BSI PTO general mtg minutes 9/28/17

Katrina Constantino, District 20 superintendent:
Met with parents in July. Learned so much. I promised that I would come to your first meeting. I applaud you for coming.
BSI is a citywide school, but under my jurisdiction. Wanted to tell you about District 20 and the things we hope your school will be immersed in. There are a lot of misconceptions. We have a lot of programs.
Your kids score in the 99th percentile coming into the school. We want the kids to soar and go farther. We are sharing a lot of things that will be happening. I am so delighted to welcome Mr. Eric Havlik. He’s seasoned and knows many of the principals in the district.
D20 is 4th in math in the city. Neck and neck with D15 in ELA. We have 24,000 students in 3-8. We have the largest population of English language learners in the city. It’s the beauty of the district. Many parents are forming support groups in schools to help.

Dr. Joe O’Brien, deputy superintendent. Principal leadership facilitator.
Powerpoint presentation.
5 year focus of the district: to increase classroom rigor among all subgroups; namely students with disabilities, ELA learners, and high performing students through a collaborative inquiry model.
Across all 38 schools, teachers work in teacher teams to support all subgroups.
In ELA, D20 is outperforming the city average by 10 pts. (50% of kids in D20 score a 3 or 4 in ELA vs about 40% citywide.). In math, it’s 57% vs city average of 38% scoring 3s and 4s.
Students with disabilities are also scoring higher than city average. In math, 19% pass vs 12% across city.
D20 is proud that each school has so many different populations. We are proud that we meet those new families.
Intervisitation and professional learning:
Principals and APs will rotate through the geographically based cohorts to identify and develop new innovations, scaffolds and supports to support students with disabilities and ELLs. Target lowest performing ELL grade and target supports.
We want teachers to be able to share resources and have support between colleagues to benefit all students.
Other district foci: project-based learning, content vocabulary, digital literacy. We want to provide experiences for our students. (One class in D20 went out to the Hamptons to see houses out of the Great Gatsby.)
Content vocabulary: big challenge for students. Asking all schools to use it in the classroom and also on the walls and hallways.
Digital literacy video.
Constantino: Couldn’t be content with just plodding along and not going global. I don’t think our children are as knowledgeable about digital literacy as we would like them to be. Mentions Alan November’s technology and education research. Also Yale University’s Marc Brackett. 5 principals have gone to China. 686 is going to be an integral part of this. The school should be project-based. Students should run the classroom and the teacher should be the facilitator. These kids are special. We want to take them far beyond where they came.

****

Eric Havlik: Here tonight to talk about some of the things we have planned for the year. I am thrilled to be here and activate the resources that I see at the school. Want to foster the students’ creativity. I believe in understanding the whole child. What social emotional needs we need to support. I will spend and dedicate the time getting to know your children. I hope you are with me on that ride.

Power point slides available here [LINK to be added]: Staffing issues that he’s inherited: Ms Ferguson as dean. Ms Ryan (formerly of PS230) - ESL; Ms Sabina - SETSS (special needs). Open positions: Spanish and Science. Identified someone to be the Spanish teacher. Hope to have her teaching 4-8th grade. Science: two candidates coming in to do demo lessons. Still interviewing science teachers in case neither finalist works out. K-2 science is in the classroom. Advisory is something that is critical to middle school. 2-3x per week. It’s a time to ask academic questions, but also social issues addressed. These groups may travel together for a few years and stay with the same advisor. Don’t know why it wasn’t done last year, but it is a critical outlet.

Middle school: Musical 6-8th Art portfolio 7-8 Debate: 7-8. Buddie classes: projects (reading, editing, writing, math games) between older and younger classes. First task: letters of support to schools affected by the recent hurricanes. Lunch and Recess slide details schedules for grades.

Grade Level parent meetings: Read all the notes and will start those in January. Great information was passed back and forth. Diversity Pilot: goal was achieved for this. I’m a strong advocate. Met with two parents about the work that the diversity committee has done. Stem Lab: call yesterday with the School Construction Authority about this exciting project. A tremendous amount of work has gone on to get the project to this point. Looks likely that work will begin this year. Final stages of being approved by SCA. Then it goes out to bid. Then bid is awarded and then permits are awarded. Hopeful it could be built soon. Construction could begin this school year.
DOE funded programs slide: Media literacy, 4-8; Spanish, 4-8, Dance K-8, Visual Art, K-8, Debate (w/pto)

PTO Budget slide: shows the list of programs that will be paid for with requested money. Total 368k.
I hope to have some discretionary funds for what he thinks the school needs 6 months from now.

Q&A with Parents:
Q: Teacher development. Where do you stand?
Previously a lot of money spent on math PD. A lot of work done with Metamorphosis. I think their work is great. I'm hearing about the need for ELA support. I don't want to say there will be no spending on PD. Too early for me to tell.

Q: Two questions: Have a first grader. Since there’s no science teacher, are they waiting to teach science?
A: No, it will be taught in the classroom by the classroom teacher. We are devoting time to the teachers to plan together.

Q: New to the school. How do I find out about those programs funded by the PTO?
Goes back to slide to talk about each line item:
Art supplies: same number spent last year.
Kids in the Game: recess coaches. Optional program for kids.
Chess, across grades
Elevate: study skills for middle school students
TAs: Not all are in place. Some in process. Goal: lower teacher student ratio.
BCM: K-2 music
BEAM: Grades to be determined. In past, they have done Battle of Brooklyn project. Sets for musicals
Construction Kids: BK Bridge for 2nd grade
Center of Architecture Design: goes with Construction Kids
School Loop: system used to communicate with families. 4-8.

Claire Lin: We will continue to update you on these programs throughout the year.

Havlik Q&A:
Q: The trips to Australia and China. How does that get integrated into the school? Who approves those trips?
A: It’s a new partnership and I’m excited to learn about it.

Q: Homework and textbooks. What’s your policy?
A: Textbooks. I don’t feel that it’s a yes or no answer. I don’t think we need to be teaching from a textbook. Could see it as a resource. Generally teachers use a variety of sources, including primary sources in lessons.

Q: Did your teachers in prior schools use them?

A: No. Parts of textbooks were used. Homework has a place. Homework in a lower grades need be light to nonexistent. Family time and physical activity is important. But I know there’s a time and place to prepare students for a future with larger homework loads. I am committed to preparing middle school students.

Q: Can you describe the STEM Lab?

I can’t give much detail because I’m still learning about it. Two classrooms, a rooftop lab with technology. It seems like it will be a tremendous resource.

Lin: All of the questions sent to Mr Havlik have been turned over to Mr. Havlik. Every single one up to this morning. When he has answers to other issues, he will let us know.

Havlik:
Q: Block room? What happened to the block room.
A: Discovered it the first day I was here. It’s not being utilized. It’s one of those untapped, not fully utilized resources. PS130 has a great block room. I will connect with them to find out what they are doing with their curriculum around blocks. I envision 1st graders rotating in the room and recreating their neighborhood after taking a walk with their class. And other projects.

Q: Dance twice a week. Could they have science instead?

Q: You identified two candidates for science, but you are only hiring one?

A: Only hiring one.

Looking like 3rd-5th will be taught by the new teacher.

We think we can successfully integrate science in the K-2 classes.

Q: does that mean 3rd-5th will have science 2x per week?

Treasury report:

Sheikh: September 26th Treasurer’s Report slide. [Add LINK]
We hope to do better than last year. Many proposed numbers in the budget are based on last year or in some cases averages of the previous three years.

Expenses: some fundraising events. These events also build community.

Net income of 526k is goal for next year, knowing that some new programs will be added this year.

Transfer of money will leave about 20k in the PTO account.

Q: Two items look like big changes. Expense line on year-end gala. Sharp increase in accounting costs.
A: Year-end gala: based on cost of 3 previous years, plus inflation. Accounting is for a planned audit this year.

Q: Can we vote on some of the items individually?
A: We are voting as a slate.

Q: Brooklyn Bridge construction project isn’t as strong as it could be.
A: Mr Havlik decided to keep that program.

Q: We will only have 20k left after transferring money?
A: Has historically has been this way.

Havlik: we have some flexibility in the school budget. Could be a combo of PTO and school funding. We will be doing this process much earlier next year. I am going based on what I’ve been told has worked by teachers and parents. Going to keep a very close eye and if we can reduce spending for next year, we will. I need time to see these programs at work.

Q: I just wanted to know what options we had. The absence of band is a big deal for a lot of families.
A: I should have mentioned this before. I think band is extremely valuable. I know there were a lot of scheduling problems. I’m starting with the things I’ve heard worked well, generally, though of course there are always differences of opinions. I am meeting with someone tomorrow who is a music teacher who has experience running a band program.

We felt we needed to move forward to fund the programs that are running now. But this is not closing the door on band.

Q: Is there a way to administer a band program?
Answer from another parent: there was list going around of programs that were most important to parents.
Parent comment: from what we’ve heard from our superintendent is there will be a closer relationship. She said that there may be funds that could be available from the district.

Q: We don't have many clubs. Like chess, robotics, others. How do you feel?
Havlik: We do have chess. You asked about robotics. I'm in favor and if we can bring it to the school, we will.

Motion to approve the budget. Seconded.
Motion to approve transfer of funds. Passed overwhelmingly. One disapprove. Two abstentions.
Approximately 60 parents in attendance.

Harvest fest budget. Unanimously approved.

Yulianna Shamayev: if you work for a big company, it's good to approach your HR department to see if your company matches. It's a 501c3.

Executive board minutes approved unanimously.

Lin: Introductions of board. Your participation is important. Together we make BSI great.

Vote for Simon for parliamentarian. Unanimously approved.

Yulianna Shamayev for Ass't Treasurer. Unanimously approved.
Executive VP: Maura Minsky is running. Unanimously approved.
Co-VPs as Parent Involvement: Annie Thoms and Shana Norberg. Unanimously approved.
Holly White -- VP of communication. Unanimously approved.

There will be an echo meeting tomorrow morning.

Annie Thoms: We want to set up systems to allow parents to volunteer in small ways that work for you and the school. That’s the goal. You’ll be hearing from us.

SLT Report by Tricia Ragone: The School Leadership Team (SLT) has parent members and teacher reps and teacher union reps. Work together on the CEP (Comprehensive Education Plan), which outlines the goals of the school.

At the meeting, we voted on the chair and co-chair. Ms Audrey is the recording secretary. Talked about the wishes of the parents. We’ll continue this at the next mtg.

Q: Can you give examples of some of the goals?

A: School has worked on test scores. Not just raising them, but figuring out why some populations don’t score as well as might be expected. The school has worked to improve school
to home communication since the very beginning. Family fridays and school blogs resulted out of these needs.

Comment from parent: SLT minutes are on the website and worth reading.

Mai Hoang, Fundraising report: we raise money for the extras that we think the school needs. School only gets the bare minimum funding per student. We will be contacting you soon to ask for your help. We need to raise $526k to continue the programs next year and add to them. We raise through the Direct Appeal because it's an efficient way to raise money.

Many schools raise money to supplement programs. Mr Havlik’s former K-5 school raised over $200k. PS321, 58 and 32 also raise large sums of money.

We know not everyone can give, but there are many ways to contribute to the school. We hope you will do whatever you can.

Fall Harvest: Sunday, Oct 29th. Halloween theme. 12-4. We need people to run the pony rides and decorate the cupcakes.

Please volunteer. Redesign the website. If you can get a great donation for the gala, we would appreciate that help.

Prior Year Funding slide.

Adjourned 8:50pm