



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: April 7, 2020 from 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location: Zoom meeting

Agenda:

- **Welcome** - Amanda Dubois (PA President Manhattan)
- **PA Announcements**
- **Dr. Dan Brenner** - overview and updates
- **Q&A**

| Topic & Discussant | Discussion |
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| Welcome from PA President – Amanda Dubois | Amanda welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced the aforementioned agenda. Thank you to Dr. Brenner, the Principals, everyone for supporting our children during this difficult time. Events <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Officially cancelled the Food Fair - thanks to the committee● Acknowledged the passing of Sal Uy● Smiling Masks Concert will be scheduled for Wednesday, April 15 |

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| <p>Dr. Dan Brenner, Executive Director</p> | <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thank you for attending ● There are 492 participants on the line ● Hoping everyone is safe and healthy ● Acknowledged the passing of Sal Uy, Associate Executive Director, dear friend, buddy, and “my right hand during my first 18 months”. <p>Quick update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All staff who were ill are feeling better. - Mr. McIntosh was the slowest to recover but he is now up and about - What's clear to us after two weeks, this is wearing on everyone. This new normal is something that is taking a toll. - We are seeing acts of kindness with the 7pm acts of kindness to salute first responders and health care workers - Parents working from home with kids at home - now a full home 24-7 - Zoom protocols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You can ask questions through the Q and A function on zoom - For those of you, the chat button is a button to allow you to see what everyone else is writing. The chat is public, and everyone can see it. <p><i>Building a new online school structure for students and parents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MS/TH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - try to mirror current schedule - teachers took a crash course on how to use the platforms to transfer teaching online - Zoom - a lot written about zoom (i.e. zoom bombing) - we will be able to avoid the security breach that affected the country through password protected protocols - UNIS intends to use zoom as we move ahead - in conjunction with Schoology - Junior School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenge with JS - they aren't in a Schoology platform-based position. - We are in the midst of getting more face to face discussion with the hope that students will see their classmates and teachers during class. - Teachers are working hard to have content - Many parents have shared that they have turned into Junior School teachers - but we know that children's attention is harder when 6,7,8 years of age rather than older - we need support from home to keep educational process ahead - We will provide JS schedules online with teachers- we know that routines are important for children and for parents - Music Lessons |
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| Q and A | <p><i>While the teachers are doing a herculean effort, any thought about extending the school year or coming back early?</i></p> <p>We aren't going to extend the year or start early. In order to have summer school it would require our teachers to work longer, which would be to pay them beyond their contract. It's not about the money. It's about what we are providing. We are really making an effort to provide the best program. I want to look around the city, and I want to be able to say that UNIS is doing better than any other school in the city. Our goal is to have our students continue to learn. We can't make up the social interaction. We started our afterschool language program - we're able to extend the day - we are going to offer a 3rd language in the Middle School. We are trying to think outside the box. The real sadness is how do we build the fabric that makes UNIS special?</p> <p><i>How has this impacted the financial health of school?</i></p> <p>UNIS is financially healthy - enrollment numbers are parallel to last year. I know there are families that have been impacted by this financially. We will do our best to invest in families that have been here for a long time. We have limited funds, but we are here to support people. For those that are really struggling, we encourage you to reach out to the CFO, Michael Feeney.</p> <p><i>Is UNIS tracking the health of parents/students/faculty/admin?</i></p> <p>Every morning we review what will happen with administrative staff - part of the conversation is about whether others have been infected. The reporting back has become less frequent. We aren't hearing back about kids who have had the virus. We have 1 suspected teacher who hasn't been tested. You still can't go to a hospital to get tested. One teacher has newly shown symptoms. I am sure that there are many people who have had the virus, besides the 6 people originally identified.</p> <p><i>What about the student community service requirements?</i></p> <p>We are going to show flexibility - people should not get worked up about what was and how we are going to make it work with what is. NYC cancelled the NYS Regents and we will be in line - we don't make kids casualties.</p> <p><i>Will there be parent-teacher conferences?</i></p> <p>One of the things we've made a point of - we need to stay connected more than ever to our families - I'm not sure how this will apply to the conferences. We haven't decided quite yet.</p> <p><i>How will the teachers be able to follow the students' classwork and homework?</i></p> |
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| | <p>We have Schoology, Google Meet, and then putting in Zoom systemwide. We brought in other contract service folks to address parents' tickets. There should be a seamless way for information to be transmitted.</p> <p><i>If the school doesn't open before the end of year, will there be an opportunity for people to retrieve their items, such as medications?</i></p> <p>Yes, there will be a way. We still have maintenance folk who are keeping building up, but we are not letting people in.</p> <p><i>How will IA contribute to overall pass-fail for T4 students?</i></p> <p>I don't have that answer - this will be a decision where teachers are integral in. I assume we will iron this out in a couple of weeks so that everyone has full knowledge on what you need to have to pass. You can approach it from two ways - as the least amount of work to do to pass ("senioritis"); there is learning for learning's sake.</p> <p><i>In the junior school, the specialist lessons have been inconsistent - when they are rolling out with more regularity?</i></p> <p>In the next 5-7 school days, Pascal will put a new schedule out for parents. There are challenges - such as Junior School Art - the amount of supplies there is significant - most people don't have these supplies at home - so we are faced with those challenges - some of that will come to a Junior School near you. Physical education- we really need to do; science; music. We are fully aware that the specials are critical, and we need to deliver those.</p> <p><i>How about the language program?</i></p> <p>2 days of live instruction v. 2 days assisted instruction - no one has been charged for things that they haven't received.</p> <p><i>There are difficulties when families have more than 1 child in junior school - asking for flexibility as far as activities?</i></p> <p>We are sensitive to this - Zoom lessons will be recorded in the Junior School. This is a live and learn situation. There are complications too with teachers who have their own children at home.</p> <p><i>Are there Queens-specific questions?</i></p> <p>We were working with the food vendor to ensure that they will reimburse. One of the nice things is that being small is easier to navigate. Barbara has done a terrific job as well as Susana, their tech person. There are concerns about music lessons but all in all Queens has done an admirable job.</p> <p><i>Have there been any staff layoffs?</i></p> |
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| | <p>We are approaching this as UNIS is a family - there are no layoffs. There are people contracted to work here whose employment situation we cannot control - for example the kitchen staff from Flick. Some security staff are contracted out. If there is a mass family exodus in September, then we'd have to re-examine.</p> <p><i>Some questions about kids who have accommodations and different learning styles?</i></p> <p>Our SST teams have been active, and efforts made to connect. For some kids, zoom is hard for them to concentrate and focus on. It's not always successful in coordinating with the Board of Ed for services. This is an area that we will have some kids will be struggling because it's not the optimal way to learn.</p> <p><i>Will teachers discuss the causes and effects of the coronavirus crisis as part of their curriculum?</i></p> <p>I'm not sure but I would bet that our teachers have taken the opportunity to use this as a teaching moment. I can't imagine kids not wanting to talk about it.</p> <p><i>Where should parents go if they have feedback? How can we support teachers?</i></p> <p>If it's about the classroom, go to the teacher. and then go up the chain of command. How to support teachers? Write them a thank you note!</p> <p><i>Are we having MAP testing?</i></p> <p>No, we won't be able to do this - abandon this for this year.</p> <p><i>There is some confusion of when afterschool languages started.</i></p> <p>I believe that some started today and some tomorrow. Paco then shared Mandarin on Thursday and Portuguese started on Monday.</p> <p><i>Will spring events that were cancelled happen in the fall?</i></p> <p>I don't know. We are exploring what will happen to graduation. Many students want live graduation, but we haven't decided.</p> <p><i>Will there be a refund?</i></p> <p>We built a budget that doesn't provide for tuition refunds or rebates.</p> <p><i>Are you following the Mayor's decisions regarding school reopening?</i></p> |
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| | <p>I don't know - it depends - it would be very difficult for us to reopen school if the public schools aren't opened. I wouldn't be comfortable to assume that we knew more than the city. The city has many children who have to get their meals only through school.</p> <p><i>For Queens families - are the afterschool classes for languages going to be provided?</i> They are run for Manhattan campus families. I'll talk about it with Barbara.</p> <p><i>There is a large outpouring of gratitude and appreciation for transparency</i> I appreciate that. These are collective efforts that take place - I'm a conduit of a lot of information from administrators and teachers- the hard work goes to the folks who are in the day to day trenches with the kids and the administrators that make it happen. I'm appreciative of this. I share this with administrators, and I know how much it means to them.</p> <p><i>There are multiple questions about whether it was recorded.</i> Yes, it will be shared on the web.</p> <p>Closing remarks from Amanda Pascal - thank you for making this happen. If need anything from PA, please reach out to us. Concluded at 8:13 PM</p> |
| Closing | Next meeting: Friday, May 1, 2020 (Tentative) |