

PTA Meeting

April 19, 2023 at 9:00 am

Meeting Minutes

- I. Call to Order 9:05 am
 - a. Welcome
 - b. Reading of the Minutes Motion to waive reading of March minutes; all approved
- II. Principal's Report – School safety 9:07 am
 - a. School updates: ELA state testing is today and tomorrow; math is May 2-3. The school tries not to make it stressful. On May 2-3 8th Graders will take practice Living Environment and Algebra Regents instead. Math Academy is going well; positive feedback; will continue next year. Challenge Day for 8th Grade was week of April 3; purpose is to bring students together and do a “climate reset,” break down barriers, create bonds; overall positive experience. Valerie surveyed 8th Graders including asking what grades would benefit from doing Challenge Day in the future.
 - b. Safety – focus of today's meeting 9:11 am
 - i. City-Wide Behavioral Expectations to Support Student Learning: DOE document detailing DOE policies that Valerie shared via email link ahead of the meeting and portions of via screen sharing. Policy includes lists of infractions sorted by level of severity followed by a list of ways that schools can address them. Responses can include Supports & Interventions AND/OR Disciplinary Responses; up to school to decide.
 - A. Example: Using a slur based on race, ethnicity, etc. is a Level 3 Infraction. If it's the first time or second time, our school might do a referral to counseling for bullying and use restorative practice. If the behavior continues, then maybe a classroom removal or a principal's or superintendent's suspension.
 - B. Goal is to change student behavior/get them to make better choices. Sometimes this takes support, sometimes discipline.
 - ii. Suspensions and Removals: Valerie shared an anecdote from the school she attended in the late 90s which had a zero tolerance policy; students were expelled for one infraction. Schools have moved away from extreme punishment. Goal as educators is to teach children and

for them to learn from their mistakes. No one is just expelled under DOE policies.

- A. Removals from classroom- for a period or a day. Ex. maybe if a student cursed at a teacher. Then there would be a reentry meeting before returning.
 - B. Principal's Suspension – more serious. Student does school work in the school building; 1-5 days.
 - C. Superintendent's Suspension- most serious; less common than others. Students do not come to school building and must attend a suspension site and then have a hearing.
- iii. Interventions: “Just punishment” doesn't work, we need interventions. Most commonly used at Morton are: conferences with teachers, meetings with families, restorative circles, counseling, referral to outside resources, PBIS (positive behavioral interventions and support). There is currently a program some students are participating in with positive rewards for students who need it; behavior tracker; Community Based Organization and YCO involvement and mentoring (ex. #sherules, Boys2Men)
- iv. CVS Warnings and Strikes. 75 Morton System. CVS stands for “Calm Voices low and Straight to class.” CVS warnings are given for things like running, screaming, lateness for class, etc. 3 CVS warnings = 1 strike = a lunch detention or afterschool detention and contacting parents. There also many non-CVS behavioral strikes, ex. fo disrespectful language. Lots of strikes = no out-lunch, trips or activities. Also have positive behavioral support, ex. thunder claps, elevator pass prizes, advisory Olympics, etc.
- v. Safety Support Staff
- A. Officers: Williams and Dones; they are great. Youth Community Officers from 6th precinct increased from 2 to 6 (increase in YCOs at all city schools).
 - B. School Safety Agents: Level 3 Hyland, SSA Sarvis, SSA Burgos, SSA Reddish
 - C. Dean Val Boos, AP Katie Altman
 - D. School Aides: Will, Kay, Lupe, Moises, Dora, Jennifer. Responsible for a lot of “hidden work” throughout the building, lunchroom supervision, etc.

- vi. Question: Is it true some teachers give a lot more CVS warnings than others? Valerie: Yes, there are general standards but some teachers are stricter than others. There's an ongoing conversation to address consistency, which makes system more effective. Valerie encourages teachers to document everything, so for example, a teacher can show that a student is often late instead of just saying they are always late with no CVS documentation.
- vii. Question: Any update on the big fight in January? Valerie: There was a fight between two groups of students. The conflict has stopped. She can't say anything else because of privacy concerns. Can't give an update or details. Working with YCOs at dismissal to keep an eye on and disperse kids.
- viii. Question: Will changes to city budget affect number of SSAs? Valerie: She would be shocked if we lost any SSAs. She has heard that a new school of SSAs graduates in May and that the mayor wants to increase SSAs overall.
- ix. Question: How do you determine infraction levels objectively and/or when there are conflicting claims and interpretations? Valerie: Investigate, interview students, look at video, make determinations. The school follows procedures and addresses every issue, not necessarily effectively, but they try, it can be complicated. When she described the big fight as a conflict between two groups of students she did not mean to downplay it. The fight was actually serious with serious consequences. She can't say what the "serious consequences" were.
- x. Question: Update on the threat that caused building evacuation? Valerie: Can't talk about this. There is no credible threat.
- xi. Question: Update on getting and using Remind app for emergency notification to parents? Hope: DOE is launching this city-wide soon, this school year. She has been in touch with Jennifer Greenblatt. Thinks it will be a great tool. Valerie: We looked into getting and paying for app without waiting on DOE but they required a 5 year commitment which we can't do.

III. Treasurer's Report 9:44am. Florin Dorobantu shared snapshot of financials. Main revenue and expense items were for auction. Net revenue for month of \$16K.

IV. Presidents' Report 9:48am

- a. Elections for members of PTA Board & SLT 2023-2024 School Year Need people to volunteer to run for Executive Board positions- 1st VP(s), 2nd VP(s), Treasurer(s), Secretary/ies, Members-at-Large. Corinne

Moreno-Geis and Lili Feliciano will run as Co-Presidents. Corinne wants to change bylaws so that 3 Members-at-Large spots are saved for incoming 6th Grade parents. Also SLT spots available. Let Corinne know if you're interested or know anyone who may be. PTA positions are 2 year commitments but you need to run each year. SLT positions are for 2 years but two 8th Grade parents are leaving.

- b. Budget Committee EB meeting with Admin within next month to discuss next year. Present budget in May, vote in June. Fundraising has dipped very low so drastic changes are expected to budget. Email PTA if you want to be on committee. Hope: Don't know number of new students for next year yet. Valerie: Fill out school survey, numbers are very low.
- c. Upcoming Events & Initiatives Lots of events coming up, need lots of volunteers.
 - i. Parent Workshops – Hope Flamm Next coffee talk is 4/27 at 9:30am. Open mic, talk about anything.
 - ii. Teacher Appreciation Week – May 1st to 5th Will include treats, posting messages of gratitude and a catered build your own taco bar on rooftop (Mon or Thurs). Volunteers needed.
 - iii. 7th Grade Spring Fling – May 19 @5:30pm 7th Graders have been waiting for an event for a long time! Need volunteers and ideas for games and activities.
 - iv. Art Show – May 18 @ 6pm Major event, elaborate setup, need lots of manpower, lots of art to hang up.
 - v. Open Mic – April 27 by Leanne Friedman Leanne: 4pm in library. Students will do performances, poetry, monologues, etc. Need volunteers from 3-6pm. Rehearsals have been great. Sliding scale suggested donation of \$10-20, hopefully will raise some \$. Parents required to come with kids because there are no staff chaperones. If a student wants to come and doesn't have a chaperone talk to Leanne ahead of time and she'll figure something out (chaperone can be a teacher). There are about 20 acts ranging from 30 seconds to several minutes, show will be approx. 1 hr.
1. 8th Grade Committee
 - a. Class Trip
 - b. Graduation
 - c. Graduation Party Tuesday June 20 4-6pm Cellar Dog confirmed

2. Yearbook

- V. Old Business Corinne: auction event was poorly attended but it was very good. Two Charity Buzz items raised \$18K so total auction amount raised was about \$50K.
- VI. New Business Hope: Donna has ordered new books for the library and wants parent volunteers to help organize old books and make room. Jennifer Greenblatt asked Hope to announced that any parents who want to be part of a panel for educational policy (like SLT at DOE level) should apply by Sunday 4/23. Rebecca: Talent show and Maker Fair coming up late May.
- VII. Adjournment 10:15am