

Parents' Association of The Bronx High School of Science Executive Board Meeting November 15, 2022 (hybrid)

In-person attendees

Christine Kattan - Co-President
Jayesh Patel - Co-President
Elizabeth Polkovitz - Co-President
Jennifer Allen-Cheng - Co-Vice President
Yan Yu - Co-Vice President
Ram Halder - Assistant Treasurer
Li Ping Xu - Assistant Treasurer
Sheila Boland (taking minutes) - Co-Recording Secretary

Remote attendees

Kai Lu - Treasurer
Katia Kubicek - Co-Recording Secretary
Dorie Lederfajn Paparo - Co-Recording Secretary
Dongli Huang - Corresponding Secretary
Ellen Goldberg - Member-At-Large
Abhilasha Mahan - Member-At-Large
Novelle Maxwell-Sinclair - Member-At-Large
Paul Sinclair - Member-At-Large
Mimi Yee - Member-At-Large
Helen Qiu - Member-At-Large
Amy Xue - Member-At-Large
Xia Li - Member-At-Large

Elizabeth Polkovitz called the meeting to order at 5:48 pm. She welcomed everyone, in particular the 3 new members and commended the success of the October elections.

1. New Member Introductions - Christine Kattan proceeded with the agenda and invited everyone including the new members to introduce themselves (remote and in-person attendees)

2. Election Overview - Jayesh Patel gave an overview of the election process, explaining how new members were selected to the Executive Board and SLT, that elections take place in the fall (October) and spring (May) and how the number of open positions varies depending on parents graduating from the school or other reasons. He referenced the by-laws that are followed and that nominations must be submitted by a specific date. Elections take place by zoom and registration of parents is required. Verification that parents have children attending the school is completed with the parent coordinator.

Christine highlighted the success of the election in October and thanked everyone involved. She confirmed a successor for Alison Gardy has been identified and also asked board members to think about any other parents who could be suitable additions for the Nominating Committee and to ask around. Looking for 3-5 people. It's not a huge time commitment. Recruiting for the board will start in February.

5. Open House Overview - The Open House for 8th grade students and families took place on November 1 and was very successful. Christine thanked everyone who helped. She indicated that there would be a requirement for an Open House Chair position given that the school now hosts an open house in the fall, one in the spring and one in late spring/early summer for accepted students. It's not known yet if a spring open house will take place but we should plan for it. No date yet. The DOE has returned to pre-covid SHSAT and testing admissions timelines.

6. Fundraiser Update - Yan Yu gave 3 quick updates. Regarding donation progress, 298 families have given so far. This represents 10% of families and more or less matches with past history. She gave a special mention and thanked EB members in Chinese chat groups (WeChat) who have reminded peers to donate and which has bolstered the numbers so far this year. We are 56% away from our annual target of \$300,000. Weekly text reminders will continue and there will be a holiday mail. Yan Yu proposed reactivating the donor wall at the request of some parents. Can we check to see when the wall was taken down last year? The idea of the donor wall was to acknowledge contributions made by parents, listing amounts in brackets and donor names. She considers it an effective business tool where some parents like to see credit given. She is concerned that some larger donors are unlikely to give again if they feel there is no recognition. She stressed that we need a lot of donors and big ones. Last year, more than 10 families donated over \$2000 so far this year, one family has donated over \$2000. Besides this consideration, every family is encouraged to participate regardless of the amount.

Elizabeth asked if the donor wall included brackets? She has a concern with the brackets. Can we figure out another way to make people feel acknowledged?

Last year, One Cause was launched. Donors were categorized into Platinum, Silver and Bronze depending on the amount they gave. The general consensus though is that it isn't normal practice in public schools, that a large percentage of families are in a lower income bracket and it comes down to a question of equity. We need to be sensitive and send the message asking that families give what they can. How do we maintain integrity for all families? We have to find the right balance. Yan asked what is the priority? If it's to reach the financial goal, then she believes we must use the wall. Other board members were more reluctant about this view and asked by what percent would the donations increase if we were to reactivate the wall. Would it really make a difference? Yan Yu said she looked very carefully at what was received last year. She acknowledged that it's tricky but that the economy is in a different place now and we have to try harder. 10% of families in total donated last year. The donor wall was up briefly in October but was taken down.

Christine noted that we need sponsors for The Gala and asked if we could direct families wishing to give more to gala opportunities? She suggested we hold back on making a decision in the interest of possibly 10-20 families and instead consider the larger parent population of 3000. Christine requested to table the discussion.

3. Principal's Report - Rachel Hoyle recapped on events earlier in the day. The school had its first visit from the new superintendent. She met with teachers and students and gave helpful feedback. There was

also a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Manne building. It was a fun and nice event. She thanked everyone involved in making the recent open house such a success. It was fun seeing the students so engaged and sharing their experiences with prospective students and families

In other news, Paying for College Night took place and went very well, the Robotics team attended their first pre-season event and the cross-country boys team won the City Championship

Next week, the school would welcome back its most recent graduates for Homecoming, Parent Teacher conferences would be taking place late in the week. An issue was raised that many parents didn't get the number of teachers they had requested. There was possibly a glitch or else just limitations with the fact that each teacher is at capacity at 40 appointments. They try to prioritize meeting the parents or guardians of students they feel need the most feedback. She encouraged parents to send an email to teachers if they'd like to schedule another meeting time

4. Treasurer's Report - Kai Lu discussed results presented in a Powerpoint presentation provided to members in the chat. The school received a high level of donations in October

The annual target is \$443,000, revenue to the end of October is \$128,000 and expenses are \$54,000

We're up to 30% of fundraising target and have spent 12% of budget

The amount collected in October was \$110,000 and the bank balance as of 10/31 was \$707,000 as of 10/31. The vast majority of revenue was from parent donations. He thinks we received a nice boost as a result of the annual appeal mailings

Comedy expense is showing and income will appear in the November results

The expenses included student expenses which were made up of electronic subscriptions and club-related expenses. Clubs are required to submit receipts for any expenses. The Athletics Department has a budget they have to adhere to apart from miscellaneous expenses which are addressed on a case by case basis (wrestling scales had to be replaced). Once expenses are approved, we write a check. Clubs and teams can purchase from a DOE or non-DOE vendor. Often a non-DOE vendor costs significantly less. As we approach the end of the year, if a club or organization is approaching budget, we will alert them. Students write up their own budget.

As well as student-related expenses, PA hospitality-related expenses have been incurred.

7. Technology Update - Speaking on behalf of Jayesh (who was setting up the equipment for the PA meeting) Christine acknowledged the new Owl system purchased to accommodate remote attendees of the PA meetings. Confident that it would result in a significant audio and visual improvement.

8. Test Prep Services Update - Christine briefly mentioned the Test prep survey and thanked helpers for organizing information. The test company is interested in getting materials out. How involved will the Board be? Is it something the PA can take on? Is it labor intensive? Test prep material is targeted for sophomores and juniors.

9. Volunteer Update - she made a renewed appeal for more volunteers and stressed that it's parents who make the PA happen. Needed for selling merchandise and other activities. The school will lose a lot of seasoned senior parents at the end of the year. Support for Spring auction is the focus

10. Other business - Guest Michelle Byron, SLT member was invited to speak in advocating for IEP and 504 students. She is the parent of an 11th grader. She was a member of the Bronx Science Facebook

group for parents of students with IEPs and 504s and was concerned that SLT members were making decisions about this group of students without having enough of an insight into their needs for more support and better access in their education. She decided to take a proactive role in advocating for them at the SLT meetings. She'd like to suggest that the PA forms a subcommittee to specifically help these families and other minority and marginalized groups (LGQBT, Bengali and other groups that are typically very underrepresented and that could benefit). She sees this as a way for the PA to participate more in supporting diversity, equity and inclusion communities. The perception is that specialized schools don't fully embrace minority groups and many prospective students don't feel they could be successful or receive the support they need in a school like Bronx Science.

During the Open House, a room was established where families were able to speak to parents and teachers and we could expand on this idea. What is life at Bronx Science like if you don't speak English at home? Coming from transitional housing? What is the interest in addressing new groups?

What do we mean by students with special needs? Can include students with cognitive problems, dyslexia, autism, have processing issues, be hard of hearing, not have correctable vision, be wheelchair confined or there may be other health impaired factors.

It was noted that Bronx Science is a fully accessible building.

Only 1.7% (50 students) of Bronx Science students have IEPs and 2% have 504s. This is significantly below the national average IEP of 11-12%

Some students require accommodations for test anxiety, medical conditions. Some need extended time for tests or designated seating, others need counseling services, OT or PT. There are 15 classifications for IEPs, kids who need extended time. Test anxiety. Processing issue. Other health impaired factors. Sometimes, students feel they won't be supported and right now they're getting the message their IEP will not be fulfilled at the school. As well as a subcommittee, we will need a chair.

Christine requested to table the discussion.

The December EB and PA meetings will be in person. It would be helpful if board members email Christine, Elizabeth and Jayesh their thoughts and concerns in relation to the two tabled motions before the next meeting. .

Elizabeth adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm