

PS/IS 187 PTO  
General Meeting Minutes  
December 17, 2020  
7:02 p.m.- 8:20 p.m.

**Welcome**—PTO President Jennifer Bennion.  
Quorum 7:02pm

**2020-2021 PTO Executive Board Attendees:**

President: Jennifer Bennion  
Treasurer: Traci Schwinn  
Recording Secretary: Jacqueline Cruz  
Elementary School VP(s): Dena Wolk & Yessika Murga  
Intermediate School VP: Gwendolyn Kingsberry  
Communications Secretary: Stephanie Reed

**December General Meeting Minutes and January Special PTO Presentation:**

Motion: 24 approvals  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Michael B.  
Approved

**Principal's Report**

Ms. Topbas Mejia wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked the PTO for closing out the year with the Thankfest Video. A special thank you to Michael and Gerry (our MC) for making it great. She also thanked the community for sending well wishes to her and her family. The support is greatly appreciated.

Updates:

-Based on the feedback from staff and parents the school is moving forward with the change of schedule to a Wednesday swing day. Admin has reached out to the "Y" and they are working on adjustments to support the families attending their program on remote days.

-Administration is looking at ways to increase in-school days specifically for students with IAP's and Spanish-English Learners. As of today there is no update on middle school students.

-Shout out to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Over 30 came in for the Specialized High School Admission Test. Thank you to Ms. Daskaris and Ms. Friedman for coordinating and administrating the test.

-There is a new health screener for entry to the building. Please make sure to review.

-The Youth and Education council are in favor of the Soccer Pitch so it is moving to CB12. If approved we will have a soccer pitch for the 2021-2022 school year.

-Thank you to everyone that completed the remote learning survey. Over 300 students, 160 families and 52 teachers completed the survey. The information will be used in a community handbook – more to come.

-24 hour closures are triggered when 2 positive cases within a 7 day window are reported to the DOE and Test and Trace. Test and Trace investigates exposure and that information is used to determine closures. With so many buildings, closing investigations is taking longer so instead of closing the school for 10 days, the closures are extended on a day to day basis. Administration understands the challenges, but decisions are made with the best outcomes in mind.

-Admin is also reporting positive cases for remote learners. Admin knows how challenging this time is so please feel free to communicate with your child's teacher so that as a community we can provide you with the support needed. Your classroom teacher is your lifeline if needed.

### **Faculty Report:**

Ms. Daskaris reported that 5<sup>th</sup> grade is also considered middle school and new schedules will be implemented. The flow of the day will be maintained but the Wednesday rotation will be in effect which is a slight change.

Ms. Daskaris also stated the we are all set for the 2/11/21 career day. Its our first virtual Career Day and we are looking forward to it.

### **SLT Report:**

-Mr. Doyle stated that the new PS/IS 187 website is launching in February making the site more ADA accessible.

### **President's Report (Jen B.):**

-Picture Day is coming. There will be no class photos this year, only individual pictures. Time slots for remote students will be offered. March 19<sup>th</sup> will be the "re-take" day and faculty and staff will get a free photo. Proof sheets will be sent via backpack with orders mailed directly to the homes within 2-3 weeks.

Question: Parent Pattie M. asked if parents can send in their own photos for 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Ms. Daskaris answered yes and if parents wanted to use a cap and gown the school can coordinate with getting one to them.

-3/1/21 is the application deadline for running to be on the Community or Citywide Education Council. CEC's give parents a unique opportunity to support and impact public school education at the district level. Each CEC has 11 voting members. Citywide council members are education policy advisors for the 4 student populations they represent: high school, special education, ELL, and District 75.

Information about the election can be found on the DOE website. There is a change this year; parents can vote to elect a CEC candidate where previously only the PTO Presidents could vote.

-There is a Black Lives Matter march on 2/1/21 to kick off Black History Month. More information can be found on their website.

-There are a few changes to the PTO Bylaws:

-Time change:

Regularly scheduled meetings of the executive board shall be held monthly, September through June, **on the first Monday of every month from 7:30pm until 9:00pm**, unless such date falls on a legal or religious holiday, in which case the meeting shall be held on the following or previous Monday.

**PTO Meetings will be in person on the school premises or held virtually. Meetings held in person, will be from 6:16pm to 7:45 p.m.. Virtual meetings will be from 7:00pm-8:30pm.**

-Minutes:

**Minutes of the previous meeting shall be available in written or digital form. Members will have the opportunity to review minutes prior to the meeting.**

-Committee Changes:

**Gardening: The gardening committee shall be responsible to work with the custodial staff to maintain the school garden, pond and gardening materials/supplies. The committee will be overseen by the PTO executive board and will develop curriculum in partnership with administration and faculty for the school garden program.**

**STEM: The mission of the STEM Committee shall be to cultivate curiosity and develop critical thinking. The committee will aim to collaborate with faculty to increase the engagement of students through hands-on science, technology, engineering, and math during and after school.**

-Signatories:

**The president (or one of the co-presidents), the treasurer and one additional executive board member shall be authorized to sign checks for a total of three signatories.**

### **Secretary's report**

Thank you to all that contributed Haiku's for the January newsletter. The submissions were amazing and inspirational.

February is Black History Month and the February Newsletter will focus on a celebration of art. The PTO will:

1. Coordinate with IS teachers to feature student writings on topics around Black History Month.
2. Coordinate with Ms. Donetta to feature student art in the style of various black artists - each week one of her classes will focus on a different artist
3. We will ask parents, "How does your family recognize black history month?" You can submit a picture of you reading a book, eating a meal, watching a movie, visiting a landmark etc.

Traci added that we will be using the "Swank" movie portal to show movies specific to Black History Month. Topics will be provided to hopefully enable relevant discussions.

#### **Friends of 187 Report:**

Marisa B. advised that there would be some sort of programming connected to the arts offered for Black History Month but there is no information to share yet – more to come via email.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Traci stated that the PTO has \$62,608.07 in funds available. The only funds we would be asking for this month is \$450 to cover the cost of the 4 movies being streamed for Black History month. The movies are:

42  
Hidden Figures  
Selma  
Just Mercy

#### **Time to Vote:**

1. Amendments to the PTO Bylaws

Motion: Gerry G.  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Camila O.  
All in favor – 18 yes  
Approved

2. Funds for Movie Night

Motion: Anna B.  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Mr. Jennings  
All in favor – 14 yes  
Approved

**ES Report:**

Dena and Yessika advised that we are on track for the January 29<sup>th</sup> Virtual Family Trivia Night. There were 25 responses from teachers and those will be turned in to questions. Please get there by 7pm and there will be help with getting everyone set up.

There will be prizes for the game and random drawings.

**IS Report:**

Gwen reached out to Mrs. O'Callaghan and wanted to share how proud the teachers are with our children.

-High School applications are being accepted through February.

-Advisors Ms. Chen and Ms. McCullough have weekly office hours for all 8<sup>th</sup> graders and no appointment is needed. The office hours are Monday – Thursday.

-Mrs. O'Callaghan will be sending weekly updates to 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents on Otis. The topics will be:

- Literacy
- Senior Updates
  - Countdown to Graduation
    - (Virtual Events to Celebrate and Engage)
  - Senior Ring (Jewelry) Day
    - Order First week in February/ celebration in the Spring

If you have not received a message please reach out to her @ [tocallaghan2@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:tocallaghan2@schools.nyc.gov)

-Each grade from 5-8 will have a point of contact (teacher to parent rep) that will meet briefly the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of every month to check in on each grades upcoming events and happening. Parent reps will report back to I.S. VP to relay back to the PTO Board to ensure outreach is made to the entire PTO body via newsletter and/or monthly PTO meeting.

**Michael B Update:**

-Thank you for the Thankfest submissions. If you submitted a video and didn't receive a mask please reach out to Jen.

-Saturday classes are happening. We are on week 3 so looking at a presentation.

-Film Festival flyers are going out at the beginning of February. April 5 will be the deadline for submitting and April 25 will be the festival. To date there have been 334 films submitted. T-shirts will be sold from March through April. There will be a new award at the Film Festival so let's keep it going.

-The Naff Award idea this year will be "On the Sunnyside".

## **Open Forum**

There were no questions.

Motion to Adjourn: Michael B.  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Philip Y.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m