



The Alfred E. Smith School
Happy Warriors

2005/06 School Handbook

PS163 The Alfred E. Smith School

Dr. Virginia Pepe *Principal*, Andrew Topol *Vice Principal*

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PS 163 MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of P.S. 163 to provide an academic environment that engages and enriches our students through a rigorous and developmentally appropriate program of instruction. In this way, we promote the joy of learning and help the efforts of each student to meet or exceed the Chancellor's Learning Standards.

At P.S. 163, our instructional program fosters creativity while respecting individual differences in learning styles. Our literacy and math programs develop in our students a core of important knowledge and promote critical reasoning as well as problem solving skills. P.S 163 provides instruction in content areas to examine ideas that shape our world. Our cluster programs offer a well-rounded exposure to the arts and technology.

The P.S. 163 approach is sensitive to the individual needs of children. Our school community fosters respect for cultural diversity by developing a sense of trust and open communication. The P.S. 163 staff views elementary school as a platform for future academic success. We encourage intellectual curiosity as a stimulus that can lead students to become successful, life-long learners.

PS 163 COMMUNITY - RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the PS 163 community - staff, teachers, school administrators, students, parents and guardians - will treat each other with courtesy, respect, consistency, and fairness. The whole community will work together to support a school climate that is safe, pleasant, respectful, free from bias and prejudice, and most of all, conducive to learning.

The Department of Education Conduct of Discipline contains expectations of behavior and outlines the official school and city policies for addressing inappropriate behavior. It is distributed to students in the beginning of the year. Parents are asked to send back a signed form to the school to indicate that both they and their children are familiar with it and will abide by it.

I. PS 163 - GENERAL INFORMATION

PS 163 CALENDAR - SCHOOL YEAR 2005-2006

2005	
September 8, Thursday	SCHOOL SESSIONS BEGIN FOR ALL STUDENTS. EARLY DISMISSAL FOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS ONLY.
September 9, Friday	Early Dismissal for Kindergarten Students Only.
September 29, Thursday	MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT
October 4, Tuesday	Rosh Hashanah. School Closed
October 5, Wednesday	Rosh Hashanah. School Closed
October 10, Monday	Columbus Day Observed. School Closed
November 8, Tuesday	Election Day, Chancellor's Conference Day NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS.
November 11, Friday	Veterans Day. School Closed
November 14, Tuesday	Open School Afternoon and Evening Half Day for Students – Dismissal at 12:00 Noon
November 24 & 25, Thursday and Friday	Thanksgiving Recess. School Closed
December 26, Monday through January 2, Monday	Winter Recess (including Christmas and New Year's Day). School Closed
2006	
January 16, Monday	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. School Closed
February 20, Monday through February 24, Friday	Midwinter Recess (including Washington's Birthday) School Closed
March 21, Tuesday	Open School Afternoon and Evening Half Day for Students – Dismissal at 12:00 Noon
March 30, Thursday and March 31, Friday	NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
April 13, Thursday through April 21, Friday	Spring Recess. School Closed.
May 29, Monday	Memorial Day Observed. School Closed
June 6, Tuesday	Clerical Day Half Day for Students – Dismissal at 11:30 AM
June 12, Monday	Clerical Day Half Day for Students – Dismissal at 11:30 AM
June 28, Wednesday	LAST DAY FOR ALL STUDENTS.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE CALENDAR:

- ❑ PTA, SLT and Committee Meetings
- ❑ P.S. 163 Spring Fair, usually 1st or 2nd Saturday in May
- ❑ Fundraisers and other special events

PLEASE CHECK THE WEEKLY PTA CALENDAR FOR CHANGES AND ADDITIONS!

THE DAILY SCHEDULE

Arrival

Children should arrive at school no later than 8:25 a.m. The school building opens for breakfast at 8:00 a.m. Students should enter through the main entrance for breakfast. Students are not allowed in the school yard until 8:25 a.m. Weather permitting, drop off locations are as follows:

- ❑ All 1st – 5th graders line up in the schoolyard for assembly. Parents must clear the yard by 8:30 am so the children can get to their classrooms. If you need to speak to your child's teacher, please set up an appointment and do not hold up morning lineup.
- ❑ Pre-K and their parents should arrive through the main entrance, and go directly to their classroom.
- ❑ Kindergartners should be dropped off at their classroom or in the cafeteria if the classroom is not yet open.
- ❑ In bad weather, 1st and 2nd graders should be dropped off in the cafeteria; grades 3-5 should be dropped off in the gym

Breakfast

A free breakfast is available from 8 - 8:25 in the cafeteria. Children will be brought to their appropriate drop off area after breakfast. Breakfast menus can be found on the Web at: http://www.opt-osfns.org/fn_mealframes.cfm.

Lateness

Children who arrive after the teachers have escorted their students to class are considered late. Children arriving late should enter the school via the main entrance and must first stop and get a late pass before going to their classroom.

Lunch and Recess

P.S. 163 has staggered lunch/recess periods currently scheduled as follows (but subject to change at the administration's discretion):

LUNCH & RECESS	CLASSES
10:20 – 11:15	Kindergarten
11:15 – 12:10	1 st and 2 nd Grade
12:10 – 1:05	3 rd Grade, 4 th Grade, 5 th Grade

Currently, a free hot lunch is available to all PS 163 children. Lunch menus can be found on the Web at: http://www.optosfns.org/fn_mealframes.cfm. If you prefer, you may provide your child with a lunch from home. Note that there are no refrigerators or heating facilities, so please pack an appropriate lunch.

Recess is held outside in the schoolyard, weather permitting. Depending upon weather and temperature conditions, children will have indoor recess as necessary.

Gym Schedule

Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed for their scheduled Physical Education (PE) class. All children should be wearing sneakers or flat rubber soled shoes. Girls must have shorts or pants available if they are wearing skirts or dresses to school on PE days. The 2005/06 PE schedule is as follows:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 am	5-302	3-313	4/5-304	2-215	2-222
9:25 am	5-315	3-302	1-103	3-306	2-205
10:20 am	5-318	4-305	1-102	1-204	½-206
11:15 am		3-311			
1:05 pm	K-402	4-320	K-107	2-220	1-106
2:00 pm	1-104	4-309	K-403	K-401	

Dismissal

Only parents or others specified on a child's School Emergency Information form may pick up a child from school. You must notify your child's teacher in writing if someone else will be picking up your child. Dismissal times are as follows:

- 2:55 – Children taking school buses leave their classroom for the bus. Students will be brought to the cafeteria until they are escorted outside to their buses.
- 3:00 – Dismissal:
 - Kindergarten students may be picked up at their classrooms just prior to 3:00 p.m. At 3:00, teachers will escort remaining Kindergarten students to Room 111.
 - Grades 1 – 5 are dismissed from the schoolyard, weather permitting. Please wait until your child's teacher lines up the class and acknowledge the teacher before you leave the schoolyard.
 - In inclement weather, the dismissal procedure is as follows:

First and Second Grade – Parents may enter the building through the main entrance. They must proceed directly into the auditorium and remain on the right side of the room until dismissal. Do not sit on the left side. The left side is reserved for children who are being picked up for after-school. At 2:55, teachers will bring students to the gym, where they will be seated on the floor. At 3:00, parents will exit the auditorium through the front entrance, proceed to the gym and pick up their children. Families will then exit the gym through the gym entrance.

Third and Fourth Grade – Students will exit the building through the main entrance onto the driveway.

Fifth Grade – Students will exit the building through the back exit onto the driveway.

Parents and guardians with children in more than one grade – many of you have come up with inventive ways to handle this situation. Parents may choose to have one child dropped off in the late room and pick up the child from that location.

Shortly after 3:00, teachers will escort remaining children to room 111. Please make every effort to be on time as staff resources are limited.

Children must be in Grades 3 or higher to be allowed to leave the school unescorted.

If You Need To Pick Up Your Child Early

If you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, go to the school office and ask a staff member to page the child's class, then sign your child out in the signout book. No child will be paged from 2:30 pm until dismissal. Please avoid unnecessary absences by scheduling doctor and other appointments after school hours.

In Case of Absence

All children must bring in a signed note from their parent or guardian upon their return to school from an absence. For absences of 3 days or more, a doctor's note confirming medical clearance to return to school is required. Class time is important to student achievement so please avoid unnecessary absences. The school also loses funding with each absence. Note that sufficient attendance is one of the criteria for promotion.

In Case of School Closings in Severe Weather

For information on school closings or delayed openings during severe weather conditions, please listen to local radio or television newscasts on WINS (1010 AM), WCBS (880 AM), WCBS (Channel 2), WNBC (Channel 4), WNYW (Channel 5), WABC (Channel 7), WNYE (Channel 25), NY1 (Channel 1), and in Spanish, WADO (1280 AM). **Do not call the school.** You can also check the Department of Education website at <http://www.nycenet.edu>.

On occasion, weather conditions may cause a two-hour delay at the beginning of the school day. Should this happen, please do not bring your child to school before the announced time. Also, please provide your child with breakfast at home, since we will not be in a position to serve breakfast in school that morning.

Should a storm occur during the school day and cause an early closing:

1. Check the news stations listed above to determine the exact closing time.
2. Please arrange to pick your child up at the early closing time because after school programs will be cancelled as well.

A delay in school opening will not change the 3:00 PM school closing time unless you hear otherwise on the radio or TV announcements. If you learn of a change in the afternoon pick up time before your child leaves for school, let your child know of any

change in the afternoon pick up arrangements for the day. Write a note to your child's teacher and remind your child to give the note to the teacher.

LEAP Onsite After-School Program

The Learning through an Expanded Arts Program (LEAP) has returned to PS 163, re-establishing a free after-school program serving up to 175 children every day after school until 6 pm. LEAP activities include homework help, sports, arts, science and other special classes. We are very fortunate to re-establish this program for the 2005-2006 school year at no cost to attendees. However, keeping the program requires that we raise a significant amount of funds via contributions from families both in and out of the LEAP program. Please donate to LEAP and make sure to process through any corporate matching grants. Instructions for submitting donations will be sent home via backpack, and can be obtained from LEAP staff as well.

LEAP enrollment will take place on site at PS 163 at the beginning of the school year. Pre-enrollment may also be available in June. Part-time enrollment (1-4 days per week) is available.

Children attending LEAP must be picked up by 5:45 p.m. Children who are consistently picked up late may be dropped from the program.

For questions about LEAP, please contact the Program Director, Kim Baranowski, at 646-369-0493.

In the event that the Chancellor announces cancellation of city-wide after-school programs due to bad weather or other emergencies, LEAP will be closed.

Other After-School Programs

PS 163 offers specialized classes in science and remedial tutoring in reading for Grades 1 and 2 and reading and math in grades 4 and 5. There are several private organizations that provide fee-based after-school care including the Claremont School, the 92nd St Y, the Westside Y, the Oasis program at Alexander Robertson School on 96th Street, the Beacon Program at Goddard-Riverside, and ACT at St. John the Divine. For a complete listing of programs and contact information, contact the Partnership for After School Education (PASE) at 212-571-2664 or on the web at www.pasesetter.com.

Transportation

Yellow Bus Service is only available to students in G&T, special education and those who transferred to PS 163 under the No Child Left Behind law. Free or discounted metro cards are available to all students based on age and distance from the school as specified in the table below. Note that any student receiving free bus service is not eligible for a discounted Metrocard.

If your child is in Grades	Then he/she is probably eligible for:
K – 2 and resides less than ½ mile from school	Half fare on public transportation
K – 2 and resides more than ½ mile from school	Free Yellow School Bus (Atlantic Bus Company) service or free fare on public transportation.
3 – 5 and resides between ½ and 1 mile from school	Half fare on public transportation

3 – 5 and resides more than 1 mile from school	Free Yellow School Bus service or free fare on public transportation.
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	Free Yellow School Bus service or free fare on public transportation.

Apply for Metrocards in the school office. Contact Javier Salamanca, PS 163’s Parent Coordinator, to apply for school bus service. Yellow Bus Service typically starts:

- ❑ On the first day of school for Grades 1-5 who previously used bus service.
- ❑ On the second day of school for new entrants to Grades 1-5.
- ❑ The middle to the end of the second week of school for K students

Please call the Atlantic Bus Company at 718-585-8592 if you are experiencing problems.

School Communications, Notices, & Forms

School news permission slips, and other school communications will be sent home in your child’s backpack. **Please make sure to check your child’s backpack every day.** Please send back forms and other requests for information as quickly as possible. Some important forms include:

- ❑ **Blue Emergency Card** - This card provides the school with basic contact information including phone numbers where you can be reached during the day, approved adults who can pick up your child from school, alternative emergency contacts, and your child’s physician’s name and number. The address information on this form is used for mailing important information including test results, promotion in doubt letters, and summer school notifications. ***Notify the school immediately IN WRITING if there are any changes to this information during the course of the school year.***
- ❑ **Trip Permission Slips** - Parents are asked to complete one permission slip in the beginning of the school year to cover local trips in the neighborhood. An additional permission slip is required for each trip outside the neighborhood.
- ❑ **Parent Calendar** - This calendar of events is sent home by backpack every week and posted at the school on the PTA Bulletin Board just inside the East entrance of the school.

School Supplies

Due to budget constraints, school supplies are severely limited. Your child’s teacher will send home school supply requirements, as well as other general classroom supply requests. Please supply your child appropriately and give what you can toward additional classroom needs. Class parent representatives may also coordinate classroom donations and fundraising.

Dress Code

PS 163 does not require school uniforms. Please make sure that children are dressed appropriately and comfortably to enable them to focus on learning. Rubber soled shoes are required for participation in gym classes.

Celebrating your Child's Birthday in School

Check with your child's teacher (at least a week in advance!) as to what would be the most convenient way to celebrate with your child's class during the school day. Generally, a simple celebration consisting of cupcakes and juice is appropriate.

Field Trips

Parents are asked to complete one permission slip in the beginning of the school year to cover local trips within the neighborhood. An additional permission slip is required for each trip outside the neighborhood. Children without signed permission slips will not be allowed to accompany their classmates on the trip, so check your child's backpack regularly and return the forms as soon as possible! Parent volunteers are often needed to accompany classes on field trips. Please let your child's teacher know if you are interested and available to volunteer your time.

Visiting PS 163 During the School Day

Parents are welcome to visit the school and their child's classroom during Open School Week, typically scheduled in November. Most teachers welcome parents, relatives and other appropriate visitors, with some advance notice, at other times. Please schedule classroom visits with your child's teacher. All visitors to the school must first sign in at the security desk and show proof of ID to receive a pass from the guard.

Medication

Should your child require regular medication during the school day, please pick up a "504" medication form from the Jennifer Smullian, the Guidance Counselor, and return the completed form to Ms. Buford, the school nurse. Note that classroom teachers are not allowed to administer medicine.

Immunizations

Certain immunization requirements are mandated by law. Children will be excluded from school without proper immunizations. For more detailed information on school immunization requirements or walk in immunization clinic hours and locations, call the Immunization Hotline at 212-676-2273.

Lost & Found

A "Lost and Found" box is located in the cafeteria. Label coats, mittens, bookbags and other important items with your child's name and class. To minimize loss, do not send any unnecessary items to school. The Lost and Found will be emptied on a weekly basis by 10 am on Mondays. Please check as soon as you realize your child has lost something so that it is not lost for good.

PS 163 is Smoke-Free!

Please note that smoking is prohibited in the school building or on school grounds.

II. WHO'S WHO AT PS 163

Here are the names of PS 163 administrators, teachers and staff for the 2005-2006 school year.

School Administration:

The principal, assistant principal and office staff work in the school office, room 115. Call the main school number, (212) 678-2854, to reach them.

Principal: Virginia Pepe, Ed. D
 Asst. Principal: Mr. Andrew Topol
 Secretaries: Ms. Angela Aguilar, Ms. Sherrill Ervin
 Assistants: Ms. Maritza Rivera, Ms. Yvette Ruiz
 Parent Coordinator (Room 122A): Javier Salamanca,
 347-563-5230
jsalamanca@nycboe.net

Classroom Teachers:

Class	Teacher	Class	Teacher
Pre-K	Ms. Epland/Ms. Migdal	3-202	Ms. Schmieder
K-109	Ms. Gaudio/Ms. Silverman	3-313	Mr. Brzezinski
K-107	Ms. Galeano	3-306	Ms. Shapiro
K-401	Mr. Cruz	3-311	Ms. Fishman
K-402	Ms. Lang		
K-403	Ms. DeSimone		
K-404	Mr. Sloane		
1-102	Ms. Feibusch	4-309	Ms. Soto
1-103	Ms. Shoemaker	4-305	Mr. Monserrate
1-104	Ms. Martinez	4-320	Mr. Alvarez
1-106	Ms. Salzberg		
1-204	Ms. DeVincenzi		
½-206	Ms. Liebowitz		
2-205	Ms. Young/Ms. Colledge	5-302	Ms. Leonard
2-215	Ms. Bautista	4/5-304	Ms. Wander
2-220	Ms. Castro	5-315	Ms. Weinberg
2-222	Ms. Santana	5-318	Mr. Rothstein

Curriculum Clusters/Coordinators:

To reach a teacher by phone, use the main school number (212-678-2854) unless indicated otherwise below.

Area	Name	Room	Phone
Art	Ms. Mason	207	
Computer	Ms. Cognian	209	
Guidance Counselors	Ms. Kutis	122A	678-2854 x 1222
	Ms. Smullian	122B	678-2254 x 1223
Library	Ms. Cardenas	219	
Literacy Coach	Ms. Sulliveres	322	
Math Specialist	Ms. S. Mamdouh	218	
Math Coach	Mr. Torres	322	
Music	Ms. Spallina	111	
Nurse	Nurse Buford	140	865-6859
Occupational Therapists	Ms. Graze, Mr. Strickler, Ms. Lesch	126	
Phys. Ed.	Mr. Vega	Gym	
Physical Therapist	Ms. Bluman	T4	
S.A.P.I.S.	Ms. Peterson	122A	678-2854 x 1222
Science	Mr. Cohen	218	
E.S.L.	Mr. Fouche	307B	
CTT	Ms. Fucigna	118	
	Ms. Colledge	205	
	Dr. O'Brien	313	
	Mr. Wisniewski	309	
	Ms. Aherne	315	
SETSS	Ms. Bavier	307A	
	Mr. Godfried	307A	
SETSS (811)	Ms. Lobel	322	
Speech	Mr. Berkowitz	203	
	Ms. Cirlin	213	
UFT Rep	Ms. Mason	207	
Security (Front Desk & Trailer Yard)	Ms. Palmer Ms. Marsh		3678-2854 x 1000
Instructional Support Committee	C. Diaz K. Ramirez A. Padilla	128	
School Secretaries	S. Ervin, A. Aguiar	Office	
Parent Coordinator	J. Salamanca	122A	347-563-5230
School Custodian & Staff	Edward Zarnoch (Mgr), Judy Whitaker (sec) John Nolan (fireman), Jim Nolan, William Fuller		

Area	Name	Room	Phone
Educational Assistants/ Paraprofessionals	Paras: I. Agosto, M. Parker, D. Pena, E. Pereyra 811 Para Staff: L. Berrios, K. Aviles,		
School Aides	"Rease" Diroche (Supvr.), Rosa Evans (Ms Cookie), Luisa Alicea, Maritza Rivera, Albania Rodriguez, Terry Tapia, Yvettel Ruiz		

III. PS 163 PARENT/SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

The following Parent/School organizations are fundamental to school governance and are regulated by NY State and the Board of Education. Regulations regarding the PTA, SLT and the School Safety Committee can be found on the Board of Education website (www.nycenet.edu) or at the District 3 Office of Family and Community Engagement, located at the Joan of Arc complex at 154 West 93rd Street.

School Leadership Team

The School Leadership Team is comprised of parents or guardians and school staff. Members are elected by their peers. The purpose of the SLT is to plan the educational direction of PS 163 and to make sure the available resources support this plan. Open meetings are held at school, at least once a month.

<u>Parents</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Patricia Lopez (1 GT/DL)	Dena Colledge (3 rd Mono, CTT)
Nat Polish (1 GT/DL)	Peter Cruz (K General Ed DL)
Barbara Reiser (K, 3 rd , 5 th GT/DL)	Miriam Epland (Pre-K)
Lucila Silva (2 nd GT, 3 rd GE)	Yvonne Peterson (SAPIS, DC 37)
Melissa Stanton (2 nd GT/DL)	Julie Shoemaker (1 st GT Mono)
Chantal Taylor (1 st GT/DL, 3 GT)	Carolyn Weinberg (5 th GE)
Jessica Weigmann (1 st GT/DL)	
	Dr. Virginia Pepe (Principal)
M. Dolan (3 rd GT/DL & PTA co-president)	Nia Mason (Art Cluster, UFT)

Alternate: Millie Kramer Garcia (4th GT/DL)

There are sixteen members of the School Leadership Team, eight parents and eight staff.

The seats of a PTA co-president, the teachers' union representative (UFT), and the principal are *ex officio*. (These are the core members of the School Leadership Team.)

The terms of SLT members last two years. Alternates serve for one year.

The terms of Ms. Epland, Peterson, Silva, Stanton, Taylor, Weigmann and Colledge and Shoemaker end in June 2007.

The terms of Messrs. Cruz and Polish, and Ms. Lopez, Reiser and Weinberg end in June 2006.

For 2005-6, the SLT officers are: co-chairs: Barbara Reiser and Carolyn Weinberg; secretary: Melissa Stanton; and treasurer: Miriam Epland. Selection of officers is made each fall by the Team members.

If a member misses three meetings in a school year, he or she resigns.

Childcare and Spanish translation are available at meetings.

PS 163 PTA

PS 163 has an active PTA, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the PS 163 parent community. The mission of the PS 163 PTA is to work to improve the quality of education for every child in the school. The PTA is responsible for enlisting volunteers to staff school events, fundraising for the school and communicating issues and news to the PS 163 community.

Every parent or guardian of a child currently enrolled at PS 163 is automatically a member of the PTA. A current copy of the PTA by-laws is available in the PTA mailbox (in the school office, bottom row of mailboxes) and is posted at ps163nyc@yahoogroups.com. All PTA general membership, executive board, and committee meetings take place at the school and are open to the entire school community. Elections are held at the end of the school year for the next school year. Regulations for PTA's can be found in the "Blue Book", Chancellor's Regulation A660.

PTA 2003/2004 Executive Board:

The current PTA Executive Board members will serve for the 2003/2004 academic year. There are still several openings and our PTA bylaws allow several people to share positions. If you are interested in being on the Executive Board, contact a current Executive Board member. If you have a question or concern about something at school, you can e-mail the Executive Board at ps163pta@yahoogroups.com.

Co-Presidents:	Moira Dolan 212-749-2620 917-693-4041 - cell moirajd2001@yahoo.com	Betty Jovel 917-493-3910 646-265-8621 - cell vjovel@aol.com
	Lenore Michaels 212-316-1503 917-734-8701 - cell lenoremichaels@hotmail.com	
Treasurer and Co-Treasurer	Jo Duer 646-281-7649 smallcards@aol.com	Kristin Penegor (212) 749-4419 (646) 733-7185 - cell kpenegor@yahoo.com
VP, Communications:	Susan Ryan 212-865-7084 917-414-3315 - cell hmvnipper@rcn.com	Julia Heath-Gil 212-666-4563 917- 414-2554 - cell jheath@medialink.com
VP, Facilities:	Mark Schulte 212-666-6039 (646) 494-0571- cell s-mnyc@mindspring.com	MaryAnn Taylor 212-926-9039 917-215-6880 BlacBT91@aol.com
VP, Fundraising:	Allison Downing 212-396-4401 bigaldowning@yahoo.com	Eileen Tarallo 212-280-8141 taralloeileen@yahoo.com
VP, Membership:	Nina Fine 212-316-0432 ninaffine@nyc.rr.com	Rhonda Farrell 917 603 3180 Farrell2229@verizon.net
Recording Secretaries:	Maura Daly 212-663-3355 maura.daly@rcn.com	Lise Martina 212-864-5971 l.martina@att.net
Corresponding Secretaries:	OPEN	

Delegate – CDEC	OPEN	
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Safety Committee

The Chancellor’s Regulations governing Safety Committees can be found in the document called Safe and Orderly Environment Initiative. It mandates that each school form a Safety Committee to help each school implement and maintain a safe school environment. PS 163’s Safety committee focuses on establishing and enforcing a school-wide code of conduct, improving lunch and recess conditions, ensuring Fire Code compliance and other issues of physical safety and security.

The 2004-2005 Safety Committee members are:

Administration & Community Members		Parents
Dr. Pepe (Principal)	Ms. Petersen (SAPIS)	Betty Jovel
Mr. Topol (A/P)	Ms. Marsh/Ms. Palmer (Security)	
Ms. Mason (UFT Rep, Art Teacher)	Mr. Diroche (School Aide)	
	Mr. Zarnoch (Custodian)	

Contact PTA Co-president Betty Jovel or leave a message in the Safety Committee mailbox in the school office if you are interested in getting involved with this committee.

IV. GETTING INVOLVED

Parents play a vital role in the life of their child's school. Studies have repeatedly shown that children perform better when their parents are involved in their education and when their school's PTA is strong.

Parents play a vital role at PS 163. Here are some great ways to get involved:

Support the PTA!!!

The PS 163 PTA is dedicated to supporting the needs of the students and school community by organizing parents, distributing information, and fundraising. Given the multitude of programs at our school, it is important that all parents get involved to make the most of our children's educational experience.

All major PTA decisions and expenditures are voted on and approved by the general PTA membership at general PTA meetings. Attend the general PTA meetings and make your opinion count!

Notices announcing the dates of general PTA and Executive Board meetings will be posted around school, included in the weekly calendar, and sent home in the backpacks.

Join the PTA Listserv

We now have a PS 163 internet community set up on Yahoo Groups, enabling all who join to receive email announcements and send messages to other parents around the school. This is not intended to replace backpack communications!

To join this great resource, go to the Group Home Page at Yahoo:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PS163NYC> and follow the simple prompts. If you are having trouble joining directly, e-mail PS163NYC@yahoogroups.com and ask to be "invited". Once you receive an e-mail invitation, you just hit reply and you will automatically become a member of the group.

Once you join, make sure to select "Edit your Membership" on the top right side of the screen to choose how you receive messages from the site. You can choose to receive individual e-mails or a daily digest which combines the day's e-mails into a single message. You can also choose not to receive any email at all and just go to the site to read posted messages. If you choose this option, you can also elect to receive messages marked urgent so you don't miss anything important. Your e-mail address remains anonymous - any correspondence you receive will be addressed to ps163nyc@yahoogroups.com.

If you wish to send a message to the whole school (all registered members of the group), send it to ps163nyc@yahoogroups.com. Your message will be automatically forwarded to the Group Monitor (currently Susan Ryan, PTA co-VP Communications) for final approval. All "official" PS163 announcements will be approved by our principal Dr. Pepe.

Note: There is a special group set up for PTA Executive Board members. If you have a question or concern about something at school, you can e-mail any member of the executive board.

Volunteer Your Time and Staff a School Activity

Parent volunteers are needed to monitor lunch and recess, accompany classes on field trips, as well as staff book fairs, bake sales, the annual Spring Fair and other school activities. Events needing volunteers are announced frequently. Refer to PTA contact info on page 13.

Become a Class Parent Representative

Class Parent Representatives are a vital part of the PS 163 community, to maintain open channels of communication between the teacher and the other parents of the class and the PTA. Parents interested in becoming Class Representatives should volunteer early during the school year, at "Meet the Teacher Night" in September or soon after. The main responsibilities include preparing and distributing class address lists and "phone trees", keeping abreast of the teacher's Wish List, organizing classroom fundraising, attending PTA monthly meetings and reporting back to the class, and organizing the class activity for the Spring Fair.

There should be at least 2 class representatives per class. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Class Representative or the responsibilities of the position, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Javier Salamanca at 347-563-5230 or via email at jsalamanca@nycboe.net. Javier's office is in room 122 opposite the main office. If you wish to talk to another class parent about the experience of being a class representative, you can call Fran Beallor at 212-864-7465 or via email at Fran@FranBeallor.com.

Join a PTA Committee

The PTA's committees are where planning and brainstorming take place and are the way parent efforts are organized in the school. Committees generally meet in the evenings once a month at the school, but may meet at other times as well.

Each PS 163 school program - General Education, Dual-Language, Gifted & Talented, and Special Education - is represented by a dedicated PTA committee looking for ways to improve the program.

In addition, committees of concerned parents meet throughout the year or as needed, to work on school-wide issues like fundraising, recess, safety, equipment and supplies, and after-school programming.

Other PTA committees are formed as required to focus on planning a specific event like School-wide Clean-Up Day or Spring Fair. If you are interested in helping plan fundraising events, contact Allison Downing or Eileen Tarallo, PTA Fundraising VPs.

You are welcome to join an ongoing committee at any time.

PS 163 also has a monthly newsletter, "Wonderful 163," which contains helpful articles and information. If you are interested in helping out with the newsletter, contact Julia Heath-Gil, PTA Communications co-VP.

For information or to volunteer for a committee or just to help out with an activity or at an event, simply attend a PTA meeting and volunteer, or contact a member of the PTA Executive Board in by phone or e-mail.

V. CHARTING YOUR CHILD'S ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Academic Expectations

Expectations for your child's grade level are contained in "***What Did You Learn in School Today?***" a pamphlet published by the Board of Education and sent home by backpack early in the school year. Additional copies can be found in the PS 163 school office, District office and the Board of Ed website. To help parents better understand the curriculum, PS 163 offers three curriculum conferences each year where parents can hear teachers discuss their expectations and curriculum for each grade. Additionally, parents will receive a monthly curriculum calendar, which outlines the curriculum that will be covered each month.

Get to Know Your Child's Teacher

At "**Meet the Teacher Night**," an evening event scheduled during the first month of school, the school administration briefs parents about the upcoming year. Afterwards, parents visit their child's classroom, meet the teacher, and hear about what is planned for the year. Classroom and homework policies will be discussed and given out. Find out from your child's teacher about the preferred way to communicate issues and concerns. You can always send in a letter (in a sealed envelope addressed to the teacher) to request a special conference. During "**Open School Week**" held early in the fall, parents are invited to observe their child's class during the school day.

Attend Scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents are expected to attend scheduled parent-teacher conferences typically held in both November and March. There is only a half-day of school on Parent-Teacher conference days. Notices are sent home about ten days in advance for parents to request a 10-minute time slot during the day or early evening. During this brief private conference, teachers will discuss the child's progress in school and any issues of concern. Parents are invited to ask questions, state concerns, and to help devise solutions to any problems. It is helpful to have read the description of achievement expected in your child's grade, which can be found in "*What Did You Learn In School Today?*", a brochure sent home in the fall. [*How about including the suggested questions parents ask their teachers?*](#)

If you would like to meet with your child's teacher at any other time during the school year, notify the teacher in writing. The teacher will respond with a suggested appointment time. Please do not contact teachers while classes are in session.

PS 163's Homework Policies

There are several goals for homework:

To review and practice previously learned skills.

To increase stamina, particularly in reading.

To teach personal responsibility and self-regulation.

To engage in critical thinking, reflection and analysis.

Homework is the responsibility of the student and the student should be capable of completing the tasks without assistance.

The chart below was compiled based on the suggestions from surveys returned to the Homework Committee of the School Leadership Team:

Grade	Area: Math, Word Work, Writing, Content Areas, Spanish	Reading*	Up to a maximum of:
K		15 minutes by parents	15 minutes
1	20 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
2	20 minutes	20 minutes	40 minutes
3	25 minutes	30 minutes	55 minutes
4	30 minutes	30 minutes	60 minutes
5	30 minutes	30 minutes	60 minutes

* Students should keep a reading log to code the date, title of the book and number of pages they read each night. The purpose of the log is to mark the student's progress towards reading 25 books.

Homework - Parent Responsibilities:

- Set up a quiet, well-lit study area with as few distractions as possible
- Stock the necessary school supplies (pencil, eraser, paper, ruler, glue, dictionaries, etc) in a container or area reserved for homework.
- Schedule homework time with your child.
- Encourage your child to work independently – provide assistance after the child has made a real effort. Have your child call a friend if help is needed.
- Offer lots of encouragement.
- Limit television, computer and video game time.
- Inform your child's teacher if your child is having difficulty in completing his or her homework. Also inform your child's teacher if the assignments are too easy.

Homework – Children's Responsibilities:

- Bring homework assignments home.
- Have phone numbers of classmates to call if you don't understand the homework.
- Complete the homework neatly and on time.
- Do the homework as independently as possible.

The United Federation of Teachers offers a service called "Dial A Teacher" – 212-777-3380 – which provides homework help in a number of languages Mondays through Thursdays from 4 - 7 PM.

Review Your Child's Report Card

PS 163's report cards vary by grade and do not use a standardized letter grade system. There are three marking periods for grades 1-5. Kindergarteners will only receive a report card for the 2nd and 3rd marking periods.

Report cards are written and distributed to parents during the November and March Parent-Teacher conferences. If you are unable to attend a Parent-Teacher conference on the scheduled days, ask the teacher for an appointment at another time. Note that Report cards will only be given to parents at the school; they will not be sent home via the backpack.

City and State Standards

P.S. 163 is subject to both the New York State Standards, which cover subject matter for instruction for each grade, and the New York City Standards, which define what a child should be able to do at each grade. P.S. 163's curriculum and practices are designed to help children achieve their grade-level goals and succeed at new challenges as they move forward. More detailed information on city and state standards as well as examples of student work that meets the standards can be found at the Dept. of Ed. Website (www.nycboe.net).

Academic Assessments

The Early Childhood Literary Assessment System 2 or ECLAS2 helps teachers determine each child's progress towards becoming independent readers and writers. The four tasks that make up ECLAS (alphabet/sight words, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading, and writing) lets the teacher observe and record specific information about each child in the class. Each time a child is assessed, the teacher records a mastery level for each of the four areas. All children in K thru 3 are assessed using ECLAS. Results of this assessment follow your child from year to year. Parent-Teacher conferences in November provide a good opportunity to review and discuss your child's ECLAS' results.

As of October 2003, the Department of Education began administering several diagnostic assessments in reading and math for all students in Grades 3,4 and 5. These assessments are scheduled prior to the citywide standardized tests. The results are available to parents over the Internet. Parents will receive access codes, which will allow them to check the results and offer practice to their children. Practice exams are not counted for grading purposes nor are they used to make decisions regarding promotion to the next grade level.

Citywide & Statewide Tests

As of September 2005, the state has assumed administration of all tests for all students in grades 3-5. Students in grades 3 and 5 must pass these tests with at least a Level 2 to be promoted to the next grade. Special education students may be allowed testing modifications to help them participate more effectively on the tests.

3rd Grade – Math, English Language Arts

4th Grade – Math, English Language Arts, Science (performance and written)

5th Grade – Math, English Language Arts, Social Studies

There may be practice tests in those areas. For more information on these tests, including when they are given, consult the Department of Education Assessment Calendar (available on the Dept. of Ed. Website at <http://nycenet.edu/daa/schedule/index.html> and also in the PS 163 school office). Although test results may take several months to be returned, parents should receive individual results for their child. Be sure to discuss your child's results on the tests with his/her teacher.

2005-2006 Testing Schedule (Grades 1-5)		
Date	Grade	Test
November 16 and 17, 2005	5	NYS Elementary Social Studies
January 10 and 11, 2006	3,5	NYS English Language Arts (ELA) Test
January 10, 11, 12, 2006	4	NYS English Language Arts (ELA) Test
March 7 and 8, 2006	3, 5	NYS Mathematics Test
March 7, 8, 9, 2006	4	NYS Mathematics Test
Between April 10 – May 12, 2006	4	NYS Science Performance Test

Promotion Requirements

Your child's teacher should discuss your child's academic progress with you throughout the year, so there should be no surprises. *Please keep current address information on file with the school (via an up to date Blue Emergency Information Card) so that you can receive these important communications.*

The NYC Department of Education's promotion policy requires that the children meet the following grade-level goals:

Grades 3 and 5 must:

- Perform at or above Proficiency Level 2 on the state-wide standardized tests.

Grade 4 must:

- Meet performance standards through their ongoing work, assessed by their teachers.
- Maintain 90% attendance or higher
- Perform at or above Proficiency Level 2 on the state-wide standardized.

Promotion or retention decisions must be based on all three areas. Note that children who are English Language Learners enrolled in an English language school for less than 3 years are exempt from standardized testing in English Language Arts. Further exemptions may be available depending on circumstances. English language learners, however, must take tests in math, science and social studies to the extent they are available in the child's first language. Children with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs may have modified promotional criteria and testing modifications which will allow them to take the tests in ways which accommodate them.

Dept of Ed. policy requires schools to identify early any child who is at risk of not meeting these standards, involve parents and provide academic support services in reading and math. P.S. 163's staff includes math and reading specialists, as well as classroom teachers, who may provide these services before, during and after the school day. Parent-teacher conferences and report cards provide an "early warning" system for parents.

Promotion in Doubt Notification

If your child is at risk of not being promoted to the next grade level, you will receive official notification from the school, usually in February of that year. "Promotion in Doubt" letters are sent each school year to parents of children at risk of not being promoted in June. If your child receives a promotion in doubt letter, contact your child's teacher immediately to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher, guidance counselor and/or principal to discuss how to receive additional academic assistance.

Summer School

Children who do not meet the grade level standards by the end of the school year are required to attend summer school and achieve Proficiency Level 2 or higher on an end-of-summer assessment exam in order to be promoted. Letters are sent out in May or June notifying parents that their child needs summer school in order to achieve promotion into the next grade. Children who are required to attend summer school will receive continued support services during the following school year, even if they are promoted following summer school, to ensure they maintain their gains and continue to advance appropriately. There is an appeals process for parents who believe that their child's holdover does not accurately reflect their child's ability.

VI. MAKING THE TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fourth Grade Parents – What You Need to Know!

Fourth grade is an important year for your child because it is an academically challenging year with “high stakes” tests. The fourth grade tests are used by some middle schools in selecting applicants. Parents can learn more about the reading and math standards of 4th grade by familiarizing themselves with the “What Did You Learn In School Today” brochure; or by requesting that the school or district host a workshop.

Fourth grade is not too early to consider the question of Middle School for your child. Parents can prepare for the middle school choice process by asking the classroom teacher what the strengths and weaknesses of the child are; what kind of classroom setting seems to work best for the child’s concentration and behavior; and in what manner the child learns material the best. This information will help direct your search for the right middle school.

Note that the Center School, a small academically oriented school in District 3, begins with grade 5. Applications for this school generally go out to parents via backpack in early January of the 4th grade year.

Fifth Grade Parents – Middle School Choice

All students residing in District 3 are guaranteed a placement in a District 3 middle school program. Out of district students attending a District 3 school may apply in District 3 but are not guaranteed placement if they are not accepted by one of their three selections.

1. Learn about Available Middle School Options

The Middle School Directory is distributed via backpack to all fifth grade parents in late September. It details available programs in District 3 and provides information on special requirements of each program. Contact other District offices for information on their middle school programs. Jennifer Smullian and Beth Kutis, PS 163’s guidance counselors, are charged with helping parents in the middle school choice process.

To make this choice responsibly, parents spend the fall learning about middle schools, asking PS 163 teachers and the guidance counselor for their views on what their child needs in a middle school, and visiting those schools which seem most suitable.

There are two Middle School Fairs in October at which the middle schools have representatives ready to answer your questions. Most will allow you to sign up for a tour or Open House which generally last an hour and a half. The district director of middle school choice will also come to PS163 to discuss how the selection process works.

2. Visit Potential Schools

Middle school tours and evening open houses generally begin in October. Call the middle schools you are interested in as soon as possible to schedule a visit. Bring your child with you to the schools you visit as your child’s impressions are important to your family decision.

You can best prepare your child for the middle school choice process by having conversations about school: favorite subjects, favorite books, favorite teachers. This will help you understand your child’s needs and also prepare your child for the interview process.

You can also learn what other parents think about their children's schools by logging on to www.INSIDEschools.org, a project of Advocates for Children.

3. Choose Four Schools & Submit to the Guidance Counselor

Briefly, the selection process requires that you select four schools and rank them. Your first choice school will set up an interview to which your child will bring his/her "portfolio", a collection of best work. Some schools also administer a test during the interview.

Parents must submit the names of their four top choices for their child's middle school to your child's Guidance Counselor, by the Thanksgiving Holiday, who will then submit them to the district by the December 2nd due date.

4. Receive Your Middle School Assignment

If a school decides to accept your child it will notify you or the school guidance counselor; if the school decides not to accept your child, then the second choice school will receive your child's application, set up an interview, and so forth. Most families know which middle school their child is going to by the end of April. However, District 3 middle schools are overcrowded and some children are not placed until as late as June.

If you are very unhappy with the middle school at which your child was accepted, go to the guidance counselor and see what she can do. If you decide against placing your child in the middle school you have selected, please notify the district office right away so they can fill the seat: Middle School Choice Director, Region 10, 154 West 93rd Street, New York 10025.

Fifth Grade Graduation

Graduation is an event which fifth grade parents usually begin planning before Christmas Vacation. Fifth grade parents are encouraged to attend their graduation committee meetings which decide where graduation will be held and what special events will occur. Fifth grade parents are expected to contribute towards the cost of the graduation events and should begin to budget early. The fee for graduation events varies year to year, but generally ranges between \$100 and \$125. Fifth grade parents are encouraged to hold bake sales and other fundraisers to offset costs and help families who cannot afford the full fee.

VII. DISTRICT 3, REGION 10, AND OTHER RESOURCES

NYC Department of Education Website - <http://nycenet.edu>

A wealth of information is available at the Department of Education website, from the latest press releases to performance data for all schools in the system. Sections to check: "Parents" (<http://nycenet.edu/parents/>); "Students" which includes useful links to other educational websites on the Internet; and "Community". (NOTE: Free Internet access is available at many branches of the New York Public Library, including the nearby Bloomingdale Branch at West 100th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus.)

NYC EDUCATION HOTLINE: 311

Parents, teachers, and students can call the NYC Department of Education Parent Hotline at 311. Hours of operation are **24 HOURS A DAY 7 DAYS A WEEK**. Operators will answer questions or have someone get back to you with a response. All calls are documented to track issues and responses.

Community School Board REGION 10 Key Contacts

The Community School Board Region 10 office is located at 4360 Broadway at [186th Street](#), on the 4th and 5th Floors. Some important contacts in the Region 10 office:

- ❑ The current Regional Superintendent is Gale Reeves, (917) 521-3700.
- ❑ The [Local Instructional Superintendent](#) is Norma Barinas, (917) 521-3713.
- ❑ The Office of the Committee on Special Education is located at 2120 Amsterdam Avenue and (CSE) Chairperson is Marilyn Sprecher, (212) 342-8300. The Office of Special Education Lead Region Administrator is John Mulligan at 2120 Amsterdam Avenue, (212) 342-8300.
- ❑ Director of Multilingual Programs (Dual Language) is Angelica Infante, (917) 521-3744.
- ❑ Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education is Nicky Rosen, 917-521-3656.

School Based Parent and Child Support:

Our Parent Coordinator, Javier Salamanca, is located in the school in room 122a, and can be reached at (347) 563-5230 or emailed at jsalamanca@nycboe.net. Mr. Salamanca is available to help parents become more involved and better informed on issues regarding our school and community. He will listen to concerns and notify the appropriate parties, so that the concerns can be addressed in a timely matter.

Office of Parent and Family Support:

The District Parent Support Officer for our school is DJ Sheppard. Her office is located at 154 West 93rd Street. Ms. Sheppard can provide additional information about coming events, meetings and seminars important to parents. In addition, she can provide information and answer questions regarding the PTA, the School Leadership Team, or help you handle an issue at your school. Ms. Sheppard can be reached at 212-678-8857.