

**Parents' Association of The Bronx High School of Science
General Membership Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2024 at 7:00 PM**

Co-Presidents Christine Kattan and Elizabeth Polkovitz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A motion was made to approve the 3/13/24 meeting minutes; seconded; unanimously approved.

New Business

1) Guest Speaker- Superintendent Fia Davis

- We were honored to welcome Superintendent Fia Davis who spoke about Districts 8, 10 and 11, of which we are a member, her goals and vision for the districts and for Bronx Science. It was both an informative and energizing presentation.
- Per Superintendent Davis, our mission is to elevate, celebrate, and innovate to improve and impact student achievement and school culture for Bronx high schools in Districts 8, 10, 11.
- Her goal is for all schools to achieve “rockstar status.” This means: 90% average graduation rate; 90% average attendance rate. Some schools already exceed these metrics, while others do not.
- She discussed her background prior to becoming Superintendent.
- The three Districts are comprised of: 38 Schools; 2 Specialized High Schools; 1 High School screened for the Arts; 10 CTE High Schools (Career and Technical Education);
- She discussed Year 1 District Outcomes. We are in the top 5 for the City.
- She discussed what she plans to focus on this year, including:
 - Targeted explicit literacy instruction.
 - Improving Algebra and ELA Regents Performance 10% or higher.
 - Keeping Attendance High.
 - Special Education Compliance.
 - Supporting MLL Students.
- She gave an overview of the Bronx Science statistics.
- She discussed Moonshot the Nights Program which pulls kids off the streets on Friday nights to provide activities and a safe haven.
- She discussed the Superintendent Student Council which is in its second year. A Bronx Science Junior, Jayden Sinclair, is on the Council.
- She discussed Priority 5 that all districts and schools should be more inclusive and responsive for parents and families.
- She discussed the Hart’s Ladder.
- Finally, she gave three pieces of advice and request:
 - Be in partnership with your child’s school.

- As your children get older you may give them more freedom but don't give them too much space.
- Be sure you have conversations with your children that are not transactional.
- A question/answer period followed. The questions were: (1) How did we reduce chronic absenteeism in the district by 15% in one year; (2) What are you doing to reduce vaping in school; (3) What is your vision for Bronx Science.

2) Principal's Report - Rachel Hoyle

We are celebrating several things:

- We are still waiting for more information on college acceptances, but over 100 students got accepted to Ivy League schools.
- We had the NHS induction ceremony. 250 Seniors were inducted due to their brilliance, hardwork, and commitment to serving the community.
- We celebrated the solar eclipse. All students and faculty geeked-out. Some students said they were "underwhelmed," but Principal Hoyle does not believe them.
- Thank you to the people who completed the internal survey and who participated in the focus group on communications. We will be implementing some of the ideas from the focus group. There will be more opportunities to participate in focus groups in the future.
- There was a food fair that was fun for students.

Things we are looking forward to:

- Spring Break is next week. When the students return, there will be AP exams. There will be no homework over the break and no tests on the first few days back from break.
- May 1: college fair for Sophmores and Juniors. Many colleges come and want to learn about us and our students. It's an opportunity for students to decide what is a good fit for them.
- Yankee's Game: the sign up is coming out.

Please complete the School Survey

3) Gala Update- Gabrielle Koelbel

- We hope you came and enjoyed the Gala. People relaxed and had fun. The gross proceeds from the gala were \$184,000 (we mistakenly said \$189,000), with a net of about \$135,000.
- We need more volunteers for the Gala. We need systems for people who like to categorize the merchandise.
- Consider volunteering next year. Last year, Co-Chairs Gabrielle and Shirah Werberger joined as freshman parents. This year Gabrielle was the Chair. Thanks to all the volunteers.

4) Treasurer's Report- Elizabeth reviewed the report

- There is an error in the green bar graph regarding actual revenue to date. It should read \$384,000 and not \$336,000.
- We are ½ way through what we plan to spend.
- The pie chart on spending to date shows expenses so far are 42% school facing; 45% student facing.

- As for the annual appeal, thank you to Yan Yu for all her efforts. We are still working toward the goal of raising \$300,000. Last year at this time, we had raised over \$300,000. We appreciate a donation of any amount.
- There are 3 ways to donate.
 - by phone, you can text 917-920-2677
 - go to our PA website at bxsciencepa.org
 - by regular mail. You should have received the fundraising letter (with return envelope)
- Ask your employer if they will match your donation.

5) Bylaws Vote

- We have proposed amendments to the PA by-laws. The amendments were posted in the BxSci Newsletter last month. The amendments deal with the number of people who can hold each position on the PA Executive Board.
- We are ready to vote on the amendments.
- The vote was taken and passed with no opposition.
- Thank you to the By-Laws Committee for your work on this.

6) Nominating Committee- Jodi Solomon

- Jody thanked everyone who is running for the Executive Board of the PA and the SLT.
- The vote will be held on May 15, 2024.
- Executive Board members are voted for 1-year terms.
- SLT members are voted for 2-year terms.
- Anyone can nominate themselves or someone else.
- The slate of nominees for the Executive Board is uncontested and is as follows:

Co-President

- Jennifer Allen-Cheng
- Xia Li
- Arthur Wong

Co-Vice President

- Helen Goldman – VP Community Relations
- Helen Qiu – VP Fundraising
- Ernie Sander – VP Operations

Co-Treasurer

- Julie Chin-Tom
- Amy Xue

Assistant Treasurer

- Mary Ann Carlese

Co-Recording Secretary

- Wendy Stryker
- Mark Yim

Corresponding Secretary

- Nicole Allen

Member at Large

- Lucy Louie
- Ashok Eastman
- There is one opening for a Member at Large. There was a call for any nominations from the floor. Initially, Henia Bruce McCarthy nominated herself. Then Ram Halder nominated himself, and Henia withdrew her self-nomination. Ram's contact information is: 914-303-1773; ramhalder@yahoo.com.
- Nominations for Executive Board have now concluded. We will not take any nominations during the May 15 meeting.
- There are currently two people running for SLT:
 - Dimitra Koutsantoni
 - Kate Sussman
- Nominations for SLT will remain open until the vote. Bios are due April 19 by 11:59 p.m. They can be no more than 200 words. They will be posted no later than 10 days before the vote.
- Thank you to the members of the Nominating Committee: Allison Rogovin, Jodi Solomon, Ellie Rabinowitz, Elaine Cipriano and Lucy Yang.

7) SLT Report

- We are working on a Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) with 6 Goals for next year: including awareness, high quality academics, college readiness, quality IEPs.
- We are brainstorming other ideas.

8) Co-Presidents Report

- If you are not interested in being on the SLT or the Executive Board, there are other ways to get involved, such as joining the Audit Committee. If interested, send an email to the Presidents. The Audit Committee entails:
 - A 3 to 4 hour commitment
 - In-person at the school, afternoon in mid-May to early June
 - No finance or audit experience is necessary
- If you have not already done so, please complete the NYC Public School Survey
- The Parent Outdoor Steering Committee is working on plans for the outdoor space.
 - So far, we have 3 conceptual designs that are possibilities for the space that were created by BxSc parent architect Alex Chirinian.
 - We raised \$27,000 at the Gala to be used for the Outdoor Space.

- The Yankees Game event will be posted. You should buy your tickets by May 9. This is not a fundraiser. It is for fun.

9) Other Business - None

10) Special Presentation: How to Have Difficult Conversations With Teens featuring a student panel, moderated by AP Andrew Nasser.

- We enjoyed and expressed our gratitude to AP of Guidance, Andrew Nasser and student panel members, Severjean Azirov '26, Liv Basche '27, Jady Sinclair '25 and Vicky Wang '24, who engaged in an enlightening panel discussion about the topic “How to Have Difficult Conversations with Teens.”
- We appreciate our parents/guardians’ participation and thank them for submitting questions for the panel. Some of the questions were:
 - What settings are good for tough conversations?
 - Do you prefer one long conversation or several short ones?
 - What is the worst thing your parents can say to you during a tough conversation?
 - What support can parents provide during times of high stress?
 - What is the best way to approach your child to limit defensiveness?
 - When is a good time to have a tough conversation?
 - What can parents do to prevent a freak out by their child?
- We also appreciate our students for their thoughtful and illuminating responses to the questions posed.

Important Upcoming Events/Dates

Virtual May PA Meeting and Election: Wednesday, May 15 at 7:00 PM
