



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, June 19, 2018

Meeting Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Meeting Location: TAG Cafeteria

I. Call to Order

- A. PTA Co-President, Nina Reiniger, called to order the TAG PTA meeting on Tuesday, June 19, at 6:11 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.

II. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

- A. Hard copies of the May PTA meeting minutes were distributed.

Deidre Pace made a motion to approve the May minutes; Jen Fiore seconds. Minutes approved.

III. By-Laws Amendment Vote

- A. PTA Co-President Nina Reiniger explained the proposed change to the Bylaws, to just add who is responsible for making sure the taxes get filed on time. All in favor of adding this to the Bylaws: 65 in favor. Opposed: 0. Vote passes.

IV. Nominating Committee – PTA Elections

- A. Nadia explained the difference in the voting tonight; we have a ballot for all categories, and there is an option of voting for who is already listed or writing in who you want. Then the ballots will be collected and then they will be tallied. She asks the candidates to think about what they are running for, as this method means if you aren't elected for one category you wouldn't be able to run for another as the full ballot is going in at once and being tallied. She explains another difference; due to time constraints we're allowing those running only 30 seconds to introduce themselves, the grades of their children, etc. If you are not here tonight you cannot be nominated. If you're already on the ballot it's fine. These positions are for one year. Votes for SLT will be afterward. Deidre Pace says she's rolling out of the SLT so there is only one spot. Kusalee clarified that one of the candidates for SLT is running for President so if that candidate is elected, the President is the only Executive Board member who can't be on SLT so there would be two spots. Pamela Simon asked if it would play into it that the parent running for President might have a Co-. Kathy Fernando further clarified that she is running for Co-President and if she is elected she wouldn't be able to be on SLT anymore for 2018-2019.

1. Nadia describes the functions/responsibilities of President and opens the floor to nominations. Kathy Fernando speaks on behalf of herself and Denada who are on the slate as Co-President. A parent questions Kathy re diversifying culture, the students and the Executive Board. Nadia reminds that time is restricted. Kathy says she would strive to raise fundraising goals, being able to provide services for the students. She has spoken to Board members who aren't coming back due to stress from disagreements and such. Nadia calls for nominations from the floor. Johnae Ferguson and Luigi Kapaj nominate themselves. Johnae says she is the Family Engagement Vice President, and she wants to make sure all of the students are represented. Her running with Luigi, a Kindergarten

parent, would be a cross-section of someone who's never been on the Board and someone who has been here longer. The mayor's proposal is a concern to them as well.

2. Nadia describes the functions/responsibilities of Vice President and opens the floor to nominations. Kate and Mark Levin who were on the slate withdraw from running as Co-Vice President. Instead, Mark Levin and Pamela Simon nominate themselves as Co-VP. Mark says he believes in the culture at TAG. Pam says she had been the Secretary for several years, the VP of Fundraising. She wants to help facilitate; hopefully getting streaming for PTA meetings for more parent to get their voices heard. Nadia opens the floor to other nominations; there are none. Nadia says it is an uncontested slate and we can vote now, that Pam and Mark need 2/3 vote.
Vote: All in favor of Pamela Simon and Mark Levin as Co-VP's: Confirmed.
3. Nadia describes the functions/responsibilities of Treasurer and opens the floor to nominations. Mansi Agarwal and Angela who are on the slate speak. Mansi says she has organized events and worked with funds for many years. Angela says she has been in accounting for over 10 years. Nadia opens the floor to other nominations; there are none and it is an uncontested slate. Discussion that we wouldn't need to vote from the floor; it would go on the ballot.
Vote: All in favor of voting only on the ballot when it is uncontested? Majority votes yes.
4. Nadia describes the functions/responsibilities of Recording Secretary. Rasheedah Harris and Laura Lampert, who are on the slate say they've been Co-Recording Secretary the past several years, please vote for them to stay. Nadia opens the floor to nominations, there are none and it is an uncontested slate.
5. Liz describes the functions/responsibilities of Fundraising VP. Olga and Ami are running as Co-VP on the slate, and Ami speaks on behalf of Olga who is running late. She says they want the school to succeed and raise funds to accomplish that. Liz opens the floor to nominations, there are none and it is an uncontested slate.
6. Liz describes the functions/responsibilities of Budget VP. Yuko and Sharayfah are on the slate. Sharayfah says she has prior experience in management, good consideration of people's views. Yuko says she's a parent at TAG and eager for the position.
7. Liz describes the functions/responsibilities of Grants VP. Makiko Yasuda and Richa Gulati are on the slate. Makiko feels this is the position for which she has the most to contribute. She says at her job she helps secure funding for research, is familiar and comfortable with the process and can identify new funding opportunities. Richa says she is a practicing attorney, and has helped with and written for TAG technology grants recently. Liz opens the floor to nominations, there are none and it is an uncontested slate.
8. Liz describes the functions/responsibilities of Communications VP. Rajesh Jayaraman is on the slate. He says he is the parent of a Kindergartener, was on the Communications Committee this year designing the website, and is a software engineer by training. He says he looks forward to improving communications and cultivating community, for the well-being and education of our children. Liz opens the floor to nominations, there are none and it is an uncontested slate.
Liz explains the next three positions have no nominees
9. Liz describes the functions/responsibilities of Enrichment VP. There are no nominees from the floor. Deidre Pace reminds the parents, this is Chess, this is Debate. Liz nominates herself. Sheri Simmons nominates herself. There are no other nominations. Liz and Sheri are now running on the slate for Co-Enrichment VP.
10. Nadia describes the functions/responsibilities of Family Engagement VP. Catherine Levine

nominates Kate and Trina Edmundson for Co-VP and they accept. Kate says she has a 2nd grader and an incoming Kindergartener. Trina said she was chair of Fundraising for 3 years and Co-President for 2 years. She says this is a community; we have to care about all of the children, and building community. There are no other nominations. Kate and Trina are now running on the slate for Co-Enrichment VP.

11. Nadia describes the functions/responsibilities of Audit VP. Soraya nominates Deidre Pace and Brandee Williams for Co-VP and they accept. Deidre says they are committed and would work together well. Kalin Agarwal and Mukund Subramanian nominate themselves for Co-VP. Mukund says he wants to start participating more. Kalin says he works in and has a financial background. Pam asks Deidre to explain her financial background. Deidre says she has worked in world finance for 15 years, has worked with major asset managers on Wall Street, is a major financial asset and good at numbers. Brandee says she was previously Enrichment VP, and has been in finance 10 years. She loves TAG and will serve with due diligence. Nadia opens the floor to any further nominations.

A parent asks if the two Agarwals are related – Kalin Agarwal running for Audit and Mansi Agarwal running for Treasurer. Mansi said they are husband and wife. A parent asks if he is going to be auditing his wife. Kalin Agarwal withdraws his nomination. Kusalee says she already started to collect ballots from the back two rows. Nadia says she didn't state she was closing the nominations yet, and parents said they still had questions for the nominees. Nina says she believes we leave it as is and if Kalin and Mukund are voted in we'll have an expedited election. Nadia announces they are closing elections. Pam says on paper there isn't yet a conflict of interest; it should stay as is. Eric Crump, Budget Co-VP, says technically it's moot regarding a husband and wife being a conflict of interest to hold two different positions on the Board or be on a committee together, though in this case with one as Co-Treasurer and another as Co-Audit it could be a conflict of interest. If they get in it could be voted on later. Johnae asks if there is an accurate headcount of everyone who signed in, and is told yes and it is being checked now.

V. Principal's Report

- A. Vice Principal Dascal speaks on behalf of Principal Cesar and says what a fantastic year it's been. There were some challenges to overcome. They are extremely thankful to the TAG parents and thank everyone for the turnout tonight. He gives a shout-out to the 8th grade parents who attended tonight, because their children are leaving the school and it's still important to them who gets in for the next school year.
 12. An email was sent out regarding summer attire for the upcoming days of school.
 13. Tomorrow is the Senior Trip. Thursday is the 8th grade Prom.
 14. Look for an email regarding a chorus performance of possibly the 1st, 2nd 3rd grades with Ms. Schwartz for this Friday.
 15. Next Monday June 25 is the 8th grade graduation, Tuesday June 26 is a half day with 11:05 dismissal.
 16. Report cards will be going home Friday as well as summer packets. Thank you, and have a fantastic summer.
- B. Q & A
 17. Pam asks if the Jupiter grades in now are final. Mr. Dascal says he's grading now. It's possible a teacher is still working on finalizing grades. Jupiter will probably be going down in the next 24 hours.
 18. Pam asked about the dress-down email, saying the middle school "no shorts" policy seemed kind of harsh.

Mr. Dascal said we will discuss it with the cabinet tomorrow.

19. Question re the third quarter report and final report card. Mr. Dascal said they are essentially the same, there's such a short time between the 3rd report card and the last report card.

VI. SLT Committee

- A. Nina says we have the votes already. At the time of voting both slates were valid. If Deidre wins, ok. If Kalin wins and decides to withdraw it could be an expedited election in September. Nina asks the general board if this sounds like a fair way to resolve this, and there is clapping.
- B. Eric Crump says 5 members of the parent body are on SLT. Whoever wins as Co-President, one of them will be on SLT. There is currently only one open spot. They work on the CEP – the Comprehensive Educational Plan – which has various initiatives.
20. The two up for nomination are James Stark and Ruth Aman. James Stark says his daughter is currently in 2nd grade, and he was Class Parent for 2nd grade. He said he was involved in welcoming parents to TAG and also if they were contemplating it, and that he is organized, loves the TAG community, parents, teachers and the students.
21. Ruth Aman said she has a 2nd and 4th grader. She says she just completed her doctorate in education, and can connect with both faculty and parents.
22. Nadia opens up the floor for nominations. Pam nominates Deidre Pace. Jen Fiore asks if someone on SLT can do two consecutive terms, the answer is yes.
- C. Debate Announcement – Sherri says she has been running Debate the past 3 years. The Debate Team is in the Nationals and TAG students are currently in Florida for the Championship.

VII. Budget Proposal (vote to finalize)

- A. Eric explained that per Chancellor's Regulations every PTA must have an approved budget or the funds can't be used. He said the Fundraising Committee raised around \$280,000. The fiscal year hasn't closed, checks are still coming in and going out. He said they tried to have a slate that best meets the needs for all of the students; in a thoughtful way to impact the students' best in all areas and for all of our students.

He said the biggest change the Executive Board recommended was a slight decrease to make room for other needed areas such as science. An increase for STEM, SciTech came into TAG from outside with labs. Funding last year which disappeared was around \$35,000 but was reduced to \$5,000 and the additional proposed increase is necessary to support this.

Responding to a parent question regarding Executive Board amendments having to do with SciTech, Ananda explained that with the in-curriculum program they come into the school and bring in equipment, multiple people, etc. Based on input from Administration and parents this is something that they wanted. The parent responded that it's not an Enrichment item, and Eric explained that it is; there are two different vendors who come in for Science. The PTA put out the money for this year and we need to make sure it happens again for the upcoming year. Responding to another parent's question regarding outside vendors, Ananda said the PTA works with Administration to bring in outside vendors. Another parent wanted to know if Principal Cesar preferred money for an outside vendor or for another teacher. She can decide 100% for an outside vendor or internal TAG science teacher. Ananda said they've discussed it and Principal Cesar prefers an outside vendor. Eric clarifies that the Budget proposal does not mandate we must use an outside vendor. The PTA decides how the money gets spent in conjunction with Administration and what Administration wants. Unfortunately, Principal Cesar couldn't be here tonight but that is what she wants. A parent asked if Principal Cesar looks at middle school closer as it wasn't as successful as for elementary. Ananda said Principal Cesar expressed

similar concern and is working on a plan. Rasheedah added that Principal Cesar is working with staff to develop program as well. A parent asked if this could be clarified further, before the end of the school year. Also quite a few Kindergarten parents found their regular Kindergarten teacher did a better job of teaching the students; it's different staff each time. Ananda replied that the conversation has been ongoing with Principal Cesar. There will be Executive Board meetings over the summer and we will be going over this.

Johnae said we're discussing if our kids have that STEM program or not; not how much we like the program. Katherine Powell-Manning said regarding we who are 6-8 grade parents, nobody on the board grasps what is needed for us. Another parent responds that in those grades, parent involvement plateaus, so we want to make sure the effort middle school gets, happens in those grades too. Sheri responded that she is the Debate Coach for 6-8 grades and she doesn't find that happening. That parent replies that she just wants to make sure they get the same quality as middle school. Eric said some things Principal Cesar liked, some not. Her goal is to go over this in the summer for improvements. Eric says he's saying to the parent body, to attend these meetings and hold us responsible. A parent says that middle-schoolers going to great high schools sets the standard. Brandee Williams of Enrichment says we need to step back; if you don't like a vendor, come to the meetings. If you can't, call or email. Don't wait until the general meeting at the end of the year to say, I don't like this or that. People come here with opinions. Come and sit at committee meetings, because we vote as a committee. Don't wait until the end or Budget vote to voice your opinions. It's all of our kids, Kindergarten through 8th grade. Eric said we're going to consider this Budget. Enrichment has asked for an additional \$1,000. A parent asked about the decrease in Physical Movement from \$14,000 to \$10,000. Brandee responded that parents voice at Budget meetings through Budget, not the Enrichment Committee. Responding to a question about the Debate Team – there are 30 students, and 4 of the scholars qualified for the Nationals.

Parent proposal of amendment to include a 2nd grade TA for next year. The parents and grandparents are willing to contribute the additional funds.

Eric explained that K parents are proposing a targeted fundraiser. Increasing the Budget from \$20,000 to \$300,000 with funds exclusively for a 2nd grade TA. Per Chancellor's Regulations, they need permission to do a fundraiser of this type.

A parent then asks for a fundraiser for Senior (8th grade) activities. Eric explains we're considering this as a single slate. Afterward, we can have a vote for this targeted fundraiser. He explains that the Executive Board has an issue with this; we've never had a targeted fundraiser; it's always been fundraising for all students.

A parent proposes an amendment to the Chess Team line to increase it from \$6,00 - \$8,000. Eric replied that we can't approve contingency lines or for monies we don't have. Nadia said the Debate Team did very well; we had to do outside fundraising.

Eric said, voting on amendment to add \$2,000 to the Chess line.

Sara Coates requests an increase to the 8th grade Senior package line.

Rasheedah reminds parents to keep in mind our permit for this meeting ends at 9pm; at 8:45 we need to start to leave.

A parent proposes \$20,000 from in-curriculum.

Eric says there are three amendments: 1) additional \$2,000 back to Chess from \$6,000 to \$8,000, 2) additional \$1,500 to 8th grade Senior package line 3) additional \$500 to Chess. The current spend is \$270,380.03. Trina Edmundson says we have \$9,000 left. The parent withdrew the STEM decrease

proposal.

VOTE: 1) Additional \$2,000 to Chess passes (42 in favor, 2 opposed).

2) Additional \$1,500 to 8th grade Senior package passes (43 in favor, 4 abstain).

3) Additional \$500 to Chess passes (51 in favor, 0 opposed). There is a \$8,119.97 unspent surplus.

VOTE: Vote for entire Budget slate: All in favor for 2018-19 fiscal year: 53 In favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained. Budget slate approved.

Targeted fundraising – Deidre asks if we already have Hunter College Master Students teaching here, and the answer is yes. She asks what qualifications the TA’s earning \$19,000 have, and Ananda says it’s experiences with students. A parent asks if the funds are guaranteed, and he says the money has not been raised. A parent responds that they have sufficient parents to raise the funds. Pam says she is concerned about the precedent; we’d be setting up a system of haves and have-nots. There are 600 different families at TAG. Many other parents were also concerned with the targeted fundraising. Ananda said people contribute money to a general fund. This school has economic diversity. A parent replies that other schools like NEST do this; to that another parent responds that they have a \$1million dollar budget. A parent says they’ve always had a problem with PTA’s funding school staff. A parent said this started with a blackmail proposal; he then reads aloud an email among K parents regarding less contributions to iPledge the following year if it didn’t go through. There is commotion among parents at the meeting. Trina asked if any of them asked Administration about this proposal. Trina said you have to be aware of the process. Administration must be on board before approving.

VOTE: All in favor of approving targeted fundraising: 22 in favor. All opposed: 40 opposed.

Targeted fundraising not approved.

VIII. Election Results

A. Nadia announces the results:

23. Co-Presidents – Kathy Fernando and Denand Ramnisthta

24. Co-Vice Presidents – Mark Levin and Pamela Simon

25. Co-Treasurers – Mansi Argarwal and Angela Brito

26. Co-Secretaries - Rasheedah Harris and Laura Lampert

27. Fundraising VP’s – Olga Lakhina and Ami Artz

28. Budget VP’s – Yuko Yushida and Sharayfah Brown

29. Grants VP’s – Makiko Yasuda and Richa Gulati

30. Communications VP – Rajesh Jayaraman

31. Enrichment VP’s – Sheri Simmons and Liz Butler

32. Family Engagement VP’s – Kate Chechak and Trina Edmundson

B. SLT – Ruth Aman and James Stark.

Brandee Williams says, this is the process: iPledge happens, you donate money, general membership votes. We can’t guarantee where the funds will go. We assess based on need.

IX. Adjournment

8:57 pm - Nina motions to adjourn the meeting. Eric Crump seconds the motion. Meeting is adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Laura Lampert & Rasheedah Harris, TAG PTA Co-Secretaries

Minutes approved by: Pamela Simon, TAG’s Co-Vice President at Large