



Talented & Gifted School For Young Scholars

Parent Teacher Association

Anand Raghunath
Nina Reiniger
Co-Presidents

Jennifer Fiore
Ilaria Mogno
Co-Vice Presidents

Rebecca Yoftahie
Trina Edmundson
Co-Treasurers

Laura Lampert
Rasheedah Harris
Co-Secretaries

MINUTES FOR TAG PTA MEETING

Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Meeting Time: 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Meeting Location: TAG Cafeteria

I. Call to Order

- A. PTA Co-President, Anand Raghunath, called to order the TAG PTA meeting on Tuesday, October 3, at 6:11pm 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.

II. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

- A. Hard copies of the September PTA meeting minutes were distributed.
- B. Johnnae Ferguson made a motion to approve the September 19th minutes; Jennifer seconds. Minutes approved.

III. By-Laws Discussion/Vote

Co-President Nina Reiniger introduces proposed changes to discuss and vote on at this meeting.

1. Changing the name of the Membership Committee to “Family Engagement Committee.”
2. Adding the Grants Committee as a standing committee.
3. Changing the monthly PTA meeting to the “second Tuesday of the month; at either 8:15am or 6:00pm” as the date and time for General Membership meetings (instead of the first Tuesday).
Luigi Kapaj asked about holidays like Election Day landing on the meeting day, and Nina responded that there is a provision in the by-laws to hold the meeting a week earlier or later.
4. Amend the quorum provision of two teachers. We could have more morning meetings if we removed the 2-teacher requirement.
5. Amending the list of officers to be “President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President at Large, Vice President of Family Engagement, Vice President of Budget, Vice President of Fundraising, Vice President of Grants, Vice President of Audit, Vice President of Communications, and Vice President of Enrichment,” with Vice President at Large the new title of the officer formerly known as the Vice President. We had taken a vote of the Executive Board and it was unanimous to have the Vice Presidents.
6. The Vice President at Large shall have the duties previously assigned to the Vice President.
7. Clarifying that all officer positions may be held by co-officers, each of whom will have a vote on the Executive Board.
8. For the other Vice Presidents, add duties to include:
 - a) Presiding at the meetings of their respective committees and

- b) Reporting to the Executive Board on the business of their committees.

Nina asked for a show of hands for voting in the whole thing at once. Nina asked if there were any objections to voting on it as a whole. There were no objections. She then asked for a show of hands to vote on the bylaw amendments presented. 26 votes for accepting all of the changes, 2 votes against, 2 abstain. Nina said we're going to have more by-laws discussions as we'll have more changes next month.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Audit

1. Anand spoke on behalf of the Audit Committee, and said they run an audit twice a year. There are two of them right now but they can always use help.

B. Budget

1. Co-VP of Budget Eric Crump said their next meeting is Wednesday, October 18th at 8:15 am. Come and share your thoughts, we will identify priorities. We'll try to schedule an evening meeting next month.

C. Communications

1. Co-VP of Communications Pam Simon said their first meeting of the year will be October 11th at 8:15 am in the library. The newsletter went out today. If you're a graphic designer please reach out.
2. Deirdre asked how PTA information would be getting out with (Parent Coordinator) Ms. Bruno leaving TAG this week. Pam said in previous years we went through Ms. Bruno and this year we're pushing through our Parent Directory. When Ms. Bruno transitions out and the new person comes in we'll find out how Administration wants to proceed.

D. Enrichment

1. Co-VP of Enrichment Brandee Williams said their next meeting will be Friday, October 13th at 8:15 am in the library. They are looking for parent volunteers.
2. All of the Enrichment programs from last year are back and on board. Catherine Levine got (Saturday afternoon) Basketball up and running.

E. Membership (Now Known As Family Engagement)

1. Co-VP Johnnae Ferguson said our new name will encompass what we do.
2. The Class Parent page kicked off with new changes. We're looking forward to feedback coming in. We will have events, invite you to bring friends and family.
3. Co-VP Jennifer G said the second meeting will be October 20th at 8:15 am in the library.
 - a) October 21st Scavenger Hunt at the New York Botanical Gardens from 10-11am and details will be sent soon.
 - b) October 28th Apple/Pumpkin Picking at a farm in New Jersey.
 - c) October 5th Coffee & Tea with Ms. C.
 - d) November – Cooking Class event; also a Teacher Appreciation event before Thanksgiving.
 - e) November 1st – November 15th Food Drive for Common Pantry.
4. Each month we want to do a “give back to the community” such as Toys 4 Tots.
5. Middle school initiatives – We want a repository for resources for middle school, high school, and

the transition. Johnnae said they're still available on the website under "Membership." Go to tagscholars.pta.org

F. Fundraising

1. Namita and Anna, the Co-VPs of Fundraising were not present. Anand said the next meeting is tomorrow at 8:15 am in the library.
2. iPledge Campaign – the flyer went out in backpacks, email went out. So far this year we've hit the \$20,000 mark. iPledge Party next Friday, October 13th in the gym and there will be childcare. We have a suggested contribution of \$1,000/student, but any amount counts.
3. Nina, responding to a question of where the money is going, said there is a budget and it's on the website – click on Budget and it is all there. Anand said it's where you'll see how everything comes together.
4. Catherine Levine asked if donating time would count like it had in previous years, and the response was no. Catherine said she was Fundraising chair for the past 4 years and donating time always counted. Anand, in response to Adam Scally, said any minimum amount, yes even ten cents, will get you on the iPledge tree. (the tree is a contribution tee, for all who donated).
5. Anand said parents could select a monthly deduction. We're trying to have iPledge become a whole-school donation, a general pool. Nina clarified that the donation is only a recurring donation if you choose for it to be. Trina Edmundson clarified re if you donated \$600 but wanted \$100 taken per month, you could do so without worrying that if you donated \$600 it would be a recurring \$600 payment. Brandee clarified that you can't donate directly to a classroom. Deirdre said teachers can request things specifically for their classroom and they would put it up under their own request.
6. Laura Lampert said she didn't see why the option to donate time was removed from the iPledge campaign, as since her fourth-grader started Kindergarten the iPledge contributions consistently increased while the donation of time was also an option. Anand said this year we're trying to bring iPledge monetary donations up to another level, though it's something they'd be happy to reconsider.
7. Luigi asked what the iPledge tree is and Anand explained there is a tree on the Bulletin Board and it would have the list of people who donated.

V. Principal's Report

Principal Cesar wanted to recognize the staff and teachers – Ms. Ruiz and Mr. Wong.

- A. Parks – the Upper Playground belongs to the city. The Lower Playground, which belongs to the DOE, needs repairs and is on the list to have repairs done. Eric Crump attended the Mayoral Town Hall with the Mayor regarding the construction. Regarding the Upper Playground, Principal Cesar invited the Parks Department Supervisor to look at the Upper Playground for beautification.
- B. Music position (K-5) filled - She has experience doing Chorus and the background check is in progress.
- C. Parent Coordinator position filled, today. The background check is in progress. Ms. Bruno's last day is likely this Friday.
- D. TAG Initiatives – Giving Back
 1. Supporting victims of natural disasters ends October 16th. Items will likely be going to the Fire Engine company on the next block.
 2. Children with cancer "Heavenly Hats" is Friday, October 6th and for a \$1 donation students can wear a hat in school.
- E. Picture waivers to support iPledge will be delivered next Wednesday.

- F. Elevate – new intervention program for grades 5-8
1. Assistant Principal Dascal said last year Principal Cesar found this fantastic program. Elevate comes here and runs 5 separate workshops with the kids such as time management, test prep, pneumatic devices, ways to compartmentalize stress and anxiety. It's designed to help students look at and budget their time. Last year the program was offered to a small group of students; this year we're offering it to all 5-8 grade students.
 2. Responding to a question regarding the playgrounds/yards, Principal Cesar said the lower yard belongs to the DOE. Fences are to be locked at night, but people climb the fences. The Parks Department said the upper yard must be open to the community. Maybe in a few years we can talk about a rooftop garden. We tried in the past but between people and squirrels, the plants and vegetation were removed within two weeks.
- G. Science – Hands-On request for support from PTA
1. Principal Cesar said Catherine Levine found a program which seems to fit with what a hands-on science program should be, and had her come up to address the parents at this meeting. Catherine said the program is called Sci Tech Kids, for grades K-4. She explained it is a STEM program, they come to the school and work with the students for 20 weeks, and the teachers and Teacher Assistants (TA's) will still be there. She said we need to be solution-driven rather than pointing fingers. We need \$15,000 to support the students, information will be going around, and an amended budget will be handed out. At the last PTA meeting we were told by Budget Co-VP Eric Crump the budget was amendable. She thinks the money can be taken from the \$7,500 extra toward Fundraising, the \$6,000 extra toward Music and the \$5,000 extra from the Computer Lab. A parent asked if letters could go home asking for \$50 - \$60 per student, and Catherine responded that it could work but parents are already contributing to iPledge and the last budget was voted through as a whole, with many parents unhappy. Anand clarified for a parent and said a proposal can be made in October and be considered the next month.
- H. Concerns of K-112
1. Principal Cesar said we'll be sending those parents a calendar of who will be covering the class. The teacher will be back at the end of November.
- I. Benchmark assessments will be given tomorrow morning for ELA and Thursday morning for Math.
- J. Confirmation of State test dates
2. Each set of testing was reduced from 3 days to 2 days.
 3. ELA State Test Dates: April 11th – April 12th
 4. Math State Test Dates: May 1st – May 2nd
- “Together we are better”
- K. Chain of Command Procedures for TAG
5. Parents should email teachers regarding their concerns; if necessary contact Parent Coordinator; if necessary contact Community Coordinator (Ms. Arias). If concerns have still not been addressed, arrange a meeting, contact Parent Coordinator, Community Coordinator and Teacher. If still not resolved, contact Mr. Dascal, Assistant Principal.
- L. Q & A
- Johnnae asked if we were any closer to hiring a Technology teacher. Principal Cesar said no; even the Mayor admitted the tech people are going to the Wall Street jobs. Chancellor Farina said she knows there is a shortage.
- Regarding bus stops, Principal Cesar said to speak to Marissa and Ms. Cosme.

Luigi asked if hiring several p/t Technology teachers was possible as the full time salary may not be enough but making extra money from a p/t spot might attract more candidates. Principal Cesar said they are only going to hire full time and need to make a proper schedule.

A parent asked if we would continue with the Dwight School swim program, and Principal Cesar said we're trying to get some grades to go during the fall and some in the spring.

Laura asked regarding Principal Cesar's mention of the State relaxing their Technology teacher requirements, would the Bachelor's degree be waived? The response was there is a degree requirement for State certification.

Regarding a Jupiter question, Mr. Dascal said log-in letters were sent home and if you didn't get it, contact your child's teacher or Ms. Bruno. There is a way in Jupiter for teachers to send messages to parents and vice-versa.

District 4 CEC – Eric Crump said it currently has 8 parents who deal with issues impacting the community. At the Mayoral Town Hall he made contact with someone from the School Construction Authority, and we are one step closer. Principal Cesar said Mr. Crump will coordinate the list of repairs.

Brochure for TAG – Principal Cesar said she would like to create an upscale brochure for TAG, featuring shiny active things, test scores, etc.

Co-Secretary Rasheedah Harris said she wanted to mention if your child is in the Y afterschool program grades K-2 they will offer a pilot piano program. There is also a fee-based Piano program through Enrichment.

Ms. Bruno is leaving; she has been at TAG over 20 years. We have a cake for you. We thank you for everything. We will miss you and hope for the best.

VI. Treasurer's Report

- A. Co-Treasurers Rebecca Yoftahie and Trina Edmundson presented the report. Rebecca said the income included a net change of \$1,400 from TAGwear. Expenses were \$4,800. The line item that reads "New Victory Theatre" should read "Debate."
- B. Proposal of budget amendment – Eric said a parent (Catherine Levine) was proposing an amendment to the budget. The Fundraising line increased to \$7,500 from \$4,500 because this year Fundraising said it wasn't enough and they had to use their own money. Eric said he strongly suggests we table the budget amendment. Nina recommended that people abstained from the vote because there was not enough information to make an informed choice. She (Nina) did not necessarily disagree with the budget amendment, she just did not feel there was sufficient information on the program presented or on the budget lines being cut to make an informed decision at that moment. There is a flurry of dialogue from all over the room and the proposal is put forward and seconded by (I believe the first of several parents) Deirdre. The back and forth and flurry of dialogue continues; Deirdre says the motion to vote has already been seconded. More flurry of dialogue; some saying the vote should be postponed and others saying why it is permitted to go through at this meeting. Catherine explains that it was thoroughly researched and is the best of the other science programs researched. A parent asks for due diligence in deciding so soon before parents have had the chance to fully learn about it. Eric said we're already out of time tonight for this. Trina wanted a clarification of the \$4,500 "Music Instruments and

Miscellaneous” line increase, and Eric said it’s a fund of money to purchase or repair instruments we own.

Motion to vote for the budget amendment for Sci Tech Kids is made again, this time seconded by Pamela Simon. Catherine said she is proposing \$15,000 for the hands-on science program for K-4 grades. Eric said his answer as Budget chair would be to not do this right now. Catherine said she was given a deadline of this Friday; Sci Tech Kids is waiting to hear back, we must give the program an answer and therefore if we postpone the vote we will automatically lose out on the program.

20 vote yes. 4 vote no. 12 abstain. Budget amendment of \$15,000 hands-on science program is approved.

VII. Adjournment: Anand Raghunath motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 pm. Co-Secretary Laura Lampert seconded the motion. Meeting is adjourned.

Minutes submitted by:

Laura Lampert, TAG PTA Co-Secretary (dictation, re-typed and submitted via email)

Rasheedah Harris, TAG PTA Co-Secretary (reviewed, revised and finalized via email)

Minutes approved by:

Nina Reiniger, TAG PTA Co-President