<u>**MINUTES**</u>

<u>**MS 54 GENERAL PTA MEETING: 12/13/16**</u>

The meeting was called to order and presided over by co-presidents Jerome Kramer and Katie Miller.

Quorum was achieved.

<u>**Co-Presidents Report:**</u>

- Vote on motion to approve minutes from the November PTA meeting.
  <u>Approved.</u>

- <u>Tutor Fair Update</u>:

  - The Tutor Fair will be the featured event at the next PTA Meeting on 1/10/16.
  - This event was inaugurated last year.
  - Many great tutoring companies will be present.
  - Parents were asked to spread the word.

- <u>108 Construction update</u>:

  - West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing is interested in beginning a development project across the street from the school.
  - There will be a Town Hall meeting on 12/14/16 to which the Save Manhattan Valley group has been invited; and the results of that meeting will be passed on to the parent body.

- <u>Teacher holiday gifts</u>:

  - Parents may still donate until the morning of 12/16/16.

<u>**Principal's Report:**</u>

- The second marking period progress reports will open on 12/16/16.

- Students should not be receiving homework to do over the holidays. Parents were asked to have their children read for at least half an hour each day.

- The ELA and Math tests will be similar in structure to last year's tests.

- During MLK week in January, the school will be educating students and parents about cyber usage.

Treasury:

- Budget update:

  - Bank balance as of 12/13/16 is $466,922.55

  - Income is $221,118.32

Fundraising:

- The Pie Sale:

  - The pie sale brought in $4,391.68

- Bake Sale:

  - The bake sale brought in $1,512.00

- School Store:

  - The school store brought in $4,321.33

- Broadway Night:

  - Net income from Broadway Night was $11,552.70

- Annual Appeal Update:

  - Donations to the Annual Fund are lower than they were last year at this time.
  - Parents were asked to contribute if able.

- Fairway Cards:

  - Fairway card usage is also lower than last year at this time.
  - Parents were asked to please use the cards when shopping.
  - Cards are available in the school office.

- Amazon:

- Amazon link usage is also lower this year.
- Parents were asked to used the Amazon link on the school's website prior to shopping.

Wellness Committee:

- Update on current and upcoming initiatives:

- The School Wellness Council is an advisory committee that is composed of parents, teachers and staff.
- The committee meets once/month on Tuesdays.
- Currently, the committee is working on training teachers to help reduce students' stress.
- The committee has received a grant from the DOE Wellness Program. They plan to purchase equipment that helps reduce stress.
- Students who are interested will be working on wellness posters that demonstrate ways to reduce stress.
- The school will be holding a Wellness Day in March which will include at least two periods of Wellness workshops.

Guest Speaker- Justine Fonte:

"Parenting a #Millennial in the Age of Digital Sexuality." Justine Fonte has worked in health education in both public and private schools, and is the Director of Health & Wellness at The Dalton School. She received her Master's degree in Education from the University of Hawai`i and her Master's degree in Public Health from Columbia University.

- **Video Presentation:**

- Video of a female tween discussing the effects of seeing pornography online.
- Porn industry is influencing tweens and teens views around sex: consent is rarely discussed, sex is often shown with multiple partners and is often portrayed as being a violent act.

- **Adolescence and Social Media:**

- Social media is attractive to adolescents because:

1. Identity is a large part of adolescence. The way that teens perceive themselves, interact with others, compare themselves to others and the feedback they get from others, creates their identity online.
2. Social media provides the opportunity for self-affirmation. It regulates mood states and decreases loneliness. Teens' presentations of themselves online is very different from their real self.
3. Adolescents have a great Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) so they feel the need to be online and connected.

- **Technology and Teens -- Statistics:**

- 70% of teens have a cell phone and the majority of them believe that their lives would be negatively affected if they did not have one.
- 90% of tweens/teens play video games and 85% of video games contain some form of violence. Shooter games increase aggression and objectifying, and decrease respect for others.

- **Teaching Sexuality in terms of a Healthy Relationship:**

- Teens should be taught that you need to have:

  1. Good communication
  2. Trust
  3. Respect
  4. Physical and Emotional Safety

- Texting:

- Texting compromises communication.
- Kids are functionally illiterate when it comes to reading inflection and facial expressions because they communicate so heavily via text.
- Kids become unable to communicate in person.
- Kids disguise their texts with abbreviations.
- Kids mistrust technology. They believe their texts can be erased, but everything goes in the Cloud.

- Tweens/Teens Online Presence:

- Facebook is no longer popular with tweens/teens because they do not want to "friend" (be connected with or monitored by) with adults they know.

- Instagram is popular. A Finsta is a fake Instagram account, but in reality shows how kids really feel.

- <u>Snapchat</u> is the most popular. Users send videos, pictures or texts that then "disappear" into the Cloud after seven seconds. However, the recipient can screen shot what the user has sent, before it disappears. Tweens/teens feel they are invincible and may send whatever they feel like because they believe it will disappear.

- <u>Tinder</u> is an adult dating app that high school students are joining. They do so for self-affirmation (to see how many people swipe that they like their photo). It is possible if both sides swipe, to share personal information and teens have met up with strangers using this site.

- <u>After School</u> provides an avenue to anonymously share whatever kids would like about their school with people who have joined the app. This app became a meca for cyber bullying.

- <u>Yik Yak</u> is an app where people can share whatever they would like. It has the potential for cyber bullying.

- <u>House Party</u> is a video app for group chats.

- **Effects of online images on self-image:**

- Adolescents are heavily focused on pictures and videos.
- Online images have a negative effect on body image.
- In the past, tweens/teens understood that magazine photos were often photoshopped, but now they are looking at images of non-celebrity, everyday people, who look "perfect."
- People can now manage others' impressions of them with photos/videos posted online.
- Tweens/teens are often unaware that people filter their photos through such means as plump and skinny apps.

- **Porn Literacy:**

- 71% of teen boys have reported that they have seen porn on the internet during the last six months.
- 40% of teen girls reported they have seen porn on the internet during the last six months.
- Tweens/Teens are learning what their bodies are supposed to look like, and what sex is supposed to be like, from porn.
- DTF (Down to Fuck) vs. Consent. Porn teaches the idea that if you have shown up, you are giving consent to sexual acts. Tweens/teens are rarely exposed to someone saying no.

- Porn does not demonstrate safe sex. It does not show protection in terms of birth control.
- Porn portrays exaggerated body parts that may negatively affect the viewer's self-image.
- There is a focus on physical arousal in porn, and not on the emotional aspects of sex. This increases objectification.

- **Teaching kids to be online safely:**

- Parents should teach their children that before they do anything online, they should stop and THINK-- is it:

  True?
  Helpful?
  Inspiring?
  Necessary?
  Kind?

- Parents should speak with their children about social media. They should discuss pictures that their kids post and how it makes them feel.
- Parents should set boundaries and "friend" or "follow" their children.
- Parents must remind their children that there are online predators.
- Parents should monitor video game usage: Parents should have their children explain the games to them before purchasing, monitor amount of time their children play video games, and be alert to any changes in their child's mood, thoughts and affect. Children can become addicted to these games.

- **Ways to manage Sexual Media and Porn:**

- Parents should ask their child his/her opinion about items in the news, movie story lines etc. that concern sex.
- Parents should discuss that while heteronormative partnerships are those that are most often portrayed in the media, there are many types of relationships.
- Parents should explain that images are photoshopped and altered.
- Parents should ask if their child saw consent being given in a movie or commercial.

- **Question and Answer with Justine Fonte:**

Q: What are the long-term ramifications of the digital age on children?
A: There is no data yet, because the technology is still new. Outdoor experiences, and experiences that do not require technology, have been found to be rejuvenating. The solution is to monitor/manage online life, as opposed to forbidding it.

Q: How should parents monitor Snapchat if the photos disappear after seven seconds?
A: Some parents do not allow their child to have a Snapchat account, but there can be pushback from the child. Some parents say their child can have account on the condition that the parent will be one of his/her followers. Some parents simply explain that they want their child to be safe and that he/she may have an account if the child agrees to show the parent if he/she receives something questionable. Parents should remind children about predators and make sure kids know that there are apps that disable the disappearing photos, so what they send may be permanent.

Q: Do you have recommendations for parental spyware?
A: There are apps that will show parents whatever is on their child's screen. Whatever parents choose, they should be honest with their child about their intention.

Q: How should parents manage the dynamic where kids feel they need certain types of technology or apps to keep up with other kids socially?
A: Parents should teach their children that if they have to have to do something (i.e. have a certain app or phone to have that app) as a requirement to be a member of a group, that may not be a good group to be a part of.

Q: Are the videos on the handout that was provided for parents or kids to watch?
A: There is a mix of both, so parents should watch them first before deciding which to share with their kids. If parents have their child watch a video, they should discuss it with him/her after.

- **Question and Answer with Dr. Elster:**

Q: What are we doing at this school to educate our students in this regard?
A: We educate about internet safety and what kids' cyber presence looks like, on an ongoing basis. Most of these conversations happen informally between teachers and students when students bring in concerns.

Q: Is there sex education in the school?
A: There is a piece of it in the 7th Grade Health class in the Spring. The school could expand our education in terms of discussing technology.

- PTA co-chair stated the possibility of bringing in a speaker for the students on this topic and asked parents to bring in their ideas.

Next PTA General Meeting:

1/10, 6:50 pm followed by a Tutor Fair