

**PTA General Meeting Minutes**  
**March 15, 2023 at 9:00 am**  
**via Zoom**

I. Call to Order

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

III. Principal's Report

A. Safety presentation by Valerie Leak [9:05am]. Addressed the emergency evacuation of the school building yesterday, 3/14, in response to an anonymous "non-credible" threat, which Valerie had already notified parents of in several school-wide emails sent yesterday.

- Disclaimer: Valerie is not allowed to share more details about the threat, per DOE policies.
- Sequence of Events: Valerie was notified of a threat yesterday afternoon. She called 911 and initiated the "evacuation alarm" (which is like a fire alarm). Police and 75 Morton's Building Response Team ("BRT"), led by Katie Altman, evacuated all students from the building following school safety plan which had been practiced in drills before. Students were relocated to PS 3 auditorium. Police did a comprehensive sweep of the 75 Morton building and determined the threat was not credible. Parents were notified by email to pick up students from PS 3. Per DOE's Reunification Plan policy, students were not permitted to self-dismiss. Last student was picked up from PS 3 at 8:50pm.
- Appreciations: Thanks to Staff and BRT team; they did a great job. Entire school evacuated in under 5 min. Very proud of overall response.
- Abundance of caution: Safety first. We never want to "under respond." Evacuation caused some disruption and frustration, but school and police protocol is to take all threats seriously and treat them as real until proven otherwise.
- Talking about what happened: Students are curious and will be discussing what happened in advisory (including sequence of events, feelings, observations). Counselors are available today and were also available to talk to yesterday at PS 3.

B. Valerie opened the floor to parents [9:16am]. Parents commented with many thank yous, personal thoughts, suggestions, and questions:

- Blue Card Q: Who was allowed to pick up yesterday? Mixed messaging indicated it must be a family member, someone listed on Blue Card or anyone with written permission. A: Anyone on Blue Card. Although they allowed some pickups yesterday with permission via text/email, in general Blue Cards rule.
- Email notification Q: Why didn't I get yesterday's emails? A: Everyone should have signed up for emails through PTA membership toolkit. Parents should be getting 2-3 emails a week, including Valerie's weekly newsletter and the invitation to this PTA

meeting. Contact PTA if you don't get these. Spread the word that people should sign up.

- Text alert Q: Can we get text notifications in the future? A: Last year PTA paid for Remind app for this purpose; it is expensive but PTA is revisiting issue of using it again. DOE is also working on a text message alert system citywide. There will be a debrief with district safety director and superintendent, which will include what was done right and lessons learned; debrief will include discussion of messaging system
- Building evacuation Qs: Multiple. A: Situation was chaotic because alarm rang during a class change. Protocol was followed. Teachers evacuate with list of students they are responsible for under the safety plan. Evacuating safely asap was the main concern so there was no time for students to get stuff from their lockers, even coats or phones. Students were moved to PS 3 quickly so they wouldn't have to wait outside. Bad timing that it was cold and snowing. Some parents voiced concerns about teachers responding too slowly or yelling at students. Understand that teachers were under stress. Apologies to any student who feels they were treated rudely. Reach out to Valerie about teacher specific concerns.
- Phone Q: Why couldn't students use their phones? A: [see above Q re: lockers] School policy is for phones to be locked in Yondr bags. There was a plan for this. Valerie brought unlocking magnets to PS 3 per the plan. Students had access to phones (either their own or others) and the school had contact information for everyone's families. Also don't want students to communicate evacuation location to families until police advise.
- False threat Q: What happened? What are we doing about it? A: Valerie can't comment [see disclaimer, III. A.]. Police know more details than she does. Police are investigating source of threat and school taking steps to prevent it happening again. One parent noted threat was likely made from within the school. Another suggested reinforcing with kids that words matter, threats are taken seriously and are not a joking matter.
- Lessons Learned - How families can help: Update Blue Cards with current authorized pickup people via NY Schools Account. Kids should memorize parents' phone numbers and their own addresses.
- Student support discussion: Q: Students had a difficult day. There was a shooter drill in the AM. Some were crying at PS 3. How much information should we share with our kids and can you provide some talking points? A: Reinforce that safety is the top concern. Reinforce the importance of listening to and following instructions in an emergency. Parents should ask kids if they are OK; this provides a space and opening even if they just say they're OK. Parents should pay attention to any changes with kids (ex. increased anxiety, withdrawal, etc.). School will, too. Email school if you want a counselor. Parents commented and Valerie agreed that parents should remain calm in front of their kids. Parent Rachel Colon suggested psychoeducation regarding fight or flight responses to stressful or frightening situations and shared nctsn.org as a resource.

C. Wrap up [9:47am]. Any further Qs, Valerie, Hope and Katie are available. PTA member noted great turnout (60) for this meeting; keep coming to meetings. Valerie and Katie left the call after President's Report as did about 20 attendees.

IV. Treasurers' Report. Presented by Florin Dorobantu [9:49am]. Uneventful month. Very few direct appeal donations but there were multiple other "asks" such as bowling field trip fees, which paid for the field trips and didn't cost the PTA anything. Biggest expense was \$2800 for online auction platform.

V. Presidents' Report Presented by Rebecca and Corinne [9:53am]

- a. Special Election for PTA Executive Board Co-Secretary [scheduled but not discussed](#)
- b. Nomination Committee (2 members) for PTA Board Members for 2023-2024 [scheduled but not discussed](#)
- c. Upcoming Events & Initiatives
  - i. Auction Event, March 23rd 6-10pm [bidpal.net/75morton](http://bidpal.net/75morton). [Come! Buy tickets. Or volunteer. Or email Hope. We want as many people as possible. Fun music.](#)
  - ii. Coffee Talk w/ Hope [Scheduled: 6pm Zoom session for parents discussing test anxiety with speaker from Floating Hospital, an org that speaks to parents and students citywide on various topics. Same org is having a session on vaping for all students on 3/20.](#)
  - iii. Vote on new fundraising event: Open Mic by Leanne Friedman; [PTA bylaws require general membership approval of any new fundraiser. Event planned for 4/27 with a \\$10 suggested donation. Leanne only needs about \\$50for snacks. Students will audition to perform. All students and parents are invited to attend. Approved with no objections. This event is separate from an in-school talent show organized by teachers scheduled for 5/24.](#)
  - iv. Movie Night: March 31st 6pm. [Permission slip form, payment form and movie vote form \(where students can choose between two options\) have already gone out. \\$10 suggested admission will cover admission, pizza and popcorn.](#)

VI. School Leadership Team Report [SLT is discussing how to implement new DOE advanced math curriculum at 75 Morton.](#)

VII. Committees

- a. Yearbook Committee: [Need pictures and volunteers for layout and editing. Needs to be 40% done by April 1 printing preview.](#)
- b. 8th Grade Committee [Ongoing.](#)

VIII. Manhattan Youth - Cynthia De Leon. [10:02am] [Third session just started. Spring Break camp planned for April 10-14; details being sent out soon. Baseball tryouts moved to next Tuesday due to evacuation yesterday.](#)

IX. Old Business [Picture day retake 3/29. Blue Cards on school website; Hope may put link in weekly newsletter, too.](#)

X. New Business. [Gardening committee with Olivia. Volunteer. Spring bulb planting soon; date\(s\) tbd, time: 3pm.](#)

XI. Adjournment [10:05am](#)

