



Talented & Gifted School For Young Scholars

Kathy Fernando
Denada Ramnishta
Co-Presidents

Pamela Simon
Mark Levin
Co-Vice Presidents

Johnae Ferguson
Anatoly Garelik
Co-Treasurers

Laura Lampert
Rasheedah Harris
Co-Secretaries

PTA Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, April 16, 2019

I. Welcome & Call to Order

- A. PTA Co-President, Kathy Fernando, called to order the TAG PTA meeting on Tuesday, April 16, at 6:17 pm in the cafeteria of the Talented and Gifted School for Young Scholars.
- B. Co-Secretary, Rasheedah Harris, made sure parents and TAG teachers signed the attendance sheets.
- C. Our non-profit tax status has been fully reinstated. We've raised approximately \$107,500 and need to raise the same amount in the next few months if we want to maintain our programs.

II. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

- A. Hard copies of the March PTA meeting minutes were distributed.
Rasheedah moved to approve the minutes. Pamela Simon made a motion to approve the March minutes; Sherri Simmons seconds. Minutes approved.

III. Nominating Committee –

- A. Co-Treasurer nominations, as former Co-Treasurer James Vasile has resigned. It will be an expedited election, with nominations taken from the floor. The term ends June 30th, the same day our end-of-year report is due. Responsibilities include but not limited to: cutting checks, reports, helping with taxes.
 1. Anatoly Garelik nominates himself; Johnae Ferguson agrees to run with him. Khristina Solano nominates herself to run with a co or by herself. Each give two minute introductions.
 - a) Anatoly Garelik has a son in 3rd grade. He is the head of finance in a small chemical company and has the proper skill set.
 - b) Johnae Ferguson has a daughter in 5th grade. She has been an active member on many committees, and Co-Treasurer since September 2018. She has expertise from prior experience in bookkeeping, finance.
 - c) Khristina Solano is the parent of a 3rd grader and has a 9th grader who graduated from TAG last year. She used to manage several banks, has finance experience, risk management, manages finances, insurance and works with accountants and billing.
 2. Pam explained we cannot have all three as Co-Treasurers as although the Chancellor's Regulations don't prohibit it, our Executive Board voted for no more than two. Yet this can be revisited in the summer with the new Executive Board.
 3. Voting takes place on write-in ballots which are handed out and collected.
- B. Co-Communications nominations, as additional help is needed. Responsibilities include maintaining parent contact information, creating/sending the monthly newsletter, keeping parents in the loop, calendar. Current VP

Rajesh Jaramalan says his workload has increased and he would like a Co. Pam explained the term would start today and end June 30th.

1. Marco Tomaschett nominates himself, on the slate with Rajesh. It is uncontested and as such a vote will be taken, and he needs 2/3 of the vote.

C. Vote:

1. All in favor of Rajesh Jaramalan and Marco Tomaschett as Co-VP's of Communications:
 - a) 16 in favor. 0 against. 0 abstain. Rajesh Jaramalan and Marco Tomaschett are elected.
2. Tallies for Co-Treasurers or Treasurer:
 - a) 13 in favor of Anatoly Garelik and Johnae Ferguson. 3 in favor of Khristina Solano. Anatoly Garelik and Johnae Ferguson are elected as the Co-Treasurers.

IV. SLT Report –

- A. Pam said they discussed having a high school boot camp regarding the high school process. The high school process is being organized by Ms. Y. They discussed the CEP (Comprehensive Educational Plan). Now they have student members. They are waiting on a template which comes from the DOE. Meetings are open to any parent in the school. The student members were tasked to go back to their Student Council members to discuss and find out what would engage them. The attendance at middle school events is very low. Johnae suggested Escape the Room which was brought into the class last year by Ms. Chu and they did it there.

V. Budget –

- A. Sharayfah explained that she and Yuki had to make many cuts because iPledge funding was under. \$190,000 more cuts would be needed for the Budget. They still need \$107,500 to keep everything we had last year.
- B. The next Budget meeting is Thursday, April 18 at 8:15 am. They will be seeing what Administration's goals are, what they want to keep, what they think is important, etc.

VI. Treasurer's Report –

- A. Johnae said we are still lacking a fully flushed-out report. We are still working out some of the numbers presented. Now that a new Co-Treasurer was elected she is looking forward to sorting the numbers out. She has the numbers for line-by-line items and regarding things which are still off; it's just a matter of making sure those line items are aligned with the numbers.

VII. Committee Reports –

A. Audit Committee –

1. Rasheedah spoke on their behalf and said they are still working on their report.

B. Grants –

1. Participatory Budgeting – Makiko explained that the proposals which went to the City Council get voted on in the beginning of April. We should know the outcome at some point in June regarding if TAG's hydroponics proposal was granted. We are seeking STEM suggestions; please give us any STEM suggestions you have.
2. The next Grants meeting is Friday, May 3rd.

C. Enrichment Committee –

1. Field Day – Sheri Simmons said they need parent volunteers and donations of supplies. T-shirt orders were put in today.
 - a) Field Day will be May 6th, 9th & 13th and volunteers are still needed. May 6th will be for grades K – 3. May 9th will be for grades 4 – 6. May 13th will be for grades 7 - 8. Our dates had to be moved from what was stated originally.

2. Debate Team – On April 5th our Debate Team had their first internal debate at TAG and it was successful. There was one round for elementary students and one round for middle-school students. On the weekend of April 6th and 7th our 8th grade scholars went to the State Championships. The girls won the quarterfinals for TAG.
 - a) Sheri said she is passing on the Debate torch after four years.
 - b) Sheri explained that this year Debate had an \$8,000 budget but the proposed budget for next year has \$1,000. She said Debate isn't just an enrichment, it helps with reading and writing skills, and most of the students want to return. 3rd graders want to join, and Principal Cesar expressed interest in having Debate in-curriculum. TAG has been #5 in the city, students attended a tournament in Florida. One of the students is going to Stuyvesant; two others are going to other specialized high schools.
 - c) Johnae said she met with Richard Connelly from the Urban Debate League. We didn't have enough elementary students participating, but the students are interested. She attests that it has improved her child's grades and study habits. Sheri added that Agape Leaders Institute is the vendor.
3. The next Enrichment meeting is April 17th at 8:15 am.
4. The next Field Day meeting is April 17th at 9:40 am.

D. Family Engagement Committee –

1. Kathy speaks on their behalf. The playground, with its added fencing, has been used and enjoyed by the students. They are working with the city to close up the gate. Rasheedah said more volunteers are needed for recess support; please email Family Engagement.
2. Teacher Appreciation Week, May 6 – 10. Every day will have a theme.
3. Welcome Fair – Volunteers are needed for the Welcome Fair for new families joining TAG.

E. Communications Committee -

1. Rajesh said communications will help promote the Gala and other events. Last Wednesday was the last meeting; the next one isn't yet scheduled. Email with any questions.

F. Fundraising Committee –

1. TAG Gala – Rasheedah spoke on their behalf. The VPs are busy preparing for Gala and they opened up the on line bidding site. Please continue to solicit items, and email to help volunteer for planning and for the day of the Gala.
2. 503-c tax status was reinstated; please donate, continue to donate. iPledge has \$110,500.
3. Talent Show – Friday, May 31st – it has been rescheduled. We will be reaching out to those who auditioned, right after spring break. The schedule is to be announced.
4. Discussions regarding funding / iPledge. Responding to a parent question of why communications haven't been ramped up to send emails by class, etc., Kathy said we applied for reinstatement of our non-profit tax status in September and then we'd do the push for corporate matching. Then we realized it would take longer, we planned to do another push. Rasheedah said not all of Rajesh's emails went out. In response to a question on strategy, Kathy said corporate matching could take months, and we're in the homestretch; it's now or never. The Gala is coming up but iPledge is 100% profit. The strategy is blast communications; a flyer is going out imminently.
 - a) Khristina Solano said cutting Debate won't help. Parents from upper grades aren't donating because they feel there is nothing for their middle-school kids. She added that the first things which get cut seem to be middle-school related. Sharayfah said she and Yuko are 1st grade parents so the only way they'd know is

with parent input. Pam said there are middle-school parents on the Executive Board, and they wouldn't like if the 8th grade package was cut. She said since 4th grade she's been saying that there seems to be less and less for the kids as they go up in grade. Kristina pointed out there's no more Theatre Program, and they are suggesting cutting funds for Debate, it's not good. She said her son received a scholarship on the spot from participating in Debate and we have to understand how important these programs are. Pam suggested we engage the Student Council the same way we do with SLT. As the students get older it is difficult to figure out what interests them to come to the events. Enrichment fought for Theatre but then only five students showed up. Kathy suggested emailing Class Parents to find out what the kids want. Principal Cesar said it is difficult to gauge; the students will say they want Theatre but they'll do it a few times and then want to stay outside. Time wise: It would have to be immediately after school or these pre-teens won't come back into the school to participate. Responding to Pam as to touching base with the Student Council, Principal Cesar said they meet with Ms. Lake once per week. Debate goes in sync with our Shared Inquiry. The students learn how to speak and engage in respectful discourse, speaking from the evidence at hand to take a stand on something. She said because of our special population, students' interests vary. Students are in TEAK, they're taking Piano, they're top contenders in Golf in an outside program. Sharayfah said we spoke about that in an Executive Board meeting regarding having registration fees and parent contribution for those who can't afford it. Johnae said if she's going to contribute to the PTA, why should she if she's already paying for an outside enrichment; we need to do a better job and engage the families.

VIII. Principal's Report

- A.** Principal Cesar said we're nearing our Math assessments. We go above and beyond the State standards. We start the State standards now because there isn't really time in the fall. We get results back to see where students don't perform as well, to see where we can improve; this information is used as data.
- B.** Principal Cesar thanks all parents who support students in the yard at recess. We just received a new proposal where the students can be outside more often – once a week instead of once every two weeks.
- C.** Chancellor's Initiative on Equity and Access. A child may need something different because that is who that child is. We discuss what kind of culture we come from, planning curriculum, what was taught and what improvements could be made. She recognizes Ms. Tang, our Special Education teacher. Johnae thanks Principal Cesar on behalf of the 5th grade parents, that we can have the Moving-Up Ceremony, and to please let us know when it would be. Principal Cesar said for a regular awards ceremony, dress-up clothes the students would have to earn it. They're traveling for classes; we've noticed some behavior changes with dress down. She spoke with them regarding respecting their teachers and staff, so they need to earn it. Admin will be sending out a calendar.
- D.** Play yard for recess – A parent thanks Principal Cesar regarding outside yard play; his son really enjoys it. Principal Cesar thanks Kate and Trina (who aren't in attendance), and thanks parents for sending their children ready to learn. She said our kids will be solving issues to have an earth for the future.
- E.** Proposed budget re science – Sharayfah said the proposed budget for STEAM was out completely, and asks Principal Cesar to look at it and think about its importance to her. Kathy also requested her input on Teacher Assistants, as they are critical for younger grades. Principal Cesar agreed. Kathy said they will work parallel with the parent body. Principal Cesar suggested to look at it in terms of grade bands: Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades, 3rd and 4th grades, 5th and 6th grades, 7th and 8th grades. She added that by 5th and 6th grades children begin

to change the way they act and feel. She also suggested short cycles of topics, maybe 4 weeks or so, because students get bored.

IX. Q&A – Miki Sakai said if parents see what has been cut, they will feel the urgency of what may be going away. Rasheedah said that is what the Executive Board discussed; the communications going out. Families need to know that programs may be cut.

X. Adjournment

7:45 pm – Laura Lampert motions to adjourn the meeting. Rasheedah Harris seconds the motion. Meeting is adjourned.

Minutes submitted by:

Laura Lampert, Rasheedah Harris, TAG PTA Co-Secretaries

Minutes approved by: