



## MEETING MINUTES

MS54 PTA General Meeting

November 10, 2020 @ 7:00 PM, Zoom Mtg

[BTW54PTA@ms54PTA.org](mailto:BTW54PTA@ms54PTA.org)

### Call to Order & Minutes (7:00 - 7:05)

- Welcome Yun Joo, Aleksandra + Lee
- Approve October 2020 PTA General Meeting minutes
- ~138 total participants

### Presidents' Update (7:05 - 7:15)

- Good News:
  - We were worried about fundraising this year with so many limitations due to COVID, but we have some really great things happening:
    - Turkey Trot: 250 family + teacher participants raising over \$6000!
      - Many classes meeting up for their "trot" - shout out to Team Ross for being the first team to have their meetup
      - Thanks to Virginia Wong for the idea and to Alison Gardy for hosting Weekend Wellness walks in Riverside Park at 91st St on Sunday mornings at 10 - the next one is 11/15 if you want to join (~5 miles)
    - Pie Sale: Wendy Schnierow and Amy Tuchman kept this traditional event going this year -- we brought in \$5000 with about 100 pies being donated to charity
    - We just opened our own school store selling "Classic" MS54 spirit Gear - Thanks to Fab Dia for creating and operating our first e-commerce spirit gear store! No more reliance on our vendor! It only takes a week to get your gear once you order!
    - We've got a holiday fundraiser with Charleston Wrap - a super cute site that sells a great assortment of gifts including kitchen accessories, home goods, personalized items, gourmet treats, and of course, gift wrap. The more you buy, the more we get, so start shopping!
  - First event of the year! It's a "dinner theater" event - Broadway Night is going to be unbelievable this year happening December 6 @ 6:30 pm -- going to be amazing! The host is Paige Davis who was on *Trading Spaces* and starred in *Chicago* on Broadway!
  - If you're looking for ways to give back to the community this season, we've got 'em!
    - West Side Campaign Against Hunger Turkey Challenge - We've partnered with the West Side Campaign Against Hunger for the 5th year to donate turkeys to families in need this Thanksgiving.
    - Also have our own food drive with a wishlist on Amazon found via MS54 site
    - No longer an Amazon Affiliate site - please transition to Amazon Smile. Do it once - select MS54 as a charity of choice! We get a % automatically and it really adds up!
- SLT Update: worked on this year's CEP goals which are rolled over from last year
  - CEC/Accelerated Learning Update - Still no update on the SHSAT, HS or middle school admissions processes, but we're hearing that the DOE is likely making a play to do away from screened schools - if you disagree, please make your voice heard - send emails, show up at meetings and get involved! Regents exams are cancelled.

### **Principal's Update (7:10 - 7:15)**

- Parent teacher conference sign ups distributed on 11/10
- Conference will not be available for every student - if you didn't get a time reach out to the teacher if you are concerned
- Launching after school activities soon - grateful to the PTA for underwriting this so it can be done by suggested donation only (no set cost)
- DOE updated guidance on open windows, ventilation, testing, etc. Might not be necessary for blankets as temperatures drop!
- Please remember to be safe during Thanksgiving ensures that we can continue to go to school. If you are traveling you might need to quarantine before you return to the building. Safety is key!

### **Treasurer's Report (7:15 - 7:20)**

- Not much change since last time. Balance: is \$656k; MM \$246k. Total income \$118k and net income is \$102K.
- Big budget news: of the \$350K that we set aside for Educational Consultants, the school will likely only need \$150K
  - This \$200K reduction will allow us to eliminate the Online Auction and still end the year without a deficit
  - PTA and Admin taking another look at all potential needs/impacts before presenting a revised budget at our next meeting
- Annual Appeal - Giving has stagnated at ~\$100K (only \$5K increase from last month and less than halfway to our goal). Click the button on the homepage to make a donation!
- Grant Status - No new news

### **Community Updates (7:25 - 7:30)**

- Fundraising - great participation and great work!
  - Turkey Trot
  - Holiday School Store
  - New initiatives are coming - Charleston Wrap, Shutterfly school link
  - Wellness Committee - Alison Gardy
- Wellness Committee Update
  - Turkey Trot walks meeting every Sunday
  - Continuing with the food drive that started in June - we are feeding families in need
  - Continuing community service activities
  - Next meeting 11/20 @7:30am

### **HS Panel (7:30 - 8:30)**

Up next we have a panel of HS students from schools many Booker T. students consider applying to (Beacon, Clinton, Frank McCourt, Nest+M, LaGuardia and Frank Sinatra). The panel was organized and will be moderated by two Booker T. alums, Marina Gallo and Talulah Lametrie. Marina attends Bronx Science and Talulah attends LaGuardia. Together, they've started a business, Study Buddies, that coaches eighth grade students through the HS application process.

### **Notes for 11/10 General Meeting HS Panel:**

We have 6 speakers from the following schools:

- LaGuardia (Josh)
- Beacon (Helena)
- Frank Sinatra (Jas)
- Clinton (Sari)
- Frank McCourt (Remy)
- Nest+M (Ariel)

Panelists:

- 1) Our short intro
- 2) Speaker and school introductions
- 3) Contact studybuddies@ny if you have any questions
- 3) Panel
- 4) Wrap Up

The questions will be:

1) Give us a brief overview of your school. (Student experiences so far, any comments on schools living up to expectations, general info about school)

- Laguardia: Dual program school focused on academics and arts. 6 majors. Very inclusive and accepting environment, experimental and artistic. Arts centered schools so see music programs, musical, drama festivals, art exhibits, talent show, opera and concerts and dance.
- Beacon: mid-size school. Teachers are not focused on teaching to the tests. Very creative school. Lots of opportunity for electives.
- Frank Sinatra: performing arts school, but not a specialized school like Laguardia. Small school in Astoria. Audition based. Lots of opportunity to work in the neighborhood. 6 majors. Lots of fun extras and inclusive environment.
- Clinton: smaller school focused on students being well rounded. IB school - international baccalaureate program. Every student takes IB courses and you can get a special IB diploma.
- Frank McCourt: project based learning. Not art based school. Offers regents. Very small (~450 students)
- Nest + M: K-12 gifted and talented school on lower side. 100-200 students in each grade. Hands on learning, group work, projects, labs, etc. STEM focus.

2) What languages, clubs and sports are offered at your school? (listed)

- Laguardia: spanish, mandarin, french. Swimming, diving, fencing, diving, gymnastics, film club, technical theater.
- Beacon: spanish and french. Soccer, tennis, basketball, track, fencing, etc. dance, music, film, photography, debate, community service, etc. Easy to create a club!
- Sinatra: Spanish. Lots of clubs - too long to list! Debate to LGBTQ! Easy to create a club! Basketball, softball, tennis, track, musical theatre, others!

- Clinton. Only Spanish. Lots of great sports teams - basketball, soccer, frisbee, table tennis. Gender/sex id, newspaper, student council, band, model UN and debate, cheer, fashion, theatre, etc.
- McCourt. Only Spanish. Easy to start clubs. Sports. 4 other schools on the campus and you can join sports from all of them - tennis, bowling, etc.
- Nest + M: focused on community and mindfulness. Black Student Union, art, chess, basketball, track, soccer, volley. French, Spanish, Mandarin.

### 3) What is the community like at your school?

- Laguardia: Big school so get to meet lots of people, inclusive and artistic, Diverse. Majors become like a second family.
- Beacon: Involved. Lots of social groups formed around social groups. Reputation for being cliquy but everyone is nice. Small enough but big enough. Meet with the same small advisory group of kids all 4 years. Big Sibs, and lots of orientation and community building.
- Sinatra: Smaller school compared to all the other large schools and very close knit school. Dynamic principal. Very diverse. Never feel like you won't fit in.
- Clinton: Big emphasis on community. 6-12 school so middle school students already know each other! This can make it intimidating but very welcoming. Lots of opp to meet through clubs and sports. Pretty small so you get to know most people in your grade. Dances, trivia nights. ADvisory groups every year but switched up every year (unlike Beacon)
- McCourt: Freshman assigned advisory group (15) that you stick with all 4 years. Very close knit due to size.
- Nest + M: Very engaged - events, parties, dances, game nights, movie nights, Big Sib and Advisory programs. All encouraged to be active in communities. Most students enter high school even though it is a K-12 school and the transition is smooth.

### 4) Can you describe the teacher to student relationship at your school?

- Laguardia: Very open about comms esp since the arts program. Build close relationships with teachers, meet Broadway, tv professionals, designers, composers through teachers. Lots of stop bys.
- Beacon: Not teaching to tests so teacher flexibility! Strong relationships. Small group instruction every friday - free period - to meet up with groups, or teachers for help.
- Sinatra: Majority of time in your performing arts major (1/3 of the day). Workloads can be intense. Need to balance course loads and your performing arts major.
- Clinton: Really close due to being a very small school. Lots of feedback surveys. Very available and responsive.
- McCourt: Amazing teachers. Kind, friendly, supportive and responsive. Emphasis on growth so lots of detailed feedback on your academic work. Feedback solicited as well!
- Nest + M: Teachers really get to know students because of such a small school! Tutoring and extra help after school where needed and office hours if you need help!

5) Tell us why students should want to go to your school in two sentences.

- Laguardia: if you are a student passionate about the arts! Perfect balance of arts & academics
- Beacon: If you don't want to be taught to a test and want to be more creative and independent!
- Sinatra: If you are interested in arts, academics and a more intimate/smaller setting!
- Clinton: If you are a student who wants a close social environment and a well rounded education. IB program sets us apart!
- McCourt: Anyone would have a wonderful experience at this school! Annual 6 week session is amazing!
- Nest + M: If you are interested in STEM = arts, etc. Support and attention in a smaller school setting!