

School Leadership Team Meeting

Date: 11/07/2022 – Online via Zoom

Minutes Taken by Jennifer Aldano

Members in Attendance: Jessica Geller, Michelle Perr, Jennifer Aldano, Kalliopi Alevriadis, Ingrid Nunez, Jennifer Trizulino, Erin LaFarge, Nicole Arriaga-Bell, Sarah Frazier, Krishna Ruano, Olivia Ramirez

Additional individuals in attendance: Katherine Tsimis and Lambrini Matsas, vice principals.

Absent: Janis Soper and Anastasia Smith

Meeting Convened

The minutes from the 11/7/2022 were unanimously approved.

Nicole asked her last name be change to Arriaga-Bell

Principal's Report

SLT Updates

Meetings will continue in zoom for SLT, Principal Geller will let everyone know if she hears otherwise.

COVID Update

Remains status quo ranging from 0-4 active cases on an average daily. We are still reporting to the situation room and still giving out the four (4) COVID tests a month to the staff and kids. Programing back to normal otherwise.

Calendar

This week no school for students on 11/8 (election day) but staff has school and on Friday 11/11 in observance of Veterans day no school for everyone.

11/24-11/25: No school in observance of Thanksgiving

Parents teacher conference were pushed to 12/1/2022.

Ms. Geller began working on updating the 166 website calendar so that is up and running

Hydroponics Lab:

The lab dedication was beautiful. Very sad but at the same time so amazing to see.

Ms. Geller showed pictures of the Towers in the lab on 10/19 and the progress they have made as of 11/1/2022.

The event was successful and a nice dedication in her honor.

Spelling Bee:

The 4th and 5th grade spelling bee will be happening next week.

Other new things:

Since we met last time one of the school aides rescinded her resignation so we are only replacing one (1) school aide who is going to another district 30 school. We have not agreed to release her until we have a replacement in line. Interviews have begun to fill this position but has not been filled yet.

Still looking for paraprofessionals for the kids.

We have been working with some excellent subs which we are actively working on getting them permanently certified.

New business:

The chancellor announced today that the schools will be held harmless for any budget reduction that comes up. Chancellor stated schools not held harmless for registered loss. Though doesn't really apply to us what that means is that if we had a register decrease we would not be charged. In the past (pre-pandemic) if we did have a shortage in our projection of kids (ex: if we projected 1000 and only had 950 showed up we had to pay 50 kids worth of money and vice versa).

This year over the summer Ms. Geller asked for an advance on the register because she thought our numbers were projected very low. We received an advance of \$313,000 and we only missed the target number from that for about 3-4 kids. So we won't get money but we also won't lose money.

At the end of October (10/31/22) and at the end of January we will have a budget audit for Special Ed. The special Ed numbers are way different than what we projected so that may bring in more money than we anticipated.

As an example, when projections were made there was no kinder ICT class has 2 teachers so you will get more funding. Generally as an example for a Gen ed child you may get approximately 4,000 per child but for a ICT student you would get approximately 6,000 because you have to cover the salary of 2 teachers. Since we didn't project an ICT class but did have one we should get an adjustment on the budget at the end of January. This is good news because we owe some money on the hydroponics lab and everything else should break even.

This is all good news because it can be very stressful to owe money. Prior to covid we if owed money you can't purchase anything until paying back and it can all be very stressful so good news to not have to worry. However, don't think we will have the same kind of funding this year we will not have that much money to supplement PTA school supplies project as we did last year.

With that said, we did order in bulk so maybe there will be some stuff that can make it through to next year.

Trying something new this year with Ms. Seitz. Ms. Seitz is the testing coordinator among other jobs. Next year starting 20223-2024 school year NYS Testing will be mandatory to be given in the computer. This year they are asking schools to pilot it and originally we said no but given that next year it will be mandatory next year we are going to take professional development we get and try and work out the kinks. We will be giving 3rd grade ELA on the computer and 4th grade math in the computer for this year. The expectation is that next year all of it will be computer based. The idea would be to try and work out the kinks (Wi-Fi, etc.) this year. The teachers have been asked to begin working on typing and keyboarding.

Jennifer Aldano asked if the kids will get a screen break because seems like a lot of time on the screen. Ms. Geller said in the past they had no time limit which resulted in more anxiety in some of the kids sitting sometimes 8 hours on the test because they go back and change and stay on the test all day. As of now, we don't know yet how it will work.

Michelle Perr mentioned that middle school admissions is definitely changing every year but if anything they tend to use 4th grade test scores. Would it possible to do 3rd grade and 5th grade because the 5th grade test scores don't really "harm" in case something changes due to taking them on the computer. Since 5th grade test scores don't matter for middle school admissions.

Ms. Geller said they would be talking it over and a worthwhile consideration.

Everyone in kindergarten will begin teaching then typing. Ms. Bogdos (former computer teacher) put together a bunch of free resources that teachers can use. Hoping that if the kids start early identifying it will be easier by the time they get to the age where they will have computer testing. Each teacher has time assigned for this even 5-10 minutes to help the kids with this.

Student government is on their way. They did their speeches. We explain they can't promise unrealistic things like long recess, pizza, etc. Turns out Sid the science kid is not popular with the kids. Elections taking place coinciding with election day and 4th and 5th grade students will be voting and polls closing just like NY State. Winners will be announced on Wednesday 11/9/22. Kids voting through google classroom to only have one vote. There are 5 positions the kids will be running for, and the highest vote becomes President, etc.

Thank you to Ms. Smith who has been running this for the past few years.

CEP

Ms. Tsimis reported that CEP was submitted, and we did not receive anything stating signatures missing. We will be sharing with the teachers, so everybody is aligned and

aware of the same goals. We made it into TACO to the teachers have the same goals too.

PTA Report:

Major thing to be discussed meeting held with fundraiser because fundraising chair was lost. Hoping to fill seat soon and hope to interview people who understand the time commitment as was done with the previous person.

Doing same fundraiser as last year- Original works: people can put art work and things on mugs, bags, etc.

Coming up events from the PTA:

Social event 11/17/2022: Cultural food and game night which should be a passive social event. Not as intense as the hocus pocus event.

Hocus Pocus went well we had a lot of attendance. We don't anticipate we need as many volunteers as hocus pocus event.

Introducing 2 new co-chairs for equitable school supplies committee and the executive board meeting after discussing that project. Has been told from prior board that there would always be a discussion if we don't get enough payments from parents, and it appears we are not on the threshold at the moment. Will be discussing what to do if parents aren't contributing.

Was asked how much participation but she Elizabeth requested that information but doesn't have the formal number.

It may be seen as a donation rather than the parents understanding it is paying for your supplies.

Jennifer Aldano asked if perhaps this is something class parents can help since they speak to parents and help in this but Elizabeth clarified that we don't seem to have that many class parents this year. Has reached out to them about sharing not that specifically but everything.

Waiting on better numbers from treasurer to figure out what to do. The PTA did share a video on how to change your name on zoom. Thinking of making video of how to do amazon smile etc.

Ms. Ramirez asked with respect to class parents was a letter sent out to all parents if they wanted to volunteer.

Elizabeth said that since in the beginning of the year the PTA didn't have class parent committee but now, they have it under comm which is what Karin Pavich is working on now. Will be working on it soon and will communicate with the teachers once that is done. Hoping to do that before they next PTA meeting. For the existing class parents we do communicate and many of them have what's app and/or Facebook groups.

Ms. Ramirez stated that all her students received their supplies so perhaps a reminder to parents that stated they received them and remind them to send in money.

Elizabeth stated she would like to do intermittent things to show its not just beginning of the year things we need supplies mid-year. The same with enrichment like how teachers share on dojo things from enrichment, but many parents still do not understand about enrichment. Would like to find a way to share enrichment with parents.

Will be reminding at the PTA meeting that all PTA parents are volunteers so people can understand.

Questions/comments:

Nicole Arriaga-Bell commented equitable supplies and perhaps adding a deadline so people can understand that there is a deadline for each year to understand.

Ms. Geller added that perhaps less wording on the flyer may be helpful.
A suggestion was made that the outgoing graduating class where they could donate \$23.00 to pay it forward to the next class.

School Leadership Team Meeting

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Additional individuals in attendance: Katherine Tsimis and Lambrini Matsas, vice principals.

Absent: Michelle Perr

Meeting Convened

Principal's Report

SLT Updates

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COVID Update

COVID continues ranging from 2-3 active cases on an average daily. Nothing alarming, several cases of students with RSV some hospitalized but we are not reporting them in the same way and also, we are not being informed in the same way. The message to

parents is if your child is sick, keep them home. It doesn't really matter what they have if they are sick, please keep them home.

We are going to continue to try and get the kids out for recess whenever the temperature is not too low. We have a bunch of winter gear in the lost and found. Parents should be reminded that they must put first and last name on anything they send their child school wearing.

Calendar

There is no school this week Thursday (11/24) or Friday (11/25) for Thanksgiving.

Spelling Bee:

The spelling bee went well in the classroom. The school wide even will be taking place Wednesday 11/23/2022. The 3 winners from our school will go on to the district level. Very excited about it.

Other new things:

All is well with the Budget. We did not lose any money on projections. Special Ed has exceeded what we planned on so all of our money situation seems to be fine.

We have made an offer to a new school aide. She will be starting as soon as she processes through the system. Her name is Dianne DiNicola and her projected start date is 12/1/2022. As soon as DOE clears her, she will begin.

At the last meeting we briefly discussed the computer-based testing for the state testing. We had said we would consider not using the 4th grade, but we will be using the 4th grade because we want them prepared for 5th grade testing when it will be fully computerized. We don't want them going into 5th grade without taking no tests on the computer at our school.

As a result of clicking yes and agreeing to begin some testing this year, we are getting a Wi-Fi upgrade. They have been at the school the last few days upgrading the Wi-Fi, they said withing 2 weeks of their completion. (2 weeks to install and then 2 weeks after that) the Wi-Fi speed will increase by 100%.

Ms. Geller thinks it is as a result of saying yes it appears to be happening. This is a great scenario for us because next year it will be required, and we don't know everyone will be able to get that. Very happy about the newer technology. These kids have a lot more computer-based learning that the kids did 5 years ago. I know that the 4th grade testing may be used for middle school, but it also may not. Hopefully the kids will be fine. The kids are comfortable on the computer. They have done the i-ready testing in

the computer the past few years and we will spend all year practicing. Hopefully there will be guided practice with the test as it gets closer. Everybody will be working on keyboarding skills.

The student government elections were voted and took place. Kids were elected we will be having an inauguration next week. A lot of kids voted. The nice part of the results is that it wasn't all kids from the same class that won. Makes it exciting because it was not a popularity contest they won based on qualifications.

Things are status quo lately.

We are still getting some enrollment. This tends to happen now as report cards go out (our report cards are going out a little later than most of the DOE) what ends up happening is the kids get the report card and families decide the charter school or whatever school they have the kids enrolled in is not for them and they go back to their zone school.

We have gotten several new admits in the last few days. We have received what we think is our 1st asylum seeking student.

We began noticing that since it got cold very quickly some kids that may not have the appropriate winter gear on. We will remind the teachers that if anybody notices someone needing socks, coats, etc. we do have that stuff and we do keep it confidential. if you know of someone who needs it and may not want to ask, please let us know privately. Ms. Geller texts Ms. Soper if she sees some child walking around without appropriate gear. Ms. Soper will then go the next day and find out if the child isn't wearing it to be defiant or because they are in need.

We are well stocked with socks, gloves, etc. we do take donations when we need, and we will let everyone know.

Ms. Soper mentioned we got some beautiful, knitted hats from the PTA which a few have been given out. We could use some more hats, but they would have to be new.

Report cards will be released on 11/30 and parent teacher conferences will be Thursday 12/1. They will all be virtual and all by appointment.

Teachers will have some flexibility in the conferences to go home 1st. Last year's hours was made mistakenly. Some of the teachers enjoyed being able to work through lunch and go home at 1:30 pm. Imagine that many of the conferences will not be held in the school site which should diminish the wi-fi issues. Hoping by the winter break the wi-fi should be updated.

Things are starting to pick back up. Many families were there for the multicultural event. We try to be mindful of the kids because if there is an event in the classroom and the adult parent has chosen not to get vaccinated that child will be the only one without a parent there and how would the child feel. We don't want to put the kids in the position

to question the parent. Trying to find a balance on how to do things. Hopefully as the days/months go by we will begin to do more in person. It is tricky because we don't want any feelings to get hurt. We are getting some push back from school safety. Seems like schools are the only place where they must prove vaccination which is making some parents feel frustrated. Hoping covid recording ends soon also. Sending home more covid tests so hopefully some people will test before coming back to school.

As of 11/15/2022 we now have automated call or text letting you know your child is out of school. Which is a blessing. The old system was pen and paper, but this is automated.

PTA Report:

Had a great cultural food night. It was all yummy and well attended but as mentioned we also had some issues at the door with vaccine requirement.

Got check from the Panera fundraiser and working on original works fundraiser.

Coming up events from the PTA:

Next social event will be a Movie Night on 1/18/2023. That is one we are reaching out to community affairs officer because Ms. Geller mentioned at hocus pocus event that they were interested in partnering for that.

Doing giving Tuesday requests for donation.

Trying to do class photos, 5th grade photos and re-takes all on the same day 1/24/2023. Relayed Ms. Geller comments to the photographer from the September picture day and hope to be able to do that. Apparently, we are an organized school in comparison to others. The date for that will be 1/24/2023.

Questions/comments:

Ms. Smith updated on school government. Had her 1st meeting kids and they are very excited and have lots of items on the agenda. The 1st thing we are doing is for giving Tuesday we are doing a little fundraiser for an organization that is close to one of the students. everyone will be getting a flyer. It will be kind of like the snow leopards. Also will have raffles to give out as well.