PS10 PTA Zoom Town Hall Meeting Minutes // April 23, 2020

Heather Volik (President)

- Welcome and thank you for joining our first ever PS10 PTA Zoom meeting. Tonight you will be hearing from Heather (President), Jenn Cribbs (Treasurer) and her team, Nick Moons (Extended Day), and Laura Scott (Principal). We wanted to host this meeting to inform everyone about what's been going on in the PS10 community.

- Thank you to all who sent questions in advance. We will also have an opportunity for people to ask questions after the speakers. You can chat with Jennine Carella with any questions you might have. The meeting will end at 9:30, but if any of your questions are not answered you can contact pta@ps10.org with questions, concerns, ideas, or anything else.

- We also want to give a huge thank you to our teachers who have worked so hard to move learning online.

Jenn Cribbs (Treasurer)

- In Konstella, there is a link to an updated budget (it was also shared as an attachment to a Konstella announcement). This does not show any actual income beyond February because we have not been able to reconcile March and April without access to our files. We are working on resolving that in the next few weeks. The Read-a-thon did raise at least $40,000. About one third of those checks are still in the PTA safe, but we will be depositing those in the next few weeks. If anyone wrote checks that have not yet been cashed and if you have had a change in your financial situation and would like us NOT to cash them, please reach out to treasurer@pta.ps10.org.

- The total budgeted expenses and income for this fiscal year were about $350,000. In the attached budget (sent via Konstella) you can see that we have adjusted that to respond to people's financial realities, and therefore ability to give, shifting; to the cancellation of all of our remaining events; and the reduction of vendor payments that were supporting the amazing programming at PS10. We've also accounted for new family, teacher, and administration needs in the adjusted budget. We now project spending to be around $295,000 this year. Our current projections show us falling about $16,000 short of that in income.

- As mentioned, we believe Read-a-thon netted about $40,000 this year. Thank you all so much for your participation in that event! If that number holds once we get through everything that was still in the PTA office, for us to break even this year, we need about $37,000 in individual and corporate contributions above and beyond what we've already raised. We've already spent more than $4,000 in emergency funding supporting families in need and helping families and the administration as moving learned online. Since then we have also committed to using existing budget lines to offer each teacher a $50 gift card in addition to the $160 they already have from the PTA to cover costs they incurred while setting up remote learning in their homes. We also want to continue to do right by our vendors, so we are paying for work that was already done and some work our vendors are doing to support online learning for us. The DOE has stopped all vendor payments, so the remainder of all of that will fall to the PTA.

- Even if we do not raise any additional funds this year, we have a cushion in savings that we can dip into to cover this cost and to continue our practice of fronting payments to the school each year in order to immediately get push-in teachers into classrooms, lunch and recess support on board, and the Facelab program off the ground and running, well before donations for next fiscal year have come in.

- If you have needs that have not been met, please reach out to the PTA Executive Board (pta@ps10.org) and Laura Scott and let us know. We still have flexibility to meet your needs and will do everything we can.

Nick Moons (Extended Day Co-chair)

- We are still employing all of our full-time staff, and we are working to move everything forward so that we are up and running again when we do return to school. We've been talking about kindergarten outreach for new families and some other programming initiatives that we would like to begin in the fall.

- I know there have been a lot of questions about where we are with our part-time, line staff, and paras. We have dipped into our rainy day fund to continue paying these employees (those who have chosen to stay on the payroll). Some employees have chosen to be laid off to take advantage of unemployment, but many have stayed on.

- We are currently applying for the second round of the pandemic-related PPP loan for non-profits. We are hoping that will come through. If it doesn't, we have enough saved up to help us get through this rainy day.

- We still have about $30,000 in unpaid invoices from parents from the winter session, and we've been trying to reach out to settle these debts with parents on a one-on-one basis. We understand that people's financial situations have changed and we are willing to work with people to set up payment plans and scholarships as necessary. But we will try to clear up as much of those unpaid invoices as possible. You can always reach out to Nick at ed.chair@pta.ps10.org or to the PTA at pta@ps10.org.

Laura Scott (Principal)

- The teachers and administrators need your help in making sure that we are meeting your children's needs, and so we welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions. You should feel free to reach out at anytime. We hope you enjoyed the video that the staff put together and shared last week via Konstella.

- Some teachers and staff have been ill, but are on the road to recovery. That may be one reason why some of them may not have had many live sessions with your children. Please be respectful of the fact that they may not want to share the reason they haven't been able to engage with your children 'live' up until now. Please also note that live sessions **are not** mandatory.

- In terms of the budget, there have been modifications and severe cuts. We have already secured funds to protect our staff, including substitute teachers. And we've already purchased quite a bit of technology to support the distant learning initiative should it continue into September. We also did get some supplies so we can hit the ground running in September. I want to thank the PTA for supporting us. Most families who needed additional tech support were covered by the PTA when the DOE couldn't fulfill all requests for our families' needs for laptop devices in a timely manner.

- Many times the DOE has a press conference to announce important information that we are not privy to. School administrators are often hearing this info for the first time as well. We thank you for your understanding especially when we don't have answers readily available. It's simply because we truly don't know the answers.

- It is my understanding that breakfast and lunch will continue to be served, but some of the additional programs the school administration supported will most likely not continue (Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, for example). One good thing to look forward to is that the bathrooms on the third and fourth floors were completed. So when our children return to school, they will return to brand new bathrooms which is something to look forward to.

- There was a question from our parents about grading policies and matriculation (moving children forward to the next grade). That announcement is going to be a universal one with the decision to be made by the DOE maybe sometime next week. We anticipate that a majority of our students will advance to the next grade, and we will be in the process of facilitating that once we receive guidance from Central DOE. Classes will be formed for next year, and class sizes should be similar to what they are now. Registers and students generate the need for staff, but based on demand for seats at K280 and PS10, I don't anticipate losing full-time staff. I am a bit concerned about our substitute teachers, and I am not sure what their future may be as the DOE will be facing a huge deficit.

- There have been many questions regarding live teaching during remote learning. I am not able to mandate that teachers engage with children in that way or conduct live teaching lessons across all grade levels. Teachers are navigating technology as are parents, and we are trying to help them in the best way possible. We are aware that student engagement is important, and we have had meetings all this week about ways to make that happen, especially in a way that parents will find more appealing. We are improving upon our Google Classrooms and hope to include more read-alouds across the grades. We will also have virtual lessons and assignments posted as well as some short pre-recorded lessons by teachers. Posted recorded lessons will be determined collaboratively by the teachers on each grade and we hope this will be helpful to parents. Teachers feel strongly about work being similar across the grade but they often prefer to engage their own students Our one-on-one paras are being prepared to reach out to children to conduct small group sessions as well as group playdates that will also be posted in Google Classrooms.

- We plan to create something called "Dial a Teacher." We've worked with our substitute teachers in an effort to make them available to help parents in need or to help parents understand and teach a concept to their children. That information will be made available in teachers' google classrooms.

- We will also have separate cluster classrooms in grades K-5, and parents will be able to contact those teachers directly to ask questions. Please note that no child will be penalized for work that is not completed in a cluster activity. We are being very flexible about work that is submitted in general, and we understand the challenges that parents face. Enrichment activities are being posted for children who finish their work quickly and are looking for additional activities.

- Zoom vs. Google Meet: The Dept. of Ed has mandated that teachers can no longer use Zoom because it was reported that some older students displayed inappropriate images during Zoom sessions. It was also reported that uninvited guests have been able to gain access to meetings. The DOE moved to Google Meet and Microsoft teamsters a result. We, however , have encountered some issues with the google meets platform. For example, in Google Meet, teachers cannot mute students, and so group mangement has become an issue and disruptions have occurred during meetings. Teachers have received extensive training on Google Meet, but they are still experiencing problems with resolution and sound quality. We have to meet the needs of our community, so some teachers at PS10 will continue to use Zoom until they master google meets. We are meeting with teachers this week to communicate that they have the ability to use either platform temporarily.

- IEPs and special support services: Barrett Braithwaite (Assistant Principal, bbraithwaite@ps10.org) continues to oversee this, and we plan to move forward with IEPs. The therapists are also trying their best to reach out remotely, although one therapist has had technological difficulties.
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- In the area of mental health, Ursula Koeffer (a district administrator) is offering mindfulness sessions from 7:30-8:25 Mondays and Fridays and yoga sessions daily from 8:30-9:15. If interested, please reach out to Ukoeffer@schools.nyc.gov or call 970-400-1388.

- Graduation and stepping up: If we return to the building before the end of the school term, we will absolutely do something for kindergarten and preK, and we will have some type of graduation ceremony for fifth graders. If we don't return to the school by June, the teachers are already entertaining ideas for virtual ceremonies. If you have any ideas, please reach out to one of the APs or to me.

- Finally, there was a question about how parents can support the teachers and staff. I cannot thank parents enough for the moral support as well as the funding support and donations that parents have made. Thank you!

Town Hall Questions:

Q: Outside of cluster classes, will children be penalized for not completing the main classroom work?
Laura Scott: No child will be penalized. We understand that the children are not getting the instructional support they might need, and our expectations reflect an understanding of that and are therefore flexible.

Q: Will the school year end earlier or go until late June as planned?
Laura Scott: We still do not know. We are awaiting direction from the DOE.

Q: Will lessons be available to students across the grade level (for example, if another teacher does a lesson)?
Laura Scott: Yes, we are discussing and working on that right now. Teachers on each grade will make that determination.

Q: Can teachers and substitute teachers use sick leave for COVID-19?
Laura Scott: Yes, that is ongoing, and we have had some substitute teachers step in already.

Q: Can you define cluster teachers?
Laura Scott: Teachers who teach Art, Gym, Music, Science, Theater Arts, Computers.

Q: What is happening to the Next Generation Learning Standards that were supposed to roll out in 2021?
Laura Scott: Next Generation Standards have been pushed back to 2022.

Q: Some students want to know when the next student council meeting will be because they miss it.
Laura Scott: I may be able to have a Google Meet meeting with student council members sometime next week. Students should look out for an email soon.

Q: What programs are in jeopardy for next year and how will it be decided what will be cut?

Laura Scott: I am trying to find a way to support FaceLab, but I don't know what the budget will look like until the end of May at the earliest. I don't know yet whether Title 1 funds or

programs like the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music will be cut. We are lucky that our PTA supports many of the Artist in residence programs in our school.

Jenn Cribbs (Treasurer): Our plan on how we build our budget has not changed. We will work hand-in-hand with the administration based on what the DOE is willing to cover and what they will not and on the timing of those payments. It is likely that the PTA will end up paying for most fall payments to push-in teachers and vendors and the PS10 administration will pay for spring payments when their budget opens up. There are a lot of unknowns and it may be that we need to scale back on the intensity of some of our programs, but we are not, at this point, looking to cut anything until we have further information. Like we did last year, we are planning on sending out a survey in the next few weeks asking you which of the programs at PS10 have been the most meaningful for your you and for your children. The outcome of that survey, and of a survey that will also go to teachers and the various committees that support events and programming at PS10, will have a very significant impact on how we prioritize expenditures should cuts need to be made.

Laura Scott: We also have so many student needs to be met, and those will always take precedence over extracurricular activities and artist in residence programs. For those who have asked how you can support us, the best way is to continue to support the PTA. We are able to offer many programs as a result of the PTA's involvement and financial support, and I can't thank you and them. enough.

Heather Volik: Speaking of support for the PTA, I just want to chime in regarding PTA elections, which were supposed to be taking place now. Because elections need to take place in person according to PTA by-laws, the current executive board has agreed to stay on through September. We will have elections in the fall for new members who would like to join. So please continue to support the PTA with your donations, but we also need your participation as a volunteer on the executive board or running the many events that help support our school.

Q: Who do parents reach out to for tech support, particularly with Google Classroom?
Laura Scott: Please email techhelp@ps10.org. Also, when you go into the cluster classrooms, make sure you use your child's login because that helps to ensure program security and the identity our students This way teachers can make sure the right students are participating in the online/live sessions.

Q: It's sad that fifth graders are not coming back. Is there anything we can do for them?

Laura Scott: Mr. Nusser is working with a group of students on yearbooks, and they will have T-shirts and souvenirs. If anyone has other suggestions or ideas, please reach out.

Perhaps we can create a video together of students engaged in an activity or do something else fun and unique for them.

AnnMarie Anderson (Author Committee Co-chair): Grades K, first, and second had author visits during the first half of the school year, and now we are looking into doing virtual author visits for third, fourth, and especially the fifth grade. Nothing is definite, but we may also be able to get each fifth grader a book by a visiting author.

Q: How can people make donations to the PTA?

Laura Garnett (PTA VP): You can make a donation via Konstella at: https://www.konstella.com/app/school/57bca26de4b06d68cc8510bb/donations/5bfd3f2de4b0dcc4a186dd87
If you use Amazon, you can select PS10 as your beneficiary via Amazon Smile.

Heather Volik: If your corporation does corporate matching, please reach out to treasurer@pta.ps10.org.

Q: Has Read-a-thon been tallied and is there a way to announce the winners?
Jenn Cribbs: The Read-a-thon tallying process is lengthy, and the Read-a-thon was completed only one week before we went into quarantine. The Read-a-thon Committee was able to count about two-thirds of the donations and tally sheets, but about one third is still in the safe at school. We are working hard to gain access to those materials and hope to be able to tally everything in the next 4-6 weeks. We would then do our best to announce the winners publically somehow (perhaps via Zoom or Facebook Live) in order to celebrate their achievements.

Q: Will report cards be distributed by the end of the year?
Laura Scott: I don't know that yet as that is something the DOE is still determining. It is likely that fourth and fifth graders will get some sort of report card grade since it is sometimes needed for middle school.

Q: Where will children start off in September? Will they pick up where they left off in March?
Laura Scott: Yes, it's likely that second graders will pick up with first grade curriculum in the fall since we can't just skip ahead if material hasn't been covered. But that is still being determined, and this is something affecting the entire state and nation.

Q: There are families who still need computers on the call.
Laura Scott: Today was the deadline for families to reach out to the DOE, so please contact me (lscott3@schools.nyc.gov) or the PTA (pta@ps10.org) and we will do our best to help.

Q: How will parent-teacher conferences be handled?
Laura Scott: Our last parent-teacher conference was in March, and after that point we just have the curriculum night in May. I don't know yet what that will look like, but as soon as I have a better idea, I will let you know.

Comment: A parent wanted to give a shout-out to Ms. Bookman, the Theater Arts teacher, who has been working really hard to engage with the children.

Q: Can parents purchase computers / tablets for families in need?
Laura Scott: Yes! There are no restrictions. Please reach out to me (lscott@ps10.org) or the PTA (pta@ps10.org), and thank you!

Q: Is there any assistance available for Spanish or non-English speaking parents?
Laura Scott: School aides are reaching out to families right now, but families should also reach out to me (lscott@ps10.org), the PTA (pta@ps10.org), or one of the Assistant Principals. We do have people available to assist.

PS10 contacts:
Principal:
Laura Scott lscott@ps10.org

Assistant Principals:
Barrett Braithwaite bbraithwaite@ps10.org (IEPs, Special Education)
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