

9:30AM-Call to order- Maya

9:32AM- Principal's Report Valerie

1. Covid update- Thankfully decreased

a. More students and more students are back in school which is great and we do not have. We managed to cover our classes. Other schools struggled with having enough teachers, that was not the case for us and instruction continued. This week we are back to normal with our teachers and close to normal with our students and our covid cases have really declined. We had peaked and the lull that the Mayor had talked about, has gotten to our school.

b. We have also been very lucky that we are fully staffed. We don't need a teacher. We have two full time substitutes. One is Sam, the students really love him and then the other one is Steve. Kevin, our gym teacher will be taking a leave for six weeks because he's expecting a baby with his wife and so Kevin will be out for six weeks starting at the end of February and Steve, our long term sub, will be taking over for him. Katherine Spears, who is a 6th grade Science teacher is also going to be taking a maternity leave at the beginning of April and so Sam will be covering for her while she's out. We are fortunate to have staff we have, other schools have had problems with staffing.

c. New Hires-We also have been able to hire a full time sub para professional. They are like teacher's assistant hired in the classroom to support. Our newest addition, her name is Julia. She was actually an old student of mine. We are hiring a new social worker. We have interviewed someone we really love. She will hopefully be joining us very soon.

d. Covid Policy- From the DOE it Changes constantly. If there is a positive case in a classroom, everyone in that classroom takes two take-home tests and they have been doing a great job of catching some positives. Asymptomatic students have taken them and it has been effective.

e. We did home bases for two weeks- where students stayed in their home classrooms for content and then moved for PE, arts, lunch. Nobody really loved it. Students nor teachers didn't like so everyone was excited this week when we felt it was safe enough to go back to their regularly scheduled classrooms. That has been good. The hallways seem safe. Teachers are in the hallways making sure kids stayed masked.

f. Covid-Students who test positive get google classroom and one office hour a week with each teacher. The DOE came up with a new policy as of yesterday. I'm not clear yet if it impacts our school, I will let you know. It was in the news. Administration often times gets info from the news and chalk beat. Students are taking the Math ELA assessments this year so we will take a mid year data point about their growth and the DESA assessment. Students creating a buddy system-teacher/student connection.

Each teacher is choosing a student and checking in with that student every single day. They are choosing students who are under the radar. We spend a lot of time with our “high fliers” which make it very well known that they need a lot of support and so this is our step in supporting students emotionally so that every teacher, every day has a conversation with that student. We start to learn more about our community and we start to make connections to kids who are quieter.

2. 9:35AM- Other News- Open streets

a. Applications are now available. We are going to be put in an application to have our street closed, on Greenwich Street from Morton Street- Between Greenwich and Hudson. We are going to apply to try to get it closed to cars. It would be a pedestrian street from 11AM-1:30PM so that students who are at out lunch have a place to hang out.

b. We may need your help and support to get this pushed through so we will reach out for next step. We know it would be great for the kids.

3. 7th Grade Shakespeare Residency

a. Theater for the New Audience. They were going to perform “The Merchant of Venice” however we are no longer going to be performing this play. While we trust our teachers and the theater to manage that play in a way that is respectful and address the racisms and themes that are problematic issues within the play, some parents expressed concerned about us teaching that play and did not want us to do it. We spent a lot of time talking and listening with the Theater for New Audience and in the end, Yashira, our drama teacher just decided that she couldn’t manage the type of work that it would take to bring our community together around this play. Without the full support of the parent community, it was not going to be manageable to move forward with this project.

b. The theater for New Audience is wonderful. We trust them wholly but in the end we are not going to be doing that play with them. We are still going to be working with them to do a play writing unit so they will be coming into the building, working with the 7th graders and do performances and put on their own original plays. We are all excited about that. It was not an easy decision but the best one for our community right now. I’ll be sending a letter to the 7th grade parents later today.

4. Issue in the lunchroom on Friday-

a. I heard a lot of dramatic rumors about. There was no jail fight. Nobody’s head got hit on the cafeteria table. Nobody was fighting. What happened was there was rough housing and this is why, we are very strict and it is very upsetting when students do play fight. One kid picked up another student and threw him to the ground in a play fight not to hurt or fight him but the other child got seriously injured. If you have heard this at your house from your 7th grader I just wanted to be clear about what it is that happened. There was not a fight between two kids but one student did get seriously injured and this is the consequence that is very upsetting to me. This student got seriously hurt because someone was messing around. We take play fighting so seriously and why following rules is important. As a consequence and result of this, the

student who did the harming is not in the school building. I've heard a lot of rumors about this and I wanted to clarify about what actually took place.

9:45AM- Eileen- did I miss anything?

I don't believe so.

1.Question about Wins-

a. Advisory-How students have been taking to it. Eileen-They finished up their I-Ready assessments and data from their Math assessments that they are taking. We are starting their next cycle on February 3rd which we are really excited about.

Teachers are meeting in their bungalows this week to determine what they want to teach next. We still have some of our intervention groups going. Some students will remain in those groups. Teachers will have an opportunity to be creative with what they are doing-looking at doing deep Math tasks, meditation and mindfulness skills. There are kids that don't just need academic needs they need other skills as well so really how we can tap on what they need because they do run the gamut of needs-Social/Emotional/Academic. They will start grouping their kids from there.

b. Question from Chat- Math Assessment

Your child went home with a hard copy of a math assessment-test results. If this does not sound familiar to you, please contact your child's advisor and they can get you that information again. It was a dot on a chart of what their starting point was this year and once they take the mid year assessment we can see hopefully, the growth and where they've gone.

c. Question from chat- About being off on January 31st

9:47AM Principal Valerie Response:

It's not for us. Other schools k-8th might be taking a professional development day but it does not apply to our school. They are however not in school on February 1st for Lunar New Year.

d. Question from Parents: Is Wins- assessment from what I understand from my daughter is where students are sitting at a terminal and getting questions and answering them. Is that the same as a Math assessment?

Eileen Answer: That is not the same. We were lucky to be able have access and purchase I-Ready and then the DOE told us we have to use the Math assessments so before we knew we were going to have the data for the Math assessment, we purchased our own assessment for students so this is just another data point, another way to get to know the students. I-Ready, is reactive to how they are doing. If the student is excelling, the questions get progressively harder, so the students will be getting what they need that way. If a student is struggling, it will readjust its questioning in that way.

Principal Valerie: Also, I-Ready is connected to lessons. Gives them the lessons and practices they need. The math assessment does not do that. The Math assessment is gives the data from the teacher and that's it. There are no lessons or work connected to the assessment.

9:50AM Michael Sobel-Treasurer's Report:

Hello Everyone-

1. Through December 31st revenue column we are about 21,000 Family Giving.
 - a. Just to let you know there were some donations given at the end of the year but it doesn't hit our accounts until January.
 - b. There is about another 9000 January 1-3rd so that number is a little bit higher but it will be reflected next month. Through December we are 24% of our budget for Family Giving.
 - c. We are a total revenue of 32,000 which is 15% of our budget. On the expenditures side, we spent 18% on Academic support, 26% on general admin expenses, PTA expenses are 36%, our community event expenses are 39% and if you go to the end of the expenditure column, our total expenditures are 33,000 which comes out to 16% of our budget which matches our revenue percentage of our budget. Right now we have a net revenue of -1000 dollars.
 - e. We do have 352,000 in the bank. If you have any questions, email me at PTATreasurer@75Morton.org

9:55AM

1. Maya-Our next PTA meeting, we are going to be adjusting our budget to be conservative.
 - a. Our admin didn't have to pay some additional funds for students so we will be able to take down a lot of our classroom supplies, books and line items in order for us to meet and break even at the end of the year so expect more information on that in the February meeting. Any other questions?

9:57AM

1. Rebecca-Past Events and Initiatives
 - a. We had a really nice Teachers/Staff Holiday gift giving that went quite well. Thank you Deborah for managing. That and distributing it to our teachers, they were really thrilled and made their holiday super special and thank you all for giving so generously.
 - b. Magician Evan- For 6th graders- We had a great turn out and 6th graders had a lot of fun.
 - c. Coat and Clothing Drive: We got an abundance of things. Thank you all for donating. We have now wrapped that up. You don't need to bring anything else in, we're good to go.
 - d. Family Giving-We are down but your generosity and every time we ask for something directly from the school and or for the teacher's gifts that we asked in December, it's beyond. It's beyond any year that we have ever had. I really just want to thank you because those teachers and the admin were so grateful. We received so much feedback and emails on how we have the best parents and the best PTA and we also with the first week back, which was a tough week, we used some of our funds to

get donuts and coffee for the teachers and we have done this before but I just have to say, I have never seen teachers so excited before about getting donuts before. That's just how rough the first week back was for them. They were so grateful.

Principal Valerie: To be fair, they were also really good donuts. They weren't like Dunkin Donuts but yes the teachers were so thankful.

2. Maya- Events- Due to the spike, events that we were going to do, are now pushed to later in the Spring to be safe and conscious. We are moving our in-person events to

a. April & May so we can have the yard as back up options.

b. We are doing a series of more virtual events for the next couple of months and the first one will be the cooking class with Cara Buffalino-Silman of Fresh Made, a parent t our school. This year we are going to do 3 cooking meals virtually. It's a lot of fun and kids and parents really like it. The first one is on January 25th-You should have gotten a notification. It will be held from 5-6PM. All the ingredients are there and it's going to be pasta making.

c. Java with Jill-Same theme about keeping the community together and having conversations around topics that we need help with or are curious about. Jill has set up.

10:01AM:

1. Jill Bennett:

a. Sure, Sean Grover, who was with us a couple of months ago, is a huge hit, with families of adolescence and also families of younger students. He's really addressing the social/emotional needs of both the adults and the kids. He's going to join us the last Friday morning in January, February, March. It's the second to last Friday in February since we are on a break. We've got consistency with him. We could also bring him back subsequent to March if we'd like to. If any of you want to hear from experts in a specific field as it relates to adolescence health and wellness, please send me an email. We are always open to suggestions and would love to bring new opportunities to our communities.

2. Maya- Next event

a. we are securing info on that- Wine Tasting Bringing back the Wine Tasting with Verve. For the grown ups. It's a great event for the grown ups. The sommelier will take us through old vs. new wine making that's going to be February 9th. We will get more details on that as we roll it out.

b. Stomping Ground Picture Day- On February 15th, the whole school, your child's picture will be taken as their school photo and we will also send a reminder out. Untouched, you need to come camera ready.

Jill- We will do this in the gym. We will be able to have the gym the whole day where we can space out and be safe while they take the pictures. Just make your kids are prepared.

Maya- D & I Ken and Renee- will have confirmed one session in March and one session in April with them. Those are other virtual conversations that we will be having. I see Bruce who will be giving us the SLT update.

10:03 AM:

1. Bruce SLT Update

a. Hi Maya & Everybody- SLT met last Wednesday. We do our meetings a week before the PTA. We devoted much of our time to the topic of the complexity and fluidity of Covid roles and policies and procedures and the challenges faced both by parents and administrations and teachers and we talked about ways, the SLT can try to address and relieve some of that pressure on the school.

b. One category-Understandable or frustration or perhaps the not understanding the policy environment and the school fielding all of that. Maybe not being the best entity of fielding those types of inbounds. We talked about how we might be able to help re-direct some of that.

c. We also discussed what we might consider doing to try to help both parents and the school in terms of information flow and maybe a webinar or other things that we might be able to do to try to alleviate the confusion/complexity.

10:05AM:

Maya- Yes we have seen a gap of communication at times from the DOE to the administration. Sometimes having to pivot or reinstate a new policy that they just submitted to us at 9PM on Sunday for Monday. O'neil who is the representative for the school will be included in those emails. Even if she doesn't always have the answers she's a different outlet and a different network directly to the DOE and will help share our concerns -our opinions and perspective. It's just another way for us to have conversations about our concerns.

Any other questions before we Adjourn this meeting?

That is it for our January PTA meeting. Thank you all!