

Executive Board Meeting, March 23, 2009

Present: Francesca Di Mauro, Ivelisse Suarez-Levine, Susan Saar, Kirsten Cowal, Ruth Lilienstein-Gatton, Judith Michael, Susan Rosenberg, Jeanine McAdam

Francesca Di Mauro opened the meeting by directing attention to the previously distributed agenda. At the PA general meeting on March 24th, a call will be made for a nominating committee for the upcoming SLT and PA elections. Three positions are opening on the SLT – the ones currently held by Jim Corona, Judy Amaro and Soledad Lopez Quintero. Ms. Di Mauro indicated that she will email the final version of the notes from the PA/SLT retreat to the administration so that they can review the document prior to the meeting with the Executive Board tomorrow at which time they will also receive hard copies. She stated that she believes the administration will be willing to meet with the Executive Board to discuss the contents of the document and that the only sticking point will be scheduling issues.

A June date for the Spaghetti Dinner was discussed. Current kindergarten parents will be encouraged to organize the event with the help of the Executive Board. Parents will be contacted through the class parent representatives. The potential dates that were discussed were June 4 and 11. Set up would be easier on June 4th because the school is closed that day but holding it on that date would mean that the administration would potentially not participate (serving food) as they did last year. There was also some question as to whether either date would conflict with the Y's camp orientation sessions. Tory Frye will check on that.

The tribute to Chris Kapetanios was next discussed. It will take place at the April general meeting and Jeanine McAdam is coordinating. Judith Michael and Kathy Brito will speak and Mr. Kapetanios will be presented with a plaque and certificate.

Attention was next focused on upcoming events. A bake sale will be held after the 3rd and 4th grade music festival on Thursday, March 26th and volunteers are needed to set up and staff the table and to provide baked goods. Susan Saar will send out an email announcement and Francesca Di Mauro will contact class parent representatives to solicit their help.

A school tour will be held on Tuesday, March 31st beginning at 8:45. Kathy Brito and Wilma Lopez will set up the refreshments table but parent volunteers are needed as of 8:30 to usher visitors to the auditorium and lead the small groups to classrooms after Ms. Chory and Francesca Di Mauro speak. There was some discussion about the purpose or utility of the tour since there are more applicants than seats at this point (enrollment will be capped at 75 and 96 zoned children have registered). It was noted, however, that the tour is sponsored by the school administration so the decision on whether or not to hold the tour is not the Executive Board's to take. Susan Rosenberg will seek out and coordinate volunteers – Francesca Di Mauro estimated that around five would be needed. The tour has been advertised on the school's web site and Ms. Chory has been receiving phone calls so it is apparent that some people will show up to take the tour.

At Judith Michael's request, a discussion was held on the e-group commercial ad policy. Some parents have raised questions about the appropriateness and admissibility of members posting ads with some underlying commercial purpose (e.g. tutors, Tabernacle sale, etc.). Ms. Michael emphasized that she had no particular preference either way but simply wished for the policy to be very clear so that it can be applied consistently and fairly. After various members of the Executive Board expressed opinions in favor of and against allowing e-group members to post ads, it was decided that Judith Michael would speak about the issue at the April general meeting and present the de facto policy (everything is approved unless it is profane or irrelevant) and that if there is a wish to change the policy to restrict ads, she will propose a paragraph that she has already drafted.

Jeanine McAdam and Ruth Lilienstein-Gatton reported that they recently learned in a meeting with the administration that the school has purchased Rosetta Stone for Spanish as an alternative to hiring a teacher which the lack of funds precludes. The program will be used with 5th through 8th graders twice a week in technology lab. Participation will not be optional and the administration is considering making it a graded period. The administration is open to adding up to three other languages which may include an East Asian language and Russian.

Ms. McAdam and Ms. Lilienstein-Gatton went on to discuss the after school sports program for which the grant writing sub-committee obtained the funding (\$6,000). The program has been very successful and popular and 75 students signed a petition asking for more basketball. Ms. Hozumi has done all of the program implementation and will do all of the evaluation. The grant writing sub-committee has asked Ms. Hozumi for another proposal which she will provide since the sub-committee intends to continue funding this program next year. Tory Frye suggested that inquiries be made into how the Violence Prevention funds in the school budget are being used since they are supposed to be used for after school programming.

A new discussion ensued on the future of the Daniel Gewirtzman dance program. Ms. Chory has raised the question of whether parents still want the program. The program was initiated at a time when there was no physical education which is no longer the case since the school now has a full time physical education teacher. It was widely agreed, however, that the dance program and physical education are not interchangeable. The question of how to fund the program, if it is wanted, was discussed. Leonisa Ardizzone approached Jeanine McAdam to discuss matching funds by the Friends of 187. Ms. McAdam and Ms. Lilienstein-Gatton are not willing to do an assessment of parent interest or to continue fund raising for the program from other sources. Therefore, it appears that another person will have to write a grant and take on the project of keeping the program at the school. Last year, the program cost \$15,000 but in the previous years the cost has been \$25,000.

Francesca Di Mauro pointed out that the wish list has to be discussed at the general meeting the following day and that the dance program can be discussed in the context of PA budget priorities. It was pointed out, in reference to the issue of the imbalance in PA-funded enrichment programming in the elementary and intermediate schools that Studio in a School will be implemented in the 5th and 8th grades as well as in kindergarten and 1st grade in the next cycle.

Some frustration was expressed at the fact that parents have little or no information about who is receiving enrichment programming at any given time so it was agreed that the administration will be asked at every meeting to give a report on which grades are receiving enrichment programming that month. Ms. Di Mauro indicated that she would send email to the administration notifying them of this request.

Francesca Di Mauro reported that the pilot project underway in three 5th grade classrooms with School Speak (similar to E-chalk) is going well and has been received positively. Despite considerable teacher interest, Ms. Di Mauro said it is not likely to be adopted next year due to some lingering resistance among some teachers. Funding is not an issue since there seems to be money available in the school budget. The issue will be raised at the general meeting since there was strong opinion that the wishes of the majority of parents and teachers (for this online service) should not be denied because of the discomfort or unwillingness of a small number of teachers to use computer technology.

Tory Frye announced that she is beginning to scope out parents to ascertain who will be doing which fundraising activities next year. She will send out email and a flyer shortly. Jeanine McAdam reported that the parent who claimed to be owed reimbursement from the Washington Heights Neighborhood Association (the fiscal agent for the kindergarten gardening project) did not submit her receipts to the designated person by the stipulated date so the books have been closed. The key has been obtained and Sue (last name) has the program materials.