

Draft
Minutes
PTA of MS 54, Inc.
General Membership Meeting
December 11, 2007

Present: Please see attendance sheet.

I. PTA co-presidents Mary Beth Walsh and Mark Diller welcomed parents and called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m..

II. Minutes of November 13, 2007, PTA meeting approved.

III. Principal's Report.

- a. Dr. Elana Elster paid tribute to Marie Simeone, reflecting on her many contributions as a teacher and a member of the community. Ms. Simeone was so dedicated, Dr. Elster said, that at one point in her career she commuted from Hartford, Connecticut, so she could continue teaching at Booker T. Washington, a dedication her family honored by having her buried in her school T-shirt. A memorial service at Booker T. is scheduled for Thursday, December 13.
- b. Addressing concerns over safety issues, Dr. Elster reported that security had been heightened; police had been alerted; and parents are patrolling the schoolyard every afternoon. She also encouraged parents to explain to their children the importance of being particularly cautious during the holiday season when there tends to be greater need and a higher crime rate. Parents should remind children to leave the neighborhood immediately after school as a precaution as well.
- c. The ELA test is scheduled for January 15-17 for 6th graders, and January 15-16 for 7th and 8th graders. Letters were mailed to parents/guardians of students in need of support. They are encouraged to get that support at the Early Academy. Parents can get the specific results of their children's performance on a practice test by e-mailing Humanities teachers.
- d. The School Leadership Team (SLT) is working on self-assessment.

IV. Treasurer's Update.

- a. Year-to-date results just came in and will be available in Anne Pejovich's office the week of December 18.
- b. The capital campaign goal is **\$52,000**. Including matching grants from employers, we have raised about 60% of that so far. This amount will be sufficient to meet the PTA's current budget, but will only allow us to absorb a portion of our goal of rewiring the building so that every classroom can support air conditioning. Our grants committee is actively pursuing funding from other sources, all of whom would expect substantial participation from the community.
- c. After expenditures for equipment and whiteboards this month, the PTA has a balance of approximately \$50,000.

V. Fund Raising.

- a. A Phone-a-thon will be held in January to help the Pledge Drive meet its goal. Class parents will help recruit parent volunteers. Forty volunteers are needed.
- b. The auction will be held on March 15th. This is earlier than usual, so parents are asked to start finding sponsors and rounding up items that can be auctioned now. Possibilities include theater or sports event tickets, donations from restaurants and other vendors, the use of a country house for a weekend or week.

VI. The teacher/staff holiday breakfast has been rescheduled for February 15, the day after Valentine's Day. Contributions of food are needed.

VII. School Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT needs one parent member. The SLT, composed of parents, teachers, the principal and staff, defines the educational goals for each academic year. Anyone interested in can contact: Mark Diller (mdiller@nyc.rr.com; 917-691-0865).

VIII. Question and Answer Period

- a. Safety. Dr. Elster was asked to elaborate on school safety and reported that the Parent Safety Walk, coordinated by a 7th grade parent, started on Monday. She also emphasized how important it was for children and parents to report any incident they see. It helps the school document the need for security and the need for police patrols. Additional safety actions: The MTA has arranged to have an M11 bus start at W. 108 and Columbus at 3 p.m. especially for MS 54 students. Students can be reminded to get to know which stores have Safe Haven stickers, marking places where they can go if they need help.

DoE Quality Review Results. While parents and educators debate the merits of reducing the school's successes to a single letter grade, the school is gratified to have been given a grade of "A." MS 54's representatives on the the District 3 President's Council have noted that some of the benchmarks used to create the quality review score have been valuable and could be of use to educators and parents apart from their use in the overall single letter grade. The quality review places a significant emphasis on student increases on standardized test scores.

IX. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

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