

**Claremont Immersion School PTA
General Membership Meeting
January 9, 2018. 7PM
Claremont Immersion Elementary Library
In Spanish with English Translation**

Introduction-President-Elect Lyzbeth Monard

Lyzbeth welcomed everyone and introduced Sra. Claudia Delgadillo.

The Achievement Gap Presentation-Claudia Delgadillo

Claudia thanked everyone for coming and emphasized the importance of discussing the achievement gap, especially for Claremont families. She said that the achievement gap, which is the measurement of the difference between the school performance of at-risk groups versus their counterparts, has many contributing factors, but the presentation would only concentrate on a few of them, and later, how to close the gap.

One of the contributing factors to the achievement gap, she said, is social inequality. In the presentation, Claudia said she would focus on the school performances of groups most at risk of falling behind: African-Americans, Latinos, and low-income students. She cited studies that have shown that these groups perform at a lower level on standardized tests when compared to their counterparts. Furthermore, these groups do not participate in advanced classes as often as their counterparts and many of these at-risk children drop out of school in high school.

Claudia cited some of the biggest reasons for the achievement gap, the first being poverty; when students have to worry about having enough money for food, housing, and health care, education is pushed to the side. She said poor childcare is another achievement gap factor; low-income families rely on sup-par childcare situations, ones which the caregivers do not focus on teaching the children.

Claudia mentioned a study which finds that 85% of children's learning happens outside of school; so teaching children at home is of utmost importance. She found another study which revealed that children of low-income families are read to much less than children from higher-income families. She emphasized that kids are most receptive to learning at a young age and because these at-risk groups have not been exposed to as much reading and teaching inside the home, they are far behind their counterparts when arriving to Kindergarten.

Claudia then distributed handouts of standardized test scores of various ethnic groups from the state of Virginia (Hispanics and African-Americans scored lower than their counterparts on most parts of most of the standardized tests) and encouraged the meeting participants to discuss their findings.

Claudia then asked the question, what can we do to close this achievement gap? She stated that she believes the government solution to the problem, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, has not worked very well. She said she feels learning at home is, by far, the most helpful in closing the gap. Claudia encouraged parents to help their children in three ways: first, by talking as much as possible to their kids, especially during dinner; second, by getting involved in their children's education by visiting their children's school and getting to know their children's teachers; and finally, helping their children develop good literary habits by reading to them and taking them to the library. Claudia stressed that just because a parent is not educated themselves does not mean that they cannot help their children reach great educational success.

Claudia then welcomed questions from the PTA meeting attendants.

A meeting participant asked if Hispanic kids do better in immersion programs. Claudia asserted that kids do better in immersion programs, but they only show progress after being in the program for a while; not in the beginning.

Another PTA member asked what the community can do to close the gap. Claudia suggested continuing to help provide basics (like food and clothing) to the families and encouraged families of the community to immerse themselves in the culture of those who are at risk; to have the children over for playdates.

Another meeting participant asserted that the at-risk families need to let the community know how to help them to which another PTA member said these at-risk parents are sometimes ashamed to voice their concerns. Another PTA member suggested going to the Spanish liaison at Claremont to learn about Hispanic parents' needs. Another PTA member wondered how to reach parents who are completely uninvolved in the school to which Claudia responded that because these parents are so focused on making ends meet they put complete trust in the school to take care of their children. She asserted that Claremont does a lot to help its families, so now Claremont has to reach out to the greater Arlington community.

Principal Update-Jessica Panful

Jessica welcomed everyone and asked that all the PTA members introduce themselves to each other at their tables and talk about their New Year resolutions.

Jessica announced that Ms. Samantha Kirch is a nominee for Arlington Public Schools (APS) Teacher of the Year Award. She encouraged everyone to write letters describing why they think Ms. Kirch should win the award. Letters are due January 11th. Jessica then spoke of the superintendent's winter message which was filmed at Claremont and the Claremont kids' experience with it. She then talked about the Team Kids challenge where the fifth graders support a charity of their choice and have a carnival to celebrate.

VP Social, Gina Mendoza, announced that Claremont will be holding its first school dance on January 19th. Each child (only kids fifth grade and younger are allowed) needs to be accompanied by an adult 21 and older. Mr. Clinger will be the DJ. Fifth graders will be selling food and drinks. The theme of the dance is Mardi Gras. The entrance fee is \$5 per child; adults are free. Dress code is semi-formal, but not required. Kindergarten-2nd grade will be in one room, and 3rd-5th grade will be in another. Look for a volunteer signup that will go out soon.

Jessica thanked the custodians for helping clean up the snow for the recent snow day. She went over the important dates in January:

January 15th—Martin Luther King Day (no school)
January 19th—Claremont First Annual School Dance
January 25th—STEAM night
January 26th—No School

Treasurer Report—Donna Lombardo

As of December 31, the PTA checking account had \$16,679; the savings account had \$25,000. The PTA broke even with the Fall Fest. Book Fair collected \$7,179. The PTA membership is at 255 members. No big expenditures during November and December.

Vamos Adelente—Isa Anderson

Isa announced that Read Across America is March 1 where parents will gather at Claremont to read a book to children in Spanish. She encouraged all parents to participate. Isa also

announced that May 18th is Vamos Adelente's International Dinner and Dance. She is looking for kids to perform their talent at the dance. There will also be a parade.

Science Cadre Presentation—Sarah Yue and Sra. Aracely Vance

Sarah and Aracely announced that the Claremont science team is looking for Spanish-speaking parent volunteers to support 3rd and 4th grade science classes. For more details, contact Sarah Yue at alanandsarah@gmail.com or 818-281-3182. Volunteers are also needed to help set up the science classrooms.

VP of Education and Green Initiatives-Amy Oldham

Amy announced that After School Enrichment classes were supposed to start Monday, January 8, but due to the weather, no classes were held that day and will be made up on March 12th.

President-Melissa Schwaber

Melissa asked the meeting attendants which topics they would like to have at future PTA meetings. She thanked everyone for coming and ended the meeting.

*****Meeting Adjourned*****