

PS 516 Sunset Park Avenues Elementary School Leadership Team (SLT)
 November 13, 2018
 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
 Mezzanine Room

Present	Absent	Guests
Jill Smith Amber Rashid Michelle Giambo Amanda Blevins Rachael Sullivan- UFT rep Carrie Fleming Courtney Epton Deanna Abrams -PTA rep Amy Miles Tara Bringley	Meghan Wilder	Sarah Hinton

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm.
 We read last meeting's [Minutes](#) and approved them with edits.

Principal's Report

We looked at data around the demographics of our school and what types of outcomes different subgroups are producing. Our student demographics are as follows: 78.2% hispanic, 14.4% asian, 7% white, 0.4% black, gender is relatively equal, free and reduced lunch = 80.9%, ¾ of our population is below the poverty line. Our staff demographics are as follows: 18.4% Asian, 5.08% Black, 32.2% Hispanic, 8.47% Multiracial, 35.59% White.

We spoke about the need to increase diversity in our leadership teams, such as SLT and the PTA. We discussed efforts that have already been made, but also what more we could be doing. We discussed utilizing our whole school events (Pajama Jam, Arts & Technology Night, etc) to recruit families of all backgrounds to participate in the decision making process of our school.

We reviewed the SLT Mission Statement, which is as follows:

The mission of the SLT will be to provide a forum for parents, administrators, and staff to collaborate and function as a unifying voice, that reflects the diversity of our student body. SLT is a space to enact change and enhance the quality of education at PS 516, with the goal of developing kids as people who have agency over themselves and their world.

We also reviewed Ms. Smith's principal rating from the 2017-2018 school year.

We looked at data around our 2018 3rd and 4th grade ELA and Math test results and discussed the correlation between test scores and reading levels. We also discussed how reading interventions helped 1st grade students last year and how we can continue that growth within the general classroom setting.

We discussed our work with the Learning Partners Program (LPP), which is focusing on racial equity. Our ELA data from last year shows that our students of color are reading below grade level at greater rates, and we discussed what we are doing to break those trends. The LPP vision statement is as follows:

To achieve racial equity, teachers will create an environment in which students are able to understand and express their identities. Teachers will do this by first exploring their own identities and biases, and building awareness of the identities of others within the classroom community. Teachers will make specific curriculum and resource choices that mirror student identity and experiences, but also provide a window to other identities and experiences. Teachers are mindful and proactive in recognizing and addressing academic gaps that arise through racial inequality.

As a result of these practices, students know who they are, who their classmates are, and feel like a significant part of the community. This empowers them to start taking academic risks and become independent learners. Students are able to articulate their thoughts and question each other's thinking in productive ways. All students are fully engaged in a rigorous learning experience.

Teachers' Report

Teachers discussed their Professional Development session with the Center for Racial Justice in Education. We discussed the history of race and racism in the United States. We also focused on breaking down our own biases about race by reflecting on own experiences. We role played school scenarios and how to address racism in the classroom. A good start in not shying away from these discussions. More work needs to be done. Parents asked how the PTA can help. Teachers shared that the curriculum and read alouds could be more diverse. A parent suggested we find books that have characters who are diverse and face everyday problems, not solely issues based on race.

We discussed the progress of each grades' integrated unit. The topics are as follows: Kindergarten has a spring integrated unit on Sunset Park, first grade is exploring the relationship between transportation and the environment, second grade is studying democracy, third grade is learning about ancient Egypt, fourth grade is exploring extreme weather, and fifth is focusing on this essential question: Did Christopher Columbus unjustly colonize the Americas?

We discussed our Teacher's College staff development, which is working on improving students' writing structure, how to have small group discussions in reading, and using small group instruction to help struggling readers and writers.

Teachers shared their work on the LPP “Problem of Practice” committee. A “problem of practice” noticed by PS 516 is that many white hispanic males are not able to independently explain their mathematical understanding when solving word problems either written or orally. They will work with PS 1 and PS 54 to make a change idea. The common focus area is student engagement. The team visits one school a month then will rotate schools the following months.

We shared updates from the Arts Committee. We are finalists for the Disney Musical at the school. All grades will have an arts residency this year.

Parents’ Report

Parents discussed differentiation, asking that students who are on or above grade level receive more engaging work. They suggested including more challenging and/or creative homework in lieu of fluency sheets. A parent also stated the math application problems during family Friday were too easy based on parent feedback. Mrs. Smith suggested that we analyze the homework going home and compare it to the mission statement. Parents have very different views on homework and many parents prefer more rote homework. Research supports the idea that independent reading is one of the most valuable activities students can engage in after school. She added that parents ask for rote work because it helps them connect with their child’s school work. On the other hand, parents in lower grades have requested no homework in the past.

Parents gave an update on class parents. Pre-K through second grade have class parents, but third grade through fifth do not. A parent asked how can the PTA can connect with those parents? All parent volunteers are on Remind so they have a way to communicate.

Parents gave an update on school clothes. The online orders have arrived, but we are still waiting on cash orders. Once all the uniforms come in, we will do another round. We discussed the possibility of including our school logo, and having more school spirit days.

Parents discussed PTA updates. The translation headsets have made PTA meetings more efficient. We discussed having conversations at PTA meetings that are high interest amongst all parents. It’s important to have open conversations about school issues, like we did with the uniform policy. We value hearing each other and various perspectives from school and home. A parent suggested having specific forums for these conversations outside of PTA meetings and bring food to encourage people to come.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02