

Parents Association General Meeting, February 28, 2008

Administration Report

Ms. Chory discussed the school events that took place in February – the Talent Show and Science Fair – and thanked parents for taking an active part, particularly in the Science Fair since that made the event all the more meaningful for students. She announced events coming up in March, including math exams, parent teacher conferences and the annual volleyball games. Ms. Chory asked parents to remember to pick up their children at the right time on March 13th which will be a half day.

Ms. Chory was thanked for her report and she left the meeting. Stevie Ray Dallimore welcomed parents to the general meeting and explained that Kathy Brito was feeling unwell and was therefore not giving the welcome herself.

Treasurer's Report

Luisa Diorio announced that parents contributed \$6,915 in dues this year compared to \$3,383 last year. Jennifer Marciano reported that the audit is underway since they now have a third person on the committee. They have sent a memo to the Executive Board requesting information they need to proceed. Ms. Diorio indicated that Judy Amaro sent her apologies for not being at the meeting since she would have been able to provide some information for the audit. She was unable to attend because she was at a CEC meeting.

Wish list and surveys

Francesca Di Mauro announced that the PA has the money it needs to fulfill all of the wish list. Checks will be presented at the Staff Appreciation Dinner and the copies of the wish list will be distributed at the next general meeting so that parents can see how the PA funds were allocated. Ms. Di Mauro then announced that the SLT's needs assessment will be distributed on Monday, March 3rd. She stressed that this survey is an internal evaluation tool and that it is used as an input for the Comprehensive Education Plan. She also stressed the importance of parental participation regardless of whether feedback be positive or negative. Volunteers will circulate in the hallways on March 13th to encourage parents to complete the assessment. The Chancellor's survey will be sent to parents sometime in March and the school will be graded on its level of parental participation. Parents will receive the Chancellor's survey through the mail with a SASE and will also be able to complete the survey online. Parental participation will be strongly encouraged by the administration and the Parents Association.

Title I

Marci Stringham reported that she and Kathy Brito recently attended a meeting related to Title I and that they were both elected representatives for the school, Ms. Brito as the main delegate and Ms. Stringham as the alternate. They decided to have the Parents Association handle the parental involvement requirements for Title I for the remainder of this year. This will entail attendance at monthly morning meetings at the district office on Broadway and 187th street. Ms. Stringham indicated that she cannot fulfill the role as alternate because she does not have the time and asked for a volunteer to take this position. She indicated, as well, that any parent can represent the school since all students are eligible for free school lunch this year. Next fall a meeting will have to be convened (by Administration presumably) of Title I parents so that they can elect the form of representation they wish to have. How Title I parents are to be identified, given confidentiality and privacy concerns, is unclear. Ms. Stringham has repeatedly raised the question with Administration and the district Parent Engagement Officer but has not gotten a satisfactory answer. In answer to questions from members, it was explained that Title I funds are part of No Child Left Behind and that the funds come with requirements for parental involvement in the decision making as to how the funds are allocated. One percent of the funds are to be used for parent outreach. This amounts to about \$4,000

at PS/IS 187. Last year it was used to purchase head sets for translation at meetings and this year it has been used to upgrade the library and for Xeroxing expenses.

No one volunteered to be the alternate Title I delegate to replace Ms. Stringham. Ms. Marciano suggested that perhaps the UPA delegate and the alternate delegates could attend meetings on a rotating basis. Ms. Stringham will consult Rebecca Alicea to see if this is permissible.

The minutes for the January general meeting were circulated and approved.

Nominating committee for PA elections and bylaws revision

Kirsten Cowal next announced the need for a nominating committee to be constituted for the elections for next year's PA Executive Board. Judith Michael explained, in response to questions from the membership, that the duties of said committee would include soliciting nominations, preparing ballots, running the election and ensuring compliance with district regulations arising from last year's contested election. It was also explained that members of the committee could not themselves run for any office. Another member asked whether there should be two nominating committees – one for the PA and the other for the SLT – since theoretically someone could be willing to help with the PA elections but be interested in running for the SLT. The consensus seemed to be that there realistically is not enough volunteer capacity to have two committees and that therefore only people who have no interest in running for any position should volunteer. Initially no one volunteered but toward the end of the meeting Joey Brenneman volunteered.

Ms. Cowal then announced that the Executive Board would be introducing a motion at the next general meeting to revise sections of the bylaws pertaining to the UPA delegate position to change the title and responsibilities of this position to that of community liaison which would entail attending meetings as directed by the Executive Board. Ms. Cowal indicated that the UPA delegate position is for all intents and purposes defunct because the UPA has not had a meeting for the last year and a half. Carlos Brito, the current UPA delegate, explained that he has tried contacting people and has spoken to someone at Robert Jackson's office to no avail. Ms. Cowal also indicated that it isn't clear to the Board yet when the revision, if approved would go into effect. She is still consulting Roberts Rules of Order and expects to have an answer by the next general meeting. Ms. Cowal circulated copies of the current bylaws and indicated that she would send copies in Spanish by mail or email if anyone wished a copy.

Talent Show

Mr. Dallimore discussed the Talent Show that will, if approved by the membership, take place on May 2nd. The funds from this event will be used to upgrade classroom libraries. The show will make use of in-house talent but be open to the community. As a community wide event there will be a need to ensure that there is adequate security. Children will need to be accompanied by an adult. Mr. Dallimore explained that the date of the show – the Friday following spring break – was due to the fact that the week before spring break was very full with student exams, a PA general meeting and a community event related to the Daniel Gewirtzman dance company. Mr. Dallimore indicated, in response to some questions about where the event should be held, that he didn't think the acoustics in the auditorium would be problematic as some thought it might. Mr. Dallimore asked the membership to approve this fundraising event and asked parents for their support. A motion was raised, a vote was held and the fundraiser was approved.

Fundraising/Grant writing committee report

Jeanine McAdam reported that \$1,247 has been raised through bake sales, \$516 from Franks' pies, \$30 from the Science Fair and \$500 from the Intermediate School movie night. The committee is still trying to find funding for the second grade video project. They may try to get funds through the Donors Choose program but a lot of logistics

are involved with that. The budget for the project is around \$3,000-4,000 which mostly covers salary for the teacher and equipment.

Susan Saar discussed the Bent on Learning yoga program at the school. Bent on Learning is a non-profit organization that brings yoga to public schools. The program has given the school 50 classes for the 2007-2008 school year which are being provided as an enrichment program for 8th graders. Ms. Hozumi is running this program. Susan has been asked by the organization to announce that the program is holding a fundraiser and that PS/IS 187 needs to show some commitment to the program – in the form of helping with fundraising – if it is to be retained. Ms. Saar emphasized that the program can be expanded and that it can be used as part of the curriculum as it meets state standards for the gym requirement. She indicated that there is a need to find out how the yoga program is working and if it is truly wanted. Parents were encouraged to visit the organization's web site www.bentongiving.com and to donate \$20. The web site is a little hard to navigate – one can find the right page for the school by looking it up under her name or by looking for “my team.”

Aryn Chapman reported that the process of establishing a 501c3 is underway. The committee is currently working on drafting bylaws. Leonisa Ardizzone reported that the strategic plan is being refined and that it may be partitioned to make it more manageable. Parents can obtain a copy of the current version by contacting Ms. Ardizzone.

During the Open Forum, Ms. Ardizzone announced that the organization that she directs - the Salvadori Foundation, which offers educational programs to public schools based on engineering, architecture and urban planning – will be holding a workshop on March 15 that will be open free of charge to PS/IS 187 parents. The theme of the workshop will be “Why Buildings Stand Up.” Programs for children may be held later in the school year. Ms. Di Mauro indicated that her child's second grade teacher is teaching about landmarks and asked if she could forward information about the workshop to this teacher. Ms. Ardizzone indicated that teachers would be welcome at this workshop as well.