

PS 87 PARENTS ASSOCIATION General MEETING

February 9, 2018
8:40am

MINUTES

Attendance:

Board Members: Jackie Dolson-Shewchuk, Debby Saito, Doug Creps, Milary Olson, Rebecca Solano, Shari Greenspan, Gillian Mollod, Katie Miller, Lisa Procopio, Isabel Vaz Pires, Stacy Cousino, Samantha Benowitz, Pam Unger

Guests (speaking): Monica Berry

Please refer to sign-in sheet for other guests at the meeting.

Quorum was met

Called to order by Jackie Dolson-Shewchuk, Debby Saito

Opening Remarks

As the first item of business, the Co-Presidents made the following opening remarks:

- Pan Asian Lunar Celebration will be this evening and amazing Broadway performers will be performing. The start time is 5:30 to accommodate the Broadway performers' own curtain calls! The event is free and attendees can bring a dish to share at the Potluck dinner, which starts at 7pm. A call for parent volunteers was made to assist with event set-up and clean up.
- Family Fit Night was an incredible success. Chop't donated the dinner so when you go to Chop't, please thank them for their support of PS 87.

Board Minutes

As the second item of business, a motion was made to approve the Board Minutes from the January 2018 Parents Association General Meeting. The motion was approved.

Fundraising

As the third items of business, Isabel reminded the PA that the NY International Children's Film Festival is being held from Feb 23 to March 18. A flyer has been included in take-home folders. PS 87 receives \$3 back for every ticket purchased that indicates the PS87 affiliation. In addition, Tea (online children's clothing store) will hold a 15% off sale the week of February 26th (7 days) for PS 87 families, where the store will also donate 15% back of purchases to PS 87.

Principal's Report

As the fourth item of business, Monica responded to questions on the Middle School admission process, including the proposed academic quota and the approved "blind admission" process. The following was discussed:

- What is "blind admissions"?
 - Students can apply for up to 12 middle schools and rank their choices.
 - Certain middle schools in District 3 have many more applicants than seats. In these cases, the schools currently employ a process to rank the students they will admit. They will sometimes interview students and review a portfolio submission to determine offers,

or may offer an additional school-specific test to applicants. Given resource constraints, they typically only interview students who have indicated a high level of interest in the school, by ranking it first or second).

- The Computer School Principal and Mott Hall Principal have expressed that using the ranking to determine student interviews is very helpful to ensure a good match (i.e., students want to come to the school and will accept a seat).
- Blind admissions, which has been approved by the DOE and will be implemented in the fall of 2018 for the 2018-19 admissions cycle, means that schools will no longer see the student rankings.
- Blind admissions is being implemented throughout the city, not only District 3. However, there is no model of a successful implementation yet.
- Blind admissions was put forth by the DOE as a means to promote diversity in schools, however the Superintendent (Ilene Altschul) has indicated that blind admissions alone cannot effectively create diversity in schools.
- One of the potential unintended consequences of Blind admissions is that it may create an environment where middle schools place more emphasis on standardized test scores to determine interview offers, which detracts from academic diversity.
- There is also a parallel proposal to establish quotas within middle schools to create academic diversity (e.g., x% of all students have y test score). There is currently a requirement for middle schools to have the same percentage of students with IEPs in their school as there are in the district (13% of District 3).
- There need to be measures and conditions put in place to create diversity in schools, however they have not yet been articulated. A data point previously used to measure diversity was the determination of whether a student is eligible for free school lunch. However, now that free lunch is available to all students, that data point can no longer be accurately measured. (Note: parents are still requested to continue to fill out the survey regarding eligibility for the previous free lunch criteria, but it is unlikely parents will continue to volunteer that information.)
- There is a strong need for PS87 parents to attend CEC3 meeting en masse and be vocal regarding our concerns and questions regarding the proposal of quotas as well as the implementation of blind admissions for District 3 middle schools.
 - The next CEC3 monthly business meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb 13 at 6:30pm at PS 87, and the next Middle School Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb 27 at 6:30 PM at 154 W. 93rd St.
- A parent questioned whether new middle schools are needed. Monica responded that there are more than enough seats in the entire District for all 6th graders, however not all at the schools that tend to be preferred by PS 87 parents and students.
- A parent questioned on how we make the remaining schools (those with open seats) more appealing. This led to a suggestion for broader discussion / engagement with our elected officials (like Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer) on education reforms but it was understood that these are large-scale changes, without quick fixes.
- The following additional concerns were voiced:
 - DOE allows students to remain in the district schools even after moving out of district
 - There is a lack of diversity at the elementary school level which feeds the lack of diversity at the middle school level, yet the lack of diversity at the elementary school level is not being addressed.
 - K-8 schools in northern Manhattan are currently being split into elementary (K-5) and middle (6-8) schools.
 - The appeals process, as well as the ability to change schools after the close of the appeals process, undercuts the admissions process.

- Based on the abovementioned discussion, it was suggested that the PA convene a separate meeting to focus on this matter, given the level of interest and need for PS 87 parent involvement in the discussions with the DOE.

Additionally, Monica reported on the previously discussed issue about students having an issue with the old soap dispenser. Peter (our fabulous new custodian) has fixed the problem and now students are doing a great job washing their hands. A parent asked whether automatic soap dispensers were possible. Monica will speak to Peter about automatic soap dispensers.

Monica also reminded parents that there is no school on Friday, February 16th for Lunar New Year.

Auction

As the fifth item, Pam (representing Auction Chair, Lora) reminded parents that this year's Auction will be April 21. Donations for the Auction are greatly needed, and Pam called for parents to help with neighborhood or online solicitations. As a parent, you can talk with a business you frequently patronize, or offer your own personal talents (e.g., making lunches or dinners for a family). Jackie also noted that this is a great way for local businesses to get advertising to all PS 87 families. Please contact Lora Martinez, Carly Gottsegen, Jill Rackmill or Sarah Atherton with questions or to volunteer.

Co-President's Report

As the sixth item, Debby and Jackie gave an update on the following:

- The PS87 Dual Language Committee has been holding the following amazingly successful events and a thank-you to those in the committee:
 - Winter Parent's Night Out – a night out for parents and a fundraiser sponsored by E's bar
 - Monthly Spanish Language classes for PS 87 parents, taught by PS 87 parents. This is a 30-minute Spanish language class for parents held the first Tuesday of every month after drop-off. Given great interest, it may expand to twice a month, for 45 minutes.
- PS 51 is a school in Midtown where much of the student population lives in shelters, lacking basic necessities. There was a call made for donations of new clothing and/or toiletries for these students. There will be a sign-up for parents to facilitate a monthly or bimonthly delivery of donated items (coordinated through a PS87 parent that works at PS 51 and Parent Coordinator Sandra). A question was asked about involving PS 87 students in the delivery process; it was noted that volunteers are needed to help coordinate those logistics.
- Reminder call for PS 87 parents to attend the next CEC3 Business & Calendar Meeting on Tuesday, February 13th at PS 87 from 6:30-9pm.

Treasurer's Report

As the seventh item, Doug gave an update on the budget (see Exhibit A attached) and reported the PA's interim financial statement have been provided to the DOE. In addition, this year's financial audit, which includes both the PA and the Afterschool program, has begun and the auditors will present their findings to the Board at the April meeting.

Enrichment

As the eighth item, Katie reminded the PA that the Silver Music Assembly (2nd grade) will be next Tuesday. In addition, 2nd through 5th graders will be exploring the BioBus (a research grade mobile science lab) in March. The BioBus program was funded through a grant made available from Linda Rosenthal's office.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:36am.