BSI PTO General Meeting Minutes for September 30, 2015

- The meeting was called to order by the PTO Treasurer Mark Caserta at 6:35 PM. There were 65 members in attendance. The Recording secretary James Ng read the minutes for the June 2015 meeting and it was unanimously approved by the attending parents.

- Fundraising report was presented by Alison Offerman-Celentano:
  - October 17th is the date for Harvest Festival, a fun event that will include international food, bounce castle, rock climbing and new this year, a photobooth.
  - We’ll need a lot of volunteer help to make it a success.
  - 6-7th graders can come to help. Certificate for volunteering will be presented to those that helped. It could be used for HS application.
  - Friends and neighbors are welcome to attend the event.
  - DA forms are coming. So far, we’ve raised over $43K on curriculum night
  - Barnes and Nobles fundraising event will be held on Sunday, 11/22. It will include teacher reading.
  - Gala will be in May this year. More detail will be coming.
  - Please remember to use the Amazon link, it brings in over $7K each year.

- BCM did a demo on the instruments used for band [video]:
  - The participating child should practice with their instrument a 10-15 minutes a day.
  - If chosen instrument is loud, could try to practice in closet or basement.
  - The flute will take a bit longer at the beginning to get the lips shape correctly.
  - Trumpets don’t have to be played loud. In fact they will learn to play it softly first.
  - Buy dampeners if your kid chose drums. They could reduce the noise down to about 25% of loudness. Practice with electric drum at home is fine.
  - Probably better to rent the instrument. Will need to bring it back home to practice and bring back to school for lessons.
○ Tricia Ragone[video] says that band practice will be every Friday from 10 to 11:30am. 4 to 7 graders will participate. They will need to have their rental equipments.

- Principal’s report presented by Donna Taylor[video]:
  ○ Band and playing musical instruments are good hobbies.
  ○ With regard to the lice issue, most school do not do lice checks. Teachers do spot checks.
  ○ Chancellor’s regulations only require to send child with live lice home but not child with nits. But we all knows that nits turns into live lice in 3 weeks.
  ○ BSI is trying to encourage parents of kids with lice or nits to be picked up, but cannot force the parents to do what is not mandated by the chancellor's regulations.
  ○ Donna asked for parents vote of whether we should have lice check for $2/per head. Vote taken and passed unanimously.
  ○ Donna passed ELA and math historical progression table. BSI does consistently well within the 95-98 percentile.
  ○ BSI do not test prep or teached based on the test. The kids proved that we don’t need to worry, they are doing well and are ready.
  ○ It is hard for BSI to match fairly with the other city-wides because we have a lot of bilingual kids. Bilingual kids usually take a little bit of catch up on the testing score. They usually does better in the long run.
  ○ Maria Sierra and other parents has secured BSI with a CNC mill (3D printing machine). The kids will use it to design scale models with this machine. This is an example that it takes a lot of parents to pull the oars in one direction to make this a great school
  ○ BSI received a $500K check from the Borough President’s office for the rooftop STEM lab project. The rooftop STEM lab idea came from a parent.

- EVP report presented by Jim Butsikares:
  ○ Committee signup gets carry over from previous year. If you want to be removed then please email executive board.
  ○ The following committee descriptions were presented - give back, lower grade and upper grade movie night, safety, BSI inquirer, membership, fundraising, logistic, grant, technology and creative teams.
  ○ Safety, logistics, and grant committees needs additional members and chairs.
  ○ Grants Committee was rebranded and will search for the corporate sponsorship for BSI events.
  ○ Tech committee needs help to rebuild the PTO website.

- Treasurer's report presented by Mark Caserta:
- We’ve raised $660K last year.
- As of the end of August, we’ve raised $22K, which is on par with last year. However our budget is much larger, so we’ll need to work hard to meet this goal.

- PACE report presented by Willow Lawson:
  - G&T sign up outreach in the Bronx.
- SLT report presented by Donald Salvato:
  - SLT works on the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP).
  - Election were held for the chair and time keeper.
  - The updated SLT information as well as the meeting minutes will be published on the PTO website.
  - CEP goals were updated
  - Parent concerns emails were read and discussed.
  - 6-7 graders going out to lunch time, street crossing could be a safety issue. Transit came to school last year to train the kids on safe walking around the neighborhood. Crossing guards are there to help with cross over to Seth Low park.
  - Next meeting will be on 10/28 at 8am.
- Q&A:
  - Cathy Joseph brought up the topic of school bus for 7th & 8th graders. They don’t have yellow bus any more. However, there are school bus to Mark Twain and a few other middle schools. New law was passed a couple of years back, before we have middle school, to add school bus to those schools. Issues have been raised with Alex Robinson.
  - 4th to 7th grade families should send the letter Sara Cipani wrote to their respective representatives. They will respond when they hear from parents.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm