BSI PTO General Meeting Minutes for February 29, 2016

- The meeting was called to order by the PTO EVP Celeste Ivers at 9:20 AM. There were 48 members in attendance. The minutes for the January 2016 meeting were read by James Ng and they were unanimously approved by the attending parents.
- Principal’s report presented by Donna Taylor:
  - There are many different SHSAT prep courses. They’re all very expensive even if you have 50 per class. If we offer one here, it would have to be parent pay because we don’t have the budget for it. There are a number of Title 1 children here, we need to find ways to pay for their participation, but there is not enough donation to support that right now. I am not comfortable to offer the class without support for Title 1 children. Anna is currently negotiating with the company we would have used to offer the Title 1 children with free tuition. It is looking like that company would provide that support, in which case we would be able to offer SHSAT prep in the springtime and then a few weeks in fall.
  - With regard to the STEM lab, we started to talk about building the roof lab four or five years ago. We went through many iterations. First, we spend time with architects to make sure the roof could withstand the load. We also started fundraising for it. Councilman David Greenfield gave BSI and TAOTS $75,000 for a starter fund. Last year, the Chancellor was changed, and Chancellor Carmen Farina is interested in supporting the STEM lab. The School Construction Authority (SCA) will participate and fund part of it. Recently, Brooklyn Borough President gave us half a million dollar grant. We have about $1.2 and need $3.3 million to have it built. We’ll need your help soon in letter writing to your councilmen.
  - STEM lab will not just be for BSI. It will be used for everyone as an example, as a lab to teach other teachers. BSI is kind of like a teaching school. Often, there are teachers that work side by side with our teachers. This provides an experimental space for the teachers. It will show DOE that when they build new school buildings, they should plan for a rooftop STEM lab.
- Went to visit PS 84’s open house STEM lab. Celeste attested that it was amazing to see that a 3rd grader was able to explain how things work there in very clear manner. They are very close to us in that they are a close knit community. We have a lot of people behind us to see to it that our STEM lab is a success.

- President's report was presented by Celeste Ivers in absence of David Orsolino:
  - We can look up historical grades on the DOE student site.
  - We are trying to figure out how to improve participation rate. We are interested in ideas.
  - We are also looking for ideas or suggestions for events and importantly parents to run with their ideas or events as chairs. Contact the PTO with interest in co-chairing future events.
  - SLT minutes needed to be posted.

- EVP report was presented by Celeste Ivers:
  - The March movie night will be “Inside Out.” Details will be emailed.

- Treasurer's report was presented by Mark Caserta:
  - At the end of January, we have $286,000 in the bank.
  - We are on pace with last year but still short about $400K.
  - Still in process of transferring bank account from Chase to Investor Bank. It is harder than it looks. There are a lot of things to take care of. One of them is we still need to have PayPal change it over to Investor Bank.
  - Hopefully we’ll get more donation from Investor Bank, once we transfer the money over to them.

- Fundraising report was presented by Celeste Ivers in absence of Alison and Jim:
  - Gala is coming up. It will be on May 13th at Roulette. Please start getting donations. Last year, we raised over $100K. We need every parent’s help in reaching out to restaurants, companies, classes, those who own summer homes and could donate a weekend etc.
  - Vladimir talked about the Chess event. It will be on March 5th, from 9 to 4. It is not a rated tournament. Everyone is welcomed. It is meant to be an intro to Chess tournaments for kids and parents. There will be two level groups. Need volunteers to referee the games.
  - There were 355 skaters at the Ice Skating event. There were some hiccups with Lakeside towards the end of the event. They decided to donate the entire rink rental to us which was very generous As a result, the event netted around $5,700 for us.
○ Lakeside was wondering if we’re interested in hosting a rollerblade event there. There were a lot of interest at the meeting. Celeste will look into the feasibility of it and discuss with the board.
○ DA is ongoing and it makes up a huge percentage of our budget.

- PACE report:
  ○ No meeting.

- SLT report:
  ○ No updates.

- Question: how do we get info DA numbers?
  Answer: Grade reps used to spread the word on events and DA percents. We’ll work on that.

- Meeting adjourned at 10:02 am