



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: September 13th, 2019 from 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM

Location: UNIS Café

Agenda:

- **Welcome** – Amanda Dubois - President (Manhattan)
- **Introductions and PA Announcements** – Amanda Dubois - President (Manhattan)
- **Executive Director Update** – Dan Brenner
- **Q&A**

Topic & Discussant	Discussion
Welcome from PA President - Amanda Dubois	<p>Amanda welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced the aforementioned agenda. “Parents’ Association is only as strong as its membership! We hope you want to get involved in any way that you can.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced all the officers of the PA and school coordinators – they are a resource for the parents.
PA Goals	<p>Amanda reviewed the goals of the PA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with UNIS families to increase interest in and understanding of the function of the PA. All UNIS families are members of the PA. • Encourage and organize family and community volunteer opportunities by promoting programs and social activities that heighten school and international community spirit and promote humanitarian efforts. • Represent UNIS families and act as a conduit to raise awareness around community-wide questions or concerns, as well as improving communication channels within the parent community and between parents

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	<p>and the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise and distribute PA funds in a purposeful manner to support school-wide programs and enhance the education of our children. • Support school fundraising and outreach efforts which enhance school programs and initiatives.
<p>Introduction of the Members of the UNIS PA's Executive Committee (ExComm)</p>	<p>ExComm Member Introductions:</p> <p><i>President:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda Dubois <p><i>Queens PA President:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ariela Frieder <p><i>Vice Presidents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipra Das • Dilshad Marolia <p><i>Secretaries:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angela Tolosa • Natica Wilson <p><i>Finance Coordinators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amy Cohen • Ivana Krizanic • Monique Navarro <p><i>JS School Coordinators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denise DeBono • Nadine Lemm <p><i>MS Coordinators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helen Stephan • Ivana Krizanic

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	<p><i>TH Coordinators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flavia Campi • Laura Blau <p><i>Arts Committee (incl: Music, Visual, Theater, Film):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devika Gopal Agge • Charul Gopal • Magda Vakil <p><i>New2UNIS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denise Gatpoh • Nilima Parker <p><i>Bridge2UN:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hong Xiao <p><i>UAA:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kay Kuzbari • Demetrios Mihailidis • Caroline Moses <p><i>Cultural Events:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irina Ivleva • Jinhwa Jo • Maricruz Setien
Involvement	<p>Getting Involved: Amanda reiterated that all parents were welcome to get involved and volunteer. Parents are encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to the relevant school coordinators or committee coordinator with any questions/concerns. • Come to the PA meetings and learn about upcoming events • Attend relevant school's Coffee Mornings • Read the relevant school principal's weekly newsletter • Contact the PA through unispa@unis.org to volunteer, raise questions/concerns or share ideas

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Upcoming events	<p>Dates to Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 16: TH Back to School Night • September 17: New2UNIS Info Latte • September 17: TH Picture Day • September 18: JS Specialist's Night • September 18-20: TH Week without Walls • September 23: M3 Info Session on Outdoor Environmental Education Trip • September 25: JS Coffee Morning • October 2 to 4: M3 Outdoor Environmental Education Trip • October 5: JS Cardboard Challenge • October 8: MS Picture Day • October 9: MS Parent Coffee • October 10: JS Picture Day • October 11: PA Meeting • October 16: TH Parent Coffee • October 18: UN Day Celebrated • October 21 to 24: No Classes
UN DAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be celebrated at UNIS on Friday, October 18, 2019 • Celebrates the diversity of our exceptional community and our unique connection to the UN • International breakfasts are held in classrooms • Students, parents and faculty are encouraged to dress in their national or "heart country" clothing • Green Guides needed to help ensure this is a Zero Waste event • More details to follow
Parent Sustainability Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda introduced Karen Weissman to support UN Day sustainability efforts. • Karen Weissman will be leading this effort and everyone is welcome to get involved. • Parents were encouraged to stay for 15 minutes after the meeting for green guide training.
Introduction from the	Introduction of Dr. Dan Brenner:

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Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner (Dan Brenner) was introduced by Amanda. • Dr. Brenner congratulated the group on coming out in such a large number. He stated that he wanted to introduce himself, his vision for UNIS and then take questions. • Dr. Brenner started with a few questions for the group to get a sense of who was in the room and asked parents to stand up as he queried who is new at the school, been here 5 years, 10 years or more than 15 years. He also asked the UNIS staff to stand up.
	<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner said that he's had a warm collaboration with the PA and encouraged all parents to volunteer and be active with the PA • He introduced all the administrators and asked them to provide their tenure in years to date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Andrew Bryne, Director of HR ,new ○ Antoine Delaitre, TH Principal, 4 years ○ Pascal Valley, JS Principal, 5 years ○ Jennifer Amos, Chief Academic Officer, new ○ Sochendra Samreth, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, 10 years ○ Paco Barba Moran, Director of Modern Languages, 2 years ○ Kim Bruno, Director of Arts, new ○ Guy Evans, Director of Physical Ed, 5 years ○ Michael Feeney, CFO, 2 months ○ Elaine Kelly, MS Principal, 15 years ○ Camelia Perez, MS Assistant Principal, new ○ Zakaria Baha, Director of Student Services 20 years ○ Susan Ezner, Executive Assistant, 10 years ○ Michelle Bertrand, Director of Special Events, 13 years ○ Lidana Jalilvand, Director of Special Programs, 35 years ○ Sean Collins, Director, UN Fund, 3 years ○ Kenya Washington, TH Assistant Principal, 15 years <p>Reflecting on Today:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner noted that there is a lot of effort putting professional development into teaching staff. Over 100 teachers participated in a weeklong summer institute at school. • Dr. Brenner proceeded to take questions from parent body.
Q&A	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent asked last year we discussed how there are gaps between different UNIS families and want to know what has been accomplished? <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner shared that one of the main issues is the tuition increase affecting UN parents, for example. He said he was hopeful there would be significant relief coming ahead. The Board and Board chair have been active on this issue. • As far as cooperation between groups, Dr. Brenner noted that the activities he participated in there are families from both UN and non-UN households, such as the Food Fair. • He noted he would look to create activities that are inclusive for all.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent asked what was the plan for languages - one of the comparative advantages of the school is that children can learn all 6 UN languages, but it may not be possible for Russian given low enrollment. <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner shared when a language starts, it stays – the classes in language rarely go higher than 13 and can go as low as 1. There is a commitment to serve languages. Much of the education provided is built on languages – we have 61 language teachers. • If there is a specific issue, please find Dr. Brenner after the meeting or make an appointment. • Lidana added that as of this morning, the Russian language class would actually begin.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T1 parent queried the status of the potential regulations by NYS Department of Education up in the air that were disseminated over the summer. <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner sent an email over the summer saying that all independent schools would have to provide

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	<p>education similar to the public school system which would limit some of the freedoms that UNIS enjoys.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter writing campaign began. • NY State Ed Dept. did not feel that specific parochial schools weren't meeting standards so it revisited its current laws and now seeking to enforce requirements on course curriculum and "substantial and equivalent" schooling akin to the public school system. • NYS Ed Dept. Commissioner left the department three weeks after letters were submitted. Over 15,000 letters submitted. • Dr. Brenner will come back to parents if this becomes an issue again. Letters make a difference because they listen to those.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent noticed that the rooftop playground needs repair and wanted to know the plans to repair it. <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner noted that rooftop playground was a failed experiment. Water is under the surface of parts of playground and flash patches all across. They are exploring a larger fix for the roof and closed a section. Since they closed it, some other conditions have arisen. • Dr. Brenner said they are going to back to flash patches temporarily. They will look at all space to the torn patch and make sure it's safe and remains safe, until we can redo the roof. That project won't likely happen this year. • For the JS playground, he said they are doing testing to make sure the building is sound. • Pascal Vallet said that they will be bringing a giant chess set to the playground.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent asked what is the goal of the UNIS capital campaign? <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner shared that he will come back to the parents later this year with a vision, which may not be capital ideas.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Junior School parent asked how does UNIS compare to other schools that raise money. For example, he shared that schools with less children raise more money. He asked how we can work together to help raise money to make this function better. <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner stated that one of the beauties of UNIS is that it is not like other schools and the likelihood of raising comparative funds is unlikely. • UNIS looks for maximum involvement of parents based on what they can afford -- that may not be the same for UNIS compared to schools on the Upper West Side and Upper East Side of Manhattan. • That is a challenge as UNIS has the same needs • UNIS' means to get the needs have to be different and may be creative • Dr. Brenner stated he would look to see how to involve member states and foundations as well. • They have a three pronged approach – need parents involvement, need parents involved in UNIS fund, and need other avenues of revenue stream. UNIS has to acknowledge our realities. • This is a building built in 1974 and remains largely the same.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A J4 parent asked about how technology is integrated in the curriculum and was concerned with the use of apps and videos and little apprehensive about how computers are used in all classes. <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner shared that use of technology depends on the division where the students are. The acceptable use policy is standard and all students have to complete. They are also audited on this process. • Pascal Vallet encouraged the parent to go to JS homepage and look to technology to see the vision. They know the concern – rather than be a victim, we want technology to support us to have a better life. He is happy to discuss this at a JS parent coffee. • Dr. Brenner said that technology is a tool and not the driving force in an educational plan. If parents sense that's taking place, please reach out to the principals, Jen or Sochenda.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A JA and M2 parent noted that a lot of work has been done regarding curriculum development. 1) when will new staff be able to share updates and 2) when will needs of children be addressed from either end.

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	<p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner shared there was a lot of work done last year and over the summer. For example, all Spanish teachers meet together monthly across divisions. UNIS now has a Chief Academic Officer to ensure that children are getting similar experiences regardless of class or grade level. • UNIS is looking into the scope and sequence of the curriculum, which remains ongoing work.
	<p><i>Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent questioned a description of UNIS in a booklet by ISAAGNY that is not precise. It states that 45% from metropolitan area and 55% are from UN and UN affiliates. <p><i>Answer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brenner noted that he wasn't sure what the booklet is being discussed and not familiar with it. • He encouraged parents to go on the website – 50% are affiliated with UN and 30% of student body has at least one family member who has an international passport; 90 mother tongue languages; 50% of teachers are from international backgrounds; students hail from 109 countries. • If anything is incorrect, please let Dr. Brenner know. He is happy to review the booklet to update it as well.
Closing	<p>Amanda Dubois closed by thanking Dr. Brenner for speaking and the leadership team for attending. She thanked everyone else for attending.</p> <p>The next PA meeting will be on Friday, October 11th, 2019 at 8:30 AM to cover security and Veracross issues.</p>