

General Meeting, May 27, 2009

Francesca Di Mauro called the meeting to order. The minutes from the previous general meeting were approved. Ms. Chory reported that the ELA scores for grades 3 through 8 were received by the school and indicated that 79% of students were on or above grade level, an 11% increase from the year before. She announced that the school budget would suffer a \$300,000 cut. She indicated that the school administration was praised by higher ups for their handling of hygiene in the wake of swine flu concerns. In the previous week half of the fourth grade had been absent and as a result all classrooms were cleaned (students were kept in the auditorium while their classrooms were being sanitized). The school has not had any confirmed cases of swine flu. Attendance dropped at one point to 82% but is now at 89% (the average is 94%).

During the question and answer session, a parent asked if Title I funding was lost and the answer was no. A question was asked about the status of the decision on whether to retain ability grouping/tracking and the parent was told that an SLT subcommittee had been established to examine the pros and cons of the current system and would be meeting the following week. A parent asked for information about the GE Grant. Ms. Hozumi replied that the grant was for \$250,000 a year for 4 years and would focus on math and science in the intermediate school. Grant funds would initially cover professional development for teachers, the costs associated with adding extra science periods, some equipment such as laptop computers and Smart Boards and the revamping of 2 classrooms for science and lab instruction. An Action Plan with 5 goals will soon be completed and be made available to parents who wish to see it.

Some discussion ensued, following a parent's question, about the status of the math scores which are currently embargoed. It is routine for scores to be embargoed even after being released to schools until after the Mayor's Office puts out a press release. In the meantime, parents can contact their class teachers to get their children's results. A new system is being implemented by the Department of Education in which parents will be able to obtain access online to their children's test results. Two letters will be sent to parents shortly – one that describes the online system and the other that provides a temporary password. Denise Rosa, the Parent Coordinator, indicated that both letters are not in the school building yet. The school administration officials were thanked and left the meeting.

The floor was opened for nominations to the PA Executive Board and the School Leadership Team. The following parents nominated themselves for the PA Executive Board: Francesca Di Mauro for President, Susan Rosenberg for Elementary School Vice-President, Kathy Brito for Intermediate School Vice President, Carlos Brito for Treasurer, Susan Saar for Communications Secretary and Ana Cecilia Hernandez for Recording Secretary. There were no candidates for CEC delegate. It was established that since none of the positions were contested that a PA election would not need to be held. The PA membership in attendance at the meeting voted to elect the slate of candidates.

The following individuals are running for the three vacancies on the School Leadership Team: Kathy Brito, Lars Hanson, Ana Cecilia Hernandez, Jared Levin, Daniel Levy, Haydee Lorenzo, Sue Seitner, and Victoria Frye. The candidates also spoke briefly about their qualifications and goals. The SLT election will be held on June 10th and there will be three voting times: 7:00-8:30am, 2:30-4:00pm and 7:00 to 8:30pm. SLT candidates were asked to pick up copies of campaign regulations to ensure that any electioneering activities would be in compliance with A660 regulations.

A question was asked as to how teachers get on the SLT. James Goldwasser, a current SLT member, replied that teachers have an election. Results have not historically been posted but will be going forward. In addition to the parent representatives, the SLT consists of the Principal and Vice Principals, the United Federation of Teachers representative (an elected position) and one more teacher. The non-teaching staff who are members of the DC 37 union also have representation on the SLT.

The next item up for discussion was the PA Web site. The hosting contract is up for renewal. The cost is \$8.95 per month with a 2 year minimum which needs to be paid in full up front. The parent, Jay Douglas who is currently managing the Web site indicated that he was willing to continue doing so. Various parents stressed the need to push the school administration to maintain their own Web site. Judith Michael made a motion to approve the renewal of the Web site hosting for two years for a total cost of \$214.80. The motion was seconded and passed with no votes against or abstentions.

Francesca Di Mauro then drew the members' attention to the list that was attached to the agenda of potential fundraisers for next year. She indicated that people with ideas for fundraisers should attend the June 1 fundraising committee meeting in order to provide information. She mentioned that new co-chairs for the committee are needed for next year. The main role of the co-chairs will be to act as overseers to provide support and guidance and ensure that all activities are in compliance with A660 regulations. Ms. Di Mauro clarified that committee chairs are not term limited and that they are non-voting members of the Executive Board.

Susan Rosenberg announced that the Spaghetti Dinner was taking place on June 4th and that the organizers need borrowed crock pots and donations of pasta and sauce. T-shirts, tote bags and cookbooks will be available for sale and incoming parents will be told that the PA may approve the production and sale of clear backpacks with the 187 logo as a fundraising initiative.

James Goldwasser gave a report for the School Leadership Team. He indicated that they are not sure if the needs assessment will inform the Comprehensive Education Plan because the sample size was small and there were other problems with the survey. He described the recent intervention from higher ups in the Children's First Empowerment Network and the Department of Education and indicated that these individuals were helping to improve communication within the SLT. The outside people helped the SLT and school administration get a better understanding of the roles and remits of the PA and SLT. After an earlier very contentious discussion at the SLT on the vision statement, the outside people in a subsequent special meeting helped the SLT come to consensus on a vision. Mr. Goldwasser read the agreed upon vision statement which was received with enthusiasm by the audience. He announced that a kindergarten class next year which be a CTT (collaborative team teaching) classroom because a number of students are entering kindergarten with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans). Finally, James Goldwasser indicated that at the last SLT meeting a decision was taken to constitute a break out committee (the first of its kind and of others to follow) to review the tracking issues. The committee will be comprised of two teachers, two parents, one member of the administration and one member of the empowerment network. He took the names of parents interested in serving on the committee and instructed those parents to contact Leonisa Ardizzone.