

PS/IS 187 PTO
General Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2021
7:05 p.m.- 8:28 p.m.

Welcome—PTO President Jennifer Bennion and Gwen Kingsberry
Quorum 7:05pm

2021-2022 PTO Executive Board Attendees:

Co-Presidents: Gwendolyn Kingsberry & Jennifer Bennion
Treasurer: Traci Schwinn
Recording Secretary: Stephanie Reed
Elementary School co-VP: Dena Wolk & Yessika Murga
Intermediate School VP: Jacqueline Cruz
Communications Secretary: Ksenia Selemon

September 23, 2021 General Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve: Rae Hilliard
2nd: Yessika Murga
Approved: 45 approvals (100%)

Principal's Report

Principal Emel noted that the school is settling into routines, and she is proud of students and staff. She stated the annual Think Pink celebration raised \$2780 for the American Cancer Society, with help from Ms. O'Callaghan and participants. She noted that family gardening days are going well and there is a second one coming up. The art teachers helped with creating thank you cards to give the garden supporters. She also thanks the 8th grade families and IS teachers for a successful first high school information night.

It was noted that November is the month of gratitude and Hispanic heritage month would be celebrated at the school with the help of Friends of 187. Ms. Manolas will be starting student of the month in November. Parent-teacher conferences will be next week, virtually.

During election speeches for student council, IS students repeatedly asked for approval of outdoor (off grounds) lunch again, which is in the works. COVID weekly testing is continuing. 73% of families returned COVID consent forms, up from 15%.

November 9th is a tea at 6 pm to welcome family wellness ambassador Rae Hilliard for the Family Wellness initiative, along with Ms. Capellan.

Ms. Daskaris let the school community know that she broke her foot and is at home recuperating. She noted that there will be an in-person Biobus for November for 5th and 8th grade, with outdoor stations. She also noted that lunch out (off grounds) for IS will be up to parent discretion.

Ms. Emel discussed recent incidences that occurred which led to 7th and 8th grades not having recess at lunch in order to have a whole grade discussion about having safer recess. One parent asked for clarification as to whether this was COVID-related and Ms. Emel confirmed it was not about COVID, but rather about safe play.

One parent asked for clarification about sign-up for parent-teacher conferences. Ms. Daskaris confirmed that there will be a direct sign up via Sign-up Genius this year, which will be disseminated via Blackboard by Ms. Capellan.

One parent asked for information on having Spanish classes offered at different levels depending on students' current Spanish knowledge. Ms. Emel stated that the schedule is set for this year and it is difficult to intermix cohorts due to COVID, so classes will remain as is, but she will consider it in future years. She noted that Ms. Sanchez is mindful of the different levels.

Faculty Report:

Mr. Jennings noted that the intergenerational multicultural collaboration is moving forward with help of Gerry Goss and Isabelle Elton, who has contacts at the Isabella senior center. Alumni for the project are on board and the dates for first interviews are set. The 3rd and 4th grade music show is moving forward, and it will be pre-recorded for safety; Mr. Hardy will record the show and has recommended certain gear and cameras in order to produce the show, which the school will purchase.

One parent asked Mr. Jennings if he has enough transcribers and it was discussed that the interviews will be recorded via Zoom and perhaps there is simple software that can be used to transcribe them. Another parent/alum asked how they can get involved in the project and Mr. Jennings agreed they could talk offline about that.

President's Report (Jen B. and Gwen):

It was noted that parents can become more involved with the PTO and the school by attending PTO meetings, becoming a CPR, volunteering, supporting dues drive, joining committees, and running for the PTO Executive Board or SLT.

Upcoming fundraisers are Meadowfarms and Tree Sale. Meadowfarms is starting on Monday. The PTO gets a portion of the proceeds.

Picture day is coming up on November 8th and 9th with a retake day hopefully in January. There will not be class photos until the spring. It was noted that students will keep their masks on until the photo is taken and then put it back on right after that, like last year.

PTO Garden Committee:

Mr. de Simon encouraged the school community to join the garden committee's Instagram account. He discussed family day with Grow NYC and noted that the garden is thriving this fall. Stolen harvest was discussed. Parents can join classes to garden with them. November 13th is the last Saturday family day. A grant of \$3000 was awarded by Whole Foods which will pay for indoor supplies and there is a \$5000 grant in the works, but more money is needed for tools and gloves for kids, and to incorporate more science. Pop-up tents and magnifying glasses would be helpful too. The garden committee will be asking for funds from the PTO for this (\$1458).

Treasurer's Report (Traci):

Funding has been spent recently on garden family events and expenses for the welcome back picnic. Revenue stemmed from dues, merchandise, and AmazonSmile fund.

Potential funding for ES afterschool programming was discussed, including 10 weeks of art for 2nd grade, track for 4th grade, and Lego robotics for 3rd grade, for a total of \$5242.56.

Potential funding for IS afterschool programming was also discussed, including 10 weeks of chess for all IS grades (5th -8th), art for 7th grade, math for 6th grade, creative writing for all IS grades, Esports for all IS grades, and band for 25 students, for a total of \$8492.90.

Tree sale balance is due: \$4727.75

Garden committee is asking for additional funds: \$1458.00

One parent asked about additional offerings for afterschool. Ms. Emel noted that there is still NYJTL and PSW available. HW help and tutoring, will be starting hopefully in November. She will also get information about the NYJTL tennis was the waitlist. Jen also noted that information about the IS afterschool offerings have not yet been sent home.

Time to vote (57 participants):

\$4727.75 for the Tree Sale balance - Motion to approve: Gerry Goss. 2nd: Camila Otero. Approved (100%).

\$1458.00 for the Gardening Program - Motion to approve: Gerry Goss. 2nd: Karen Blundell. Approved (100%).

\$5242.56 for ES afterschool programming - Motion to approve: Gerry Goss. 2nd: Sara Held. Approved (100%).

\$8492.90 for IS afterschool programming - Motion to approve: Gerry Goss. 2nd: Gwen Kingsberry. Approved (100%).

ES VP Report (Dena and Yessika):

The ES VPs thanked the CPRs and noted that a CPR for Ms. Benson's class is still needed. Movie night, family trivia, and other activities are coming up soon.

IS VP Report (Jackie):

Jackie noted the launch of the diversity newsletter and drew attention to Hispanic heritage month this month, so November's newsletter will combine information from October and November. Upcoming IS events will be disseminated via email weekly.

Friends of 187 Report:

Nori noted that the community picnic was successful and a great collaboration between FO187 and the PTO. Rocks were painted and the garden committee put them out in memory of 9/11 victims.

Karima discussed the cultural showcase for 5th – 8th grade scheduled for November 3rd with spoken word and dance. They are now working on needs of school community for arts in the school, such as perhaps

visual arts for 5th and 6th grade, movement and dance for 7th and 8th grade, other gaps for the ES, field trips and teaching arts partners, music instrument needs for the IS, and writing programs for all grades.

Open Forum:

- Gwen thanked everyone who helped with the picnic.
- Gerry asked people to be on the lookout for Tree Sale sign-up. Tree Sale will be December 10th – 12th.
- Traci asked about library updates and Ms. Emel noted that there was no update on staffing but borrowing books is being worked on.
- Dena asked if the fact that the ICT classroom is out of compliance without a special education teacher is being rectified and Ms. Emel said they were waiting on updates.
- One parent asked about parent volunteers being allowed to help with library and Ms. Emel said she will explore that, perhaps for afterschool help.
- One parent brought up that an email went out about a great program for SHSAT review that people should consider.
- One parent questioned whether appropriate use of social media could it be a part of the education with the health teacher. Ms. Emel said that the Digital Citizen approach will be followed and covered in the regular classroom. The parent asked if parents and not just older students could also be given tools and Ms. Emel agreed they could share so there could be support at home.
- The waitlist for NYJTL was discussed again and Ms. Emel reiterated she would speak to the director for information.

Motion to Adjourn: Gerry Goss

2nd: Traci Schwinn

All in favor (100%).

Meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.