – Axel, 702 here at Booker T, and Owen, 5th grade at PS 87. Over the years, my school volunteer experience has included: a frequent class parent, 4 years as school-wide auction class project coordinator, dual language program advocate (Spanish), and working at most auctions, art shows, book fairs and bake sales. But most important to the position: I take good notes. My

MS54 PTA Executive Board and SLT Nominees for 2019-20

background is in technology and marketing, and has varied from full-time to part-time to on-hold. I've lived on the UWS for over 11 years, and in NYC since 1995.

Joanne Giordano / Corresponding Secretary

As the mother of a rising 8th grader at Booker T. as well as a Booker T. graduate who is a rising junior in high school, I have been a member of the MS54 PTA Executive Board for the past 3 years, serving as Corresponding Secretary for the past two years and I am happy to continue in this role for my final year at Booker T. In addition to serving on the Exec Board, I have been an active member of the MS54 School Wellness Council since it began 4 years ago, planning the annual Booker T. Wellness Day and advocating for more wellness programs in our school. Over the course of my children's education, I have been an involved parent, volunteering and serving in various capacities in every school. In addition to my role at MS54, I currently serve on the SLT and Co-Chair the Health & Safety Committee at Stuyvesant High School.

Marianna Crespi / 7th Grade Representative / Parent-at-Large

My name is Marianna Crespi and I'm running for the 7th grade representative position. My daughter, Isabel, is just finishing up 6th grade. She has had a fantastic year and we are thrilled to be part of the MS54 community. I have led the Community Cares Committee at PS199 for two years, and I have been class parent for the last five years. I strongly believe in giving back to the community by taking a more active role in my daughters' schools. The 7th grade rep position provides a great opportunity to continue to be engaged and involved. I am a leadership and career coach. My focus is on helping clients navigate transition and change.

Michele Samarel / 8th Grade Representative / Parent-at-Large

I am the parent of a 7th grader and have 2 older children in high school who graduated from Booker T. I have been an active member of my children's schools PTAs for the past 14 years. At Booker T., I have been a member of the Executive Board for the past 5 years in the position of Assistant Treasurer. As the Assistant Treasurer, I have been running the Annual Appeal and Phone-a-thon. I have also been running the school supply program and managing our fundraising software. Before that, I chaired our Auction Committee and I continue to work on the auctions every year handling the back office. After all my years of fundraising, I'd like to be involved with and support Booker T. in a new way - that is why I am running for 8th Grade Representative.

Joshua Kane / SLT

NYC actor Joshua Kane is a solo theatre artist with a history of activism, leading workshops in multicultural environments and performing nationwide. He specializes in partnering with cultural institutions to further their brand through community and artistic engagement. With a focus on teaching others to tell their stories, Kane is an empathetic listener and a lifelong learner. For more than 25 years, Kane has run his own theatrical production company, creating, producing and performing solo theatre shows and educational workshops across the US and internationally. He recently completed the 20-month Leadership Fellows Program in which mid-career arts

MS54 PTA Executive Board and SLT Nominees for 2019-20

professionals who seek to transform the world through their work as arts leaders are given the tools to navigate the ever-changing landscape in an increasingly diverse world as they deliberately make space for others. Kane was also the inaugural PTO president at the Harlem Hebrew Dual Language Charter School, a position in which he served for three years. For his work in the public schools the state of Connecticut declared him a Master Teaching Artist. As the parent of a rising 7th grader, Joshua is active in the MS54 community attending events, meetings and served as auctioneer at the annual fundraiser. His voice has supported national brands ranging from Major League Baseball to the Central Intelligence Agency. He would like to put his talents to work for our community as a member of the SLT.

Brad Roberts / SLT

My name is Brad Roberts and I would like to be on the School Leadership Team at Booker T. I have an intimate knowledge of New York City's public schools. I graduated from PS26 and JHS216 in Queens and from the Bronx HS of Science. I went on to graduate from Wesleyan University with a math and economics major and from the Wharton School at UPenn with a finance concentration. I now run a credit trading business for a French bank in midtown.

My daughter, Romy Roberts is finishing up sixth grade and her sister Jaime is in fourth grade at PS166 - so I hope to be involved at Booker T for the next four years. I am concerned about the admissions changes to our school that the Mayor and the Chancellor have mandated. This will have a big impact on curriculum and culture going forward. I want to be part of the SLT so I can help ensure that Booker T remains one of the best feeder schools to the most competitive and challenging high schools in NYC. This is a great place but we have a challenging path to navigate going forward.

George Schneiderman / SLT

I am the parent of two current grade 6 students, and one alumna who is now at Stuyvesant. I am interested in serving on the SLT primarily out of a desire to help the school successfully navigate the changing middle school admissions process in District 3, and over the past several months have gotten involved in the school's equity team for the same reason.

For elementary school, at various times one or more of my children attended: a D3 G&T program, a D3 gen ed program in the same building, an extremely diverse Harlem charter school, and D5 pre-K. I also live in the far northern part of D3, where we are zoned for a school where 97% of students are economically disadvantaged, 96% are Black or Hispanic, 27% are homeless, and 12% are proficient in math (based on state test results). These experiences have left me both highly concerned about the problem of de facto segregation in NYC and D3 schools, and keenly aware of how hard it is for schools to successfully serve students from radically different educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

MS54 PTA Executive Board and SLT Nominees for 2019-20

Professionally, I have spent the last 15+ years working in K-12 educational technology, primarily in assessment, with a particular focus on making assessment data accessible and meaningful to parents and teachers. For example, I was the lead designer on the NYC ARIS system, and I have helped design reports for clients including PARCC, Smarter Balanced, and ETS. As a result, I know a great deal about assessment data—both its value and its limitations—and about K-12 educational standards, including Common Core Math and ELA/Literacy, NYS and NYC Social Studies, and NGSS, which the NY science standards are based on.

Jacqueline Shannon / SLT

Dr. Jacqueline Shannon is the mother of three Booker T. students – Nikolai Margolin, who will be attending Brooklyn Tech in the Fall, and Isabella and Anya, who will be completing 6th grade in June. Dr. Shannon has served as a chaperone for Booker T. trips and events and served as a volunteer for Booker T. phone-a-thons. While her children were at P.S. 163 she regularly volunteered in the classrooms/school events, helped their fight to delay dangerous construction next to the school, and brought a new program, Story Pirates, to the school's children. Today, Jacqueline, an associate professor at Brooklyn College, chairs the college's department of Early Childhood and Art Education. She is a former NYU research scientist and director of a home-based parenting program in East Harlem. She has been broadly published in peer-reviewed journals and has also had opinions published by The New York Times and The Washington Post.