

## **MS54 General PTA Meeting Minutes**

**November 13, 2018**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Reviewed and approved October minutes
- Middle school update: going along as scheduled, 3 tours left
  - *Question: what are the admissions carve out requirements?*  
*Answer:* New for current 5<sup>th</sup> grade families applying to start MS next year is a socioeconomic/academic diversity carve out: 10% of offers will go to “level 1” kids coming from disadvantaged economic backgrounds, and 15% will go to similar “level 2” kids. How it plays out is still TBD.
- Equity and Diversity project update:
  - 11 people met at their first meeting
  - Next meeting will be Monday or Tuesday next week
  - Similar but broader CEC3 meeting likely hosted here in January
- Tutor Fair will be held in January, where representatives from a wide range of tutoring options will be available to talk with families
- Lobby redesign project: started when talking about equity, to make more accessible, but also want to better highlight the school's namesake and mission; call for others interested to help and join the committee
- Upcoming PTA meeting topics were outlined and reviewed

### **PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

- Middle school admissions update:
  - 3 more tours
  - Significant number of kids will be different from the population of recent years
  - How to group kids is at the forefront of the discussion (heterogeneous vs. homogeneous across classes and subjects TBD)
- Marking period ended Friday; report cards will go home with kids this week
- Parent/Teacher Conference signups start tomorrow (Wednesday 11/14) at 10am for the first round (pick 2 teachers); a week later is round 2 signup. Time is tight and slots fill up fast, but there are also open hours for walk-in appointments – and if you don't get to talk with a teacher that night, get in touch and they are usually accommodating.
- Tuesday 11/27 is a half day for kids (11:30 dismissal)

### **TREASURY UPDATE**

- Budget – on track, similar to last year in terms of fundraising and expenses. Balances as of 11/13/2018 were \$419,780.75 in Checking, \$252,060.73 in MMA
- Annual Appeal – largest fundraiser to get \$ into the school, with suggested contribution of \$1000 but more important is participation (whatever you can give, and sooner rather than later – we are behind last year's numbers).
  - Contribute via the link on the website homepage, or send in check with your child.

## **FUNDRAISING**

- Pie Sale – last day to order is tomorrow (Wednesday, November 14)
- Fairway cards are on their way in – will go home with all 6<sup>th</sup> grade kids, and will be available from office for any others who may not already have one
- JETS fundraiser tickets on sale for 12/15 and 12/23 games
- NY International Children’s Film Festival – for every ticket sold, \$3 goes to PA
- Continue to bring in your boxtops
- Spring: Yankees and USCFC games
- Amazon: before shopping, link first through MS54.org homepage, and 3% of purchases will go to the PA. This is different than Amazon Smile. All the small amounts add up to significant funds raised.
- Broadway night – it went well and raised over \$6000
- AUCTION: We need donations. Whatever you can get, big or small, donate.

**CLOSING STATEMENTS:** we’re big on committee recruitment now, for Lobby Redesign, Equity & Diversity, and a new one coming around the proposed changes to the specialized HS admissions process

## **FEATURED SPEAKER: JANE SHIELDS on VAPING**

*Presentation will be emailed to parents*

Vaping is dangerous, despite the perception that doing “just flavors” is fine:

- Flavors have toxic chemicals that can cause permanent lung damage and scarring. Some chemicals in some flavors have been linked to “popcorn lung,” “wet lung,” and other conditions.
- Most e-cigs have nicotine, and in higher doses than regular cigarettes. Teenage brains have higher chance of addiction to nicotine, even after just 1-2 tries

Marketing attracts teens

- Products are packaged to look like candy or juice boxes,,, and sometimes further entice kids with “for adults only” labeling
- YouTube vape tricks
- Clever memes, shared primarily on Instagram (*HHS trying to counter this with social media campaign on “the real cost” of vaping PSAs*)
- With special introductory promotions, it’s cheap (buy 2 months worth for \$3) and easy (even opt-out of showing ID) to get started

Schools can...

- Educate students; use PSAs/Posters; bathroom and hallway monitoring
- *Schools CANNOT detect vaping products or e-cig – they are so small, and some don’t have odor even when being used*

Parents can... talk to their kids openly and honestly, *before* there is a problem; if there *is* an issue already, be gentle but firm. Tips for talking and taking action:

<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/takeaction.html>

## **RED FLAGS**

- If your child is suddenly an expert on vaping/tricks/flavors/brands
- If their friends vape
- If they start spending a lot of money (~ \$20/week after introductory prices)