



TALENTED & GIFTED
SCHOOL FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS (M012)

PARENT HANDBOOK

VERSION 1.1



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TAG GENERAL INFORMATION



TALENTED & GIFTED SCHOOL FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS (TAG)

204 E. 109 St. (between 2nd and 3rd Avenues)

New York, NY 10029

Telephone: (212) 860-6003

Fax: (212) 831-1842

Public Transportation to TAG:

- Closest MTA subway stop: the 6 train to the 110th St. Station
- Closest MTA buses: M15 uptown (on 3rd Avenue); M102/M103 downtown (on 2nd Avenue); all buses stop at East 109th Street.

The Talented and Gifted School for Young Scholars is located in East Harlem. Founded in 1999 as an elementary school, and expanded in 2004 to include a middle school, TAG serves students in grades K-8. Students must pass an admissions exam to gain acceptance, as per gifted and talented requirements set forth by the New York City Department of Education. TAG is an unzoned school that accepts qualified applicants from all boroughs - one of five “citywide” gifted and talented schools. Its population varies from year to year, but typically it educates about 530 students in its nine grades.

TAG incorporates best instructional practices from across the nation, including those aimed at gifted and talented students. Differentiated instruction for accelerated and struggling learners is an essential part of school culture. That culture blends traditional elements, such as school uniforms and routine homework, with progressive elements, such as group work and student-centered (as opposed to teacher-centered) classrooms.

TAG 8th graders take Regents exams in science, math, and Spanish, and many of its 8th graders gain acceptance into the city’s specialized high schools and private schools, including Stuyvesant, Bronx High School of Science, Brooklyn Technical, Beacon, and Hunter, among many others.

TAG’S BUILDING

TAG shares its building with three other schools: Global Neighborhood Secondary School (grades 6-8), Esperanza Preparatory Academy (grades 6-11; 12th grade to be added in 2015-16), and P.S. 138 (The Burke School is a District 75 School). The schools function independently of one another, each with its own classrooms and hallways used only by its respective students and staff. School principals coordinate lunch times, assemblies, drop-off, and dismissal to ensure the safety of all students.

Shared building facilities include the 529-seat auditorium; the gymnasium, which includes a full-sized basketball court; outdoor playgrounds; and the cafeteria. Principals coordinate the use of each facility so that only students from one school are using it at any one time.

The upper yards behind the school building, as well as the play area to its west bordering 3rd Avenue, are part of Poor Richard’s Park, property of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department. Concerns about care or maintenance can be directed to Joe Lamantia, Parks District #11 supervisor, at 212-410-2818 or Joe.lamantia@parks.nyc.gov. The property number of Poor Richard’s Park is M230.

TAG CONTACT INFORMATION



TAG ADMINISTRATION

Please contact Ms. Miriam Bruno, the parent coordinator, at mbruno3@school.nyc.gov, for all school matters.

TELEPHONE

The school's main phone number is 212-860-6003. Fax: 212-831-1842.

FACULTY

Teachers will provide an email address for direct contact. Parents can send the teacher a note in your child's daily homework folder. Teachers accompany students to pickup in the yard after school and are generally available then for informal chats. Parents with problems that remain unresolved can speak with Ms. Bruno, the parent coordinator.

COUNSELING

Ms. Michelle Yrigoyen, guidance counselor (myrigoyen@schools.nyc.gov), and Erica Arias, community coordinator (earias@schools.nyc.gov), are contacts in matters regarding counseling or discipline. The NYC DOE discipline code is available online at <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/DisciplineCode/default.htm>

TAG WEBSITE

The school maintains a website at www.tagscholars.com

IF YOU NEED HELP COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH

The city's Department of Education offers free telephone interpretation services. They are available to all DOE personnel who come into contact with limited-English-proficient parents. Services are available between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays). Hours are extended during scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Call 718-752-7373 for interpretation services in 150 languages. Press "4" to request an interpreter.

SCHOOL LOGISTICS



SCHOOL HOURS

As of the July 2014, the TAG school day for 2014-15 is scheduled to run from 8:05 a.m.-2:25 p.m.

CALENDAR

The first day of school is Thursday, September 4, 2014. (See section below for detailed “First day of school” information.) School holidays and early dismissal days will be listed on calendars students will take home in their red homework folders at the beginning of each month. They are also available online on the DOE calendar (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Calendar/2014-2015+School+Year+Calendars> or <http://goo.gl/1AzukR>). If the school is scheduled to dismiss students early, families will be contacted.

DELAYS OR UNEXPECTED CLOSINGS

“Notify NYC” has partnered with the New York City Department of Education to provide expanded information on school delays, closings, and early dismissals. To enroll go to www.nyc.gov/notifynyc

CLASS PERIODS

A typical school day has eight periods, including lunch. The 2014 – 2015 bell schedule is:

- 1st Period 8:05 AM - 8:50 AM
- 2nd Period 8:52 AM - 9:37 AM
- 3rd Period 9:39 AM - 10:24 AM
- 4th Period 10:26 AM -11:11 AM
- 5th Period 11:14 AM - 12:04 PM (Lunch)
- 6th Period 12:06 PM - 12:51 PM
- 7th Period 12:53 PM - 1:38 PM
- 8th Period 1:40 PM - 2:25 PM

MEALS

Free breakfast provided by the DOE is available in the cafeteria from 7:30am to 7:50 a.m. Check with classroom teachers for the timing of lunch, which lasts 50 minutes. The DOE provides free lunches to qualified students; students who do not qualify and eat DOE lunches will receive a bill in their homework folder prepared by Dalia Rivera, school assistant. Payment must be made by check or money order (no cash) made out to “TAG School.” Parents can also provide their children’s lunch in a lunchbox or brown paper bag; no refrigerator or microwave is available.

For children with allergies, please provide three copies of the student’s photo and list of allergies to Ms. Bruno, the parent coordinator. Photos will be posted for the school staff in case medical action must be taken; the information will also be kept on file in the school health center.

Lunch sign up: <http://goo.gl/veQvBd>. School Menus: <http://goo.gl/AdUkKv>

RECESS

A daily recess period of approximately 25 minutes is held in the school yards during the lunch hour. Students alternate eating in the cafeteria and playing in the school yards by grade, with K-4 students eating and playing together and 5-8 students eating and playing together. School yards are only accessible to TAG students during these periods; only kindergarten children play in the lower yard. A school safety officer and school aide chaperon the children. Certified staff working with the organization Physical Education Plus facilitate voluntary games throughout the playground. Equipment includes tennis rackets, balls, jump ropes, and more. Recess is held outdoors unless the weather is inclement, in which case students are expected to read quietly. (Parents should send students to school with a book.) Students are expected to have warm outerwear on cold days. Personal sporting goods such as balls or jump ropes must be approved by the child's teacher and Erica Arias, community coordinator. Items must be labeled with the child's name and classroom. The school is not responsible for lost items.

ATTENDANCE

- **Morning drop-off:** All students must enter through the main entrance on 109th Street near 2nd Avenue. Students can be dropped off as early as 7:30 a.m. A free breakfast provided by the DOE is available in the cafeteria from 7:30-7:50 a.m.
- **Late arrivals:** Late-arriving students come to the main entrance to sign in and get a late pass to present to the teacher. Families with a pattern of late arrival to school will be contacted by the attendance office, as per DOE guidelines.
- **Afternoon dismissal:** Students not traveling by bus will be escorted by teachers to the play yard behind the school for dismissal. Students will be released only to adults listed on their family's "blue card" of emergency information, which is held in the main office. All late pickups will be registered in the school log. Patterns of late pickup will be brought to the administration's attention.
- **Absences:** If your child is absent, please send a note to school upon your child's return.
- **Early pickup:** To pick up your child early, go to the main office, where your child will be called to meet you. Only persons listed on each student's "blue card" in the main office will be allowed to pick up the child. Every pickup person must be at least 18 years old.



Red arrows mark the entrances to the lower play yard, site of the first-morning drop-off at 7:30 a.m. and routine afternoon pickup at 2:25 p.m. The cafeteria entrance will not be open in the mornings; TAG students must enter through the main entrance.

Point A: The Cafeteria entrance.

Point B: The small backyard. Teachers will dismiss students from this location regardless of weather conditions.

TRANSPORTATION



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Certain Manhattan residents are eligible for yellow bus service to TAG; DOE eligibility requirements vary according to grade and distance from school. Residents not served by yellow buses qualify for student MetroCards, good for three free subway or public bus rides each school day. Yellow bus and student MetroCard application forms can be obtained from any school assistant in the main office. Students who are approved for the yellow school bus are expected to ride the bus to and from school daily. If your child will not be riding the bus in the afternoon, you will have to come to the TAG main office prior to the official dismissal time to pick them up.

For more MetroCard information, visit <http://goo.gl/CKNiA3>. The DOE chancellor's regulations on transportation can be found at <http://goo.gl/sdDgfd>.

PRIVATE BUSING

Transportation remains one of the great challenges of a citywide school. Many private bus companies exist, but they will establish a route only if enough students sign up to make the run profitable. Several TAG families have united to establish private bus routes from areas of northwestern Manhattan and central Queens. The PTA is working to connect parents in other neighborhoods to help them link with companies to establish working routes for the 2014-15 year.

If you have interest in a private bus service and live in Manhattan, Brooklyn, or the Bronx, contact Debasish Das (ddas710@gmail.com) or Jennifer Stelwagon (jcoopermd@yahoo.com) for more information. If you live in Queens, contact Sundar Mudaliar (sundarmudaliar@yahoo.com) or Natasha Davis (ndavis220@hotmail.com).
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesAndEligibility/StudentMetrocards/default.html>

BUS PICKUP AND DROP-OFF

DOE contracted buses and private bus companies must drop off students in front of the main school entrance. If available, a volunteer parent will usher students into the building and into the care of school staff. A bus aide or school staff member will usher your child to the correct bus at the end of the school day. Bus service is generally available on half days.

For student safety, drivers are asked to not stand or double park in front of the main entrance, where school buses drop off and pick up students. Parking on the school block is limited, with only a small number of legal parking spaces.



TAG's school building is staffed by a team of NYPD school safety officers. All visitors during school hours, including classroom volunteers, must sign in with a school safety officer at the lobby's security desk. Visitors must show proper ID (such as a driver's license, passport, or consulate identity card), regardless of how many times they have entered the building. Once signed in, visitors must wear a stick-on badge indicating which school they are visiting. TAG visitors must report to the main office (room 109) for assistance from a school aide, or walk directly to their meeting or event. Visitors are not allowed to roam the school corridors or look into classrooms without permission. Visitors must enter and exit the building through the main doors near the security desk.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

TAG strictly follows the NYC DOE's General Response Protocol. Student compliance is paramount for the safety of all. You can review the protocol online and discuss these procedures with your child (<http://goo.gl/rVWdd9>).
<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/30CB88A1-110E-4A6F-81A8-E7770BBC42EE/0/GRPOnePageSummary.pdf>

SCHOOL POLICIES



UNIFORMS

Students are expected to wear uniforms each day, including the first day of school. Students are allowed to dress down (non-uniform) on their birthdays. The PTA website has a uniform guide: www.tagscholarspta.org/uniform-guide.html

Uniforms for girls and boys may be purchased at Cookie's Kids, Lands End, or Children's Place (websites listed below). At Cookie's Kids, use TAG's school locator #1241. Coupons offering a 10 percent discount at Cookie's Kids are available in Ms. Bruno's office.

<http://www.landsend.com/shop/school-uniforms/-/N-g54>

- Children's Place: www.childrensplace.com
- Cookie's Kids: <http://goo.gl/tnN7mz>
- Land's End: <http://goo.gl/11KPAz>

Enter the coupon code TAGES (elementary school) or TAGMS (middle school) at checkout to raise funds for the PTA.

Students must wear a gym uniform one day each week on their class's gym day; they will not be allowed to change into or out of the uniform. Gym day will be announced during the first week of school. Gym uniforms can be purchased at the PTA website (www.tagscholarspta.org/tagwear-orders.html) and picked up at Ms. Bruno's office. Contact the PTA for distribution dates.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Chancellor's Regulation A-412, Section V, prohibits electronic devices, including cell phones, in school. Chancellor's regulations are available online (<http://goo.gl/AJpqsZ>).

LOST AND FOUND

Most teachers have lost & found bins in their classrooms. The school's lost & found bin is a large grey container located in Ms. Bruno's office. The bin is regularly emptied and its contents given to the Salvation Army, so please search for your belongings promptly.

Iron-on name labels can be useful in identifying lost items. Labels can be purchased at www.tag.mabelslabels.com; a percentage of each purchase will be donated to the PTA.

SIBLING POLICY

Current applicants for citywide gifted and talented schools like TAG will be granted priority if they have a sibling enrolled at the elementary school. While for the past several years only applicants scoring in the 99th percentile have been admitted to citywide schools, siblings will be granted placement priority if they score in the 97th percentile or higher. Families whose top priority is to have children educated together should list the sibling's school as their first choice. If you rank another program as a higher choice, your child may be placed in that school.

DOE regulations can change. For middle school policies and more information on applying to gifted and talented programs, check <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/GiftedandTalented/default.htm>.



TAG benefits from an on-site health center run by Mount Sinai Medical Center. The clinic is open on school days from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Phone: 212-360-7390. Fax: 212-722-2731. Elyse Meltzer (elyse.meltzer@mountsinai.org) RNC, MSN, CPNP, provides the following services:

- Primary care and preventive health services, including (a) comprehensive physical examinations, including those for sports, camps, and new admissions; (b) mandated school health services, including screenings for vision, hearing, asthma, obesity, scoliosis, or tuberculosis; and (c) medical care and treatment for chronic illness and disease, including dispensing and prescribing of medications.
- First aid care to all students registered in the building.
- Emergency care to anyone in need on school premises.

To receive attention other than emergency or first aid care, including physicals, routine medication, and flu vaccinations, children must be registered in the health center's database.

For students needing routine medication, parents must fill out form #504 at the nurse's office. Medication must be submitted to the school nurse, along with an administration directions form signed by a physician. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy's label with the child's name and dosage instruction.

All ill or injured students are directed to report to the health center. Parents or other persons designated on the school's emergency contact card will be contacted by the school nurse practitioner if it is deemed necessary.

For more details, visit the DOE website on school-based health centers (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Health/SBHC/SBHC.htm> or <http://goo.gl/CCcSA4>).



COMMON CORE

New York State has adopted federal Common Core State Standards, which outline expected knowledge and skills in English language arts and mathematics for students in each grade from pre-K through 12th. Developed at the national level but adopted and adapted separately by each state, the standards are meant to set expectations for student learning and to ensure that students learn the same skills while being prepared for college and careers. Standardized tests are designed to assess student progress in meeting Common Core standards. For more information, visit www.engageny.org/parent-and-family-resources.

TESTING

Throughout the academic year students in all grades take subject tests and quizzes. Standardized New York State Common Core-based tests are given in the spring after the second marking period to all students in 3rd through 8th grades. Like all New York schools, TAG is rated in part based upon student test performance, so stakes are high. School administrators and teachers give parent orientations about the exams.

HOMEWORK

TAG students receive significant amounts of homework, beginning the first week of kindergarten. Length of nightly homework varies; in kindergarten, students who don't yet read may spend an hour or more each night. Each week teachers include a homework packet in students' red homework folders. Teachers will communicate assignment due dates.

Teachers typically communicate via the homework packet's cover sheet. They may include information about tests, quizzes, field trips, or special announcements.

At the end of each academic year, students will be given a summer homework packet to be returned the first day of the fall semester.

GRADING

Student report cards are divided into core subject areas studied in a child's home class (for elementary grades, reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies) and cluster classes held outside of the home class once or twice each week (elementary students attend art, gym, science, and technology). The report card also assesses students by TAG's behavioral and community standards (including listening, speaking, and behaviors that promote learning).

Reflecting Common Core assessment standards for each grade, the report card uses a scale of 1-4 to assess progress.

Level 4 – Exceeds standards

Level 3 – Meets standards

Level 2 – Approaches standards

Level 1 – Below standards



Report cards and progress reports are distributed at parent-teacher conferences in November, March, and June. All appointments must be scheduled online through the official school website, www.tagscholars.com. Login information will be provided in a sealed envelope in the red homework folder prior to the first parent-teacher conference.

PUPIL PATH

Pupil Path is a system in which TAG teachers communicate with families. It allows families to view important data such as attendance records, class schedules, assignment due dates and grades, graduation eligibility, class announcements, and more. Register at pupilpath.skedula.com by clicking “Are you a new user?” and completing the information. Teachers will send an email with a link; after registering, click on the link. Ms. Bruno can assist with any technical difficulties. The Pupil Path app is currently available on iTunes; the Android version is in development.

ARIS

The DOE’s Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) provides a location where educators and families can study important information about students. The parent link offers families up-to-date academic data in nine languages, including explanations of Common Core test results. Register at www.arisparentlink.org with an email address, student ID number (OSIS#), and a temporary password, which will be provided by Ms. Bruno.

CLUSTER CLASSES

In addition to studying core subjects with teachers in their main classrooms, elementary students attend “cluster classes” in other classrooms once or twice each week. Those subjects include art, gym, science, and technology.

MUSIC

TAG’s music program has two stages. In grades K-3, students will learn about rhythm, melody, movement, singing, and sight reading. In 4th grade, students enter instrument training, first on the recorder, then on a band instrument of their choice, which they continue through 8th grade. TAG has an accomplished middle-school band program, which includes the highly regarded Latin Jazz Ensemble, which routinely plays at events across New York City.

COMPUTERS

Computers are available for student use in the technology lab, which students usually attend for two periods per week. Projects there include basic computer programming and robotics. Students are not allowed to download or upload anything onto DOE computers.



FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the year, class trips are organized to reinforce and enrich classroom learning. Trips, including any costs and any need for parent chaperons, will be announced in your child's red homework folder. No one will be allowed to travel without a signed parent permission slip (no permission emails).

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS



AT TAG

The school's on-site after-school program is operated by the Vanderbilt YMCA. It is open to TAG students only and, so long as funding is allocated, remains free of charge. YMCA staff work in TAG classrooms, with students divided by grades, supervising homework and offering enrichment activities such as art, crafts, drama, and recreation. The Vanderbilt YMCA also offers holiday camps and summer camp when school is out of session. To register or ask questions, contact Andrea Scott, program director (ascott@ymcanyc.org).

OTHER AFTER-SCHOOL OPTIONS

- New York City Department of Youth and Community Development has an online “afterschool program finder.” Follow the link and fill out the “Find a DCYD program” form on the right side of the page: <http://goo.gl/BWBALx>
- The Parks Department runs after-school programs: <http://goo.gl/qIVmnB>
- The Partnership for After-school Education also has a list: <http://goo.gl/k5KqI4>
- The 92nd Street Y also offers after-school programs; transportation from TAG may be arranged: <http://www.92y.org/Uptown/Afterschool-Programs.aspx>
- The SONYC-YMCA Middle School Program for grades 6-8

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergartners come to school with many levels of knowledge, and TAG aims to educate them all with differentiated curricula that address the varying strengths and weaknesses of each student. Children entering kindergarten would benefit from being able to write their names, recognize most letters of the alphabet, and count and recognize numbers 1 through 10. Additional experiences they receive at home, such as regular reading, cutting with scissors, and fine motor activities, will greatly benefit them.

The transition to kindergarten can be tough for many children. Some parents make summer play dates to help new students make friends early, easing the transition. And, since TAG students come from all over New York City, once the year starts families often devote energy to creating play dates allowing classmates to meet outside of school.

SUMMER SLIDE

The “summer slide” is a phenomenon in which some children lose reading skills during months of vacation, meaning they can begin the school year behind where they finished last spring. Reading during the summer can combat this. City libraries offer summer reading lists, making it easy for families to log completed books and measure reading time. More information is available at www.summerreading.org.

The New York Public Library’s catalog is easy to use (www.nypl.org). Library card applications can be downloaded (www.nypl.org/help/library-card) and taken to any branch, including the one closest to TAG, the Aguilar Branch at 174 East 110th St., between Lexington and 3rd avenues.

SUPPLIES

Every June, teachers hand out a list of school supplies for the upcoming academic year. (Packets may be picked up from Ms. Bruno during the summer.) Parents should purchase all listed items, which their children will use throughout the year. Supplies must be dropped off at the general office during the first week of school; boxes or bags must be labeled with the student’s name, teacher, and classroom number.

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL



THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

School resumes on Thursday, September 4, 2014 at 8:05 a.m. Kindergarten families will enter the building through the main entrance on 109th Street near 2nd Avenue. Ms. Diaz, and Ms. Sun, the Kindergarten teachers, will pick up the students in the Auditorium, and will escort them to the room K-112, and K-113. If students would like to eat breakfast, they must be here by 7:30 a.m.

The remainder of the students, 1 - 8 grades, will line up behind the school building as follows. Students in grades 1-8th must be present in the upper yard by 7:55 a.m. Teachers will be present, and class numbers will be written on the ground.

Grade 1 students: Will line up in the Lower Yard

Grades 2 - 4 students: Will line up in the Basketball Court

Grades 5 - 8 students: Will line up in the Upper Yard (open space);

All students must report in full uniform on Thursday. Third Graders will have Gym on Thursdays, therefore, they can wear the GYM uniform on the first day.

For parents who must be on their way to work early, the 7:30 a.m. drop off in the Auditorium is still in effect. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 – 7:55 a.m.

DOE SCHOOL SURVEY



Every year parents are urged to take the New York City School Survey. Questions cover academic expectations, communication, engagement, safety, and respect. Feedback is both aggregated citywide and reported for each school. Administrators can use results to better understand the school's strengths and target areas for improvement. The DOE has used the percentage of families that complete the survey as part of a school's ranking, so submitting the survey is important.

A paper survey is distributed with every midterm report card. Parents can use an 8-digit access code printed on the survey itself to fill out an online version. Those with questions or who cannot find a paper survey can call the survey hotline at 800-690-8603.

PTA GENERAL INFORMATION



The TAG Parent-Teacher Association, TAG PTA Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization designed to support and expand curricular and enrichment options for TAG students. The PTA partners with parents, teachers, and administrators to identify areas in which it can make the greatest difference; researches methods of meeting those needs; and seeks direct funding and grants to pay for them. It also monitors existing programs to ensure it meets the expectations of parents and the school.

Every TAG parent* (see note for definition) automatically becomes a PTA member and is entitled to a voice and a vote in the organization, with no dues or fees required. Each month during the school year the PTA holds a general meeting in the school cafeteria, usually on the first Tuesday evening of the month. Attendees approve, among other things, the annual budget and plans for how that money should be spent. Members are encouraged to attend.

** This manual routinely refers to “parents.” By definition this includes parents by birth or adoption, step-parents, legally appointed guardians, foster parents, and persons in parental relation to a child currently attending TAG School for Young Scholars (M012).*

www.tagscholarspta.org/bylaws.html

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Members annually elect the PTA’s executive officers, including a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. Chairs of each of the PTA’s official committees -- including audit, communications, enrichment, fundraising, and membership -- also serve on the executive board. The board meets monthly to consider committee proposals and determine the PTA’s preliminary annual budget. All members are welcome to attend executive board meetings.

ELECTIONS

In April, every parent receives a PTA nomination form. Members may nominate themselves or other parents for each of the four officer positions, or for co-officership (with another parent). The elected PTA officers include the PTA president (president@tagscholarspta.org), the PTA Vice President (vicepresident@tagscholarspta.org), the PTA Secretary: (secretary@tagscholarspta.org), and the PTA treasurer (treasurer@tagscholarspta.org). Elections are held in June. Members must be present at the June general PTA meeting to cast a vote.

COMMITTEES

Entering the 2014-15 school year, the PTA has five official committees (audit, communications, enrichment, fundraising, and membership), plus one ad hoc committee, grant writing. Committees generally meet once a month. PTA members may attend any committee meeting and join as many committees as they like.

PTA COMMITTEE INFORMATION



Most PTA work occurs at the committee level, and volunteers are always needed, including on subcommittees that focus on specific projects. Following is a brief outline of each committee's work. Enthusiastic parents created the majority of these projects during the past three years, and new ideas are always welcome.

FUNDRAISING

The fundraising committee has enjoyed remarkable growth over the past two years, more than quintupling annual income from around \$20,000 to more than \$100,000. This money, raised through a host of projects and a lot of hard work, has allowed the PTA to help TAG administrators enrich student education in many ways. (See details under Enrichment Committee.)

The committee's principal campaign is iPledge, a direct appeal campaign to which many parents donate money or time. Donors can write a check to "TAG PTA" and leave it in the "iPledge" drop box in Ms. Bruno's office. Donors can also give at the PTA website. All donations, either one time or recurring, are tax deductible since the PTA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit group.

The committee has raised additional funds the past two years through the following events: bake sales, book fairs, Candy Gram sales, dine-out events, family field trips, 5K races, a Latin jazz concert, a masquerade ball, student carnivals, student talent shows, and silent auctions.

In addition, TAG families raise cash by collecting box tops and labels from General Mills, Campbell's, and Tyson products. Staples purchases can benefit TAG through a rewards program (#2587861085). Target offers a Visa card that donates 1 percent of purchase prices to TAG. And Amazon.com enables any shopper to donate 4 percent of purchase prices to TAG by visiting through a link available at the PTA website. BJ's new membership and renewal forms are downloadable online at the PTA website. Through eScrip parents, family and acquaintances can register their grocery loyalty cards (Pathmark, Shop Rite, Foodtown, A&P, etc) , credit card (Master Card, Visa, American Express, Discover) , and debit/ATM cards. A percentage of purchases is contributed to the PTA funds.

AUDIT

This committee's existence is mandated by the PTA's non-profit status as well as its bylaws. It conducts internal audits of all PTA financial affairs, with all treasurer's records made available to its members. The committee is also charged with presenting an audit report each year to a general PTA meeting.

PTA COMMITTEE INFORMATION



ENRICHMENT

This committee determines the best ways to help bolster education for TAG students. In 2014-15, PTA funds are scheduled to be used to: hire assistant teachers for both kindergarten and first grade; pay for “Math In Focus” (Singapore Math) materials and teacher training to supplement the elementary mathematics curriculum; and Latin classes for 3rd and 4th graders; pay for Physical Education Plus staff to organize sports activities in gym classes and at recess; add chess to the K-1st grade curriculum; pay for magazines used by elementary and middle school teachers; and, new for 2014-15, create a music curriculum for K-3rd graders.

In addition, the committee has organized the following extracurricular activities:

- Piano, a fee-based, after-school series of weekly group classes led by instructors from The Piano School of NYC, with separate curricula for grades K-4 (basic skills) and grades 5-8 (more advanced, plus songwriting). Contact: Kathy Powell-Manning (kpowellmanning@gmail.com).
- Chess, an after-school, fee-based series of weekly group classes of skill levels ranging from beginning to advanced, led by instructors from NY Chess Kids. Contact: Natasha Davis (ndavis220@hotmail.com).
- Debate: Students prepare for workshops and tournaments organized by the New York City Urban Debate League’s elementary division, with events including original public speaking, interpretive public speaking, and a student congress. Contact: William Castro (osteoclasto@hotmail.com).
- Science: New for the 2014-15 school year, the group is looking to organize a trip to the 2016 U.S. Science and Engineering Festival (<http://www.usasciencefestival.org>) in Washington, D.C. Contact: William Castro (osteoclasto@hotmail.com).

MEMBERSHIP

This committee aims to, among other things, foster a sense of fellowship among TAG families and staff -- an especially important task for a community spread among New York City’s five boroughs.

Committee projects include: organizing volunteers for the first day of school; coordinating the “class parent” system to foster communication between teachers, the PTA, and families; publishing a monthly newsletter; scheduling “Coffee & Tea with Ms. C” events to enable parents to learn about TAG activities from the principal; hosting teacher and staff appreciation events; conducting tours for prospective TAG families; arranging community-building outings and events; and hosting the welcome picnic for new TAG families in the spring.

The committee also organizes the Learning Leaders program, which enables parents to attend training sessions and pass a background check so they can work directly with TAG students, either in the classroom, as playground and cafeteria monitors, or as bus escorts. Information is available at www.learningleaders.org.

PTA COMMITTEE INFORMATION



COMMUNICATIONS

This committee is responsible for providing PTA information to TAG families. It oversees the PTA website (www.tagscholarspta.org). For a detailed description of the many ways it helps distribute information, see above section entitled “PTA Communications.”

GRANT WRITING

This committee was formed in 2014 as an ad hoc committee to help the PTA and the school find and apply for grant money. Members work with the administration to identify funding priorities and grant opportunities that fit the TAG mission. Activities include meeting, researching, writing, editing, and reporting. In 2014 the committee applied for several grants and received awards totaling \$110,000 for technology from Google and from the office of the Manhattan borough president, Gale Brewer.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)

This team, consisting of five parents, five TAG faculty members, and a school administrator, create an annual set of educational goals and objectives for the school, known as a Comprehensive Educational Plan. Using that document as a guide, it must then submit a budget request and staffing plan to the city’s Department of Education.



The TAG Parent-Teacher Association has its own channels for communicating with parents. Since, under state privacy law, DOE staff cannot share information with parent associations, connecting with the PTA requires families to take affirmative steps to request information. The PTA has created three main ways to track what's going on at TAG and what the PTA is up to. For starters, we suggest:

- Joining the PTA mailing and newsletter list
- Joining the Yahoo Group (“TAG-Discussion-Group”) for informal discussion with fellow parents.
- Checking the PTA website (www.tagscholarspta.org) regularly.

PTA MAILING AND NEWSLETTER LIST

This is the PTA's mailing list, separate from that of TAG's parent coordinator, Ms. Bruno (who regularly emails school information to families). The PTA does not share email addresses with others outside of the TAG community. How to join:

1. Go to <http://goo.gl/2ySq3N> or <http://www.tagscholarspta.org/sign-up-for-updates--committees.html>

YAHOO DISCUSSION GROUP

This is a private email and online discussion group (listserv) for only TAG parents. You can post new questions, events, thoughts, or concerns, or respond to other parents' posts via email or the group page on Yahoo. Joining this takes a few more steps than the others, but it's worth it. Here's how:

1. Go to www.yahoo.com
2. Click “Sign In” (in the upper right corner)
3. If you have a Yahoo email address, sign into that account.
4. If you don't, click “Create New Account”
5. Once you're signed in, go to: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/TAG-Discussion-Group/info> (or <http://goo.gl/Irz8tp> for short)
6. Click “+ Join Group” (a small purple button below the top banner)
7. Once the administrator approves your request to join, you may want to choose to “receive daily digest” so you don't get an email every time someone posts a topic or comment.



PTA WEBSITE (www.tagscholarspta.org)

This is the PTA's own website, separate from that of the school. Here you can:

- Explore our school and our PTA, including a calendar of upcoming events
- Join our mailing and newsletter list
- Find contact information for TAG PTA's executive board
- Read about recent triumphs and current events
- Buy tickets to upcoming school concerts, trips, and more
- Buy TAGwear T-shirts and sweatpants for gym days
- Donate directly to the TAG PTA
- Follow our Amazon link to automatically donate a portion of your Amazon purchases to TAG PTA

PTA FACEBOOK PAGE

This is TAG PTA's group page – another place to check in with what's happening at the school and to chat with fellow parents. To follow updates from this page, go to www.facebook.com/TAGschoolNYC and “like” the page. You will need to be signed into a Facebook account.

PTA TWITTER STREAM

You can follow the PTA on Twitter, too! www://twitter.com/TAGPTA

CLASS PARENTS

The PTA has set up a system of class parents to serve each classroom. Class parents volunteer to serve as liaisons between the PTA, other families, and the teacher. Families will need to provide email addresses to the PTA to be included on any class parent contact list. Those interested in serving as a class parent can email membership@tagscholarspta.org.

MISCELLANEOUS

The PTA suggestion box is located in Ms. Bruno's office. Parents also have access to a computer in Ms. Bruno's office. The PTA mailbox is in the main office. Ideas and concerns can be sent to the PTA board at ptaboard@tagscholars.com.