PTO Co-president David Orsolino called the meeting to order at 8:48 AM. There were 16 parents in attendance. The PTO Recording Co-Secretary Nick Kremer read the minutes from the November meeting. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**Principals report by Donna Taylor:** full video of Donna’s presentation can be found [here](#)

The school once again found several cases of lice infestation. Last time we had lice checks, BSI administration was sending kids home with lice or nits to get proper treatment, however there were some negative feedback from some parents who complained that the kids were sent home with nits, which according to the regulations was not required. However, this is a common practice because where there are nits there will be lice. It’s just a matter of some short time between them. So Donna had to take this situation under control and we will have a lice check at the school tomorrow (on Thursday 12/18). We need to be all in this together. Donna proposed to do a lice check right at the beginning of the school year and have it scheduled in the budget. Perhaps around the Thanksgiving time. BSI is coordinating efforts with TAOTS to join in a cross-school lice check. There was a suggestion from a parent to try and work with Wingspan to coordinate and ensure the coats are put into the backpacks. Donna thought this was a good idea and will discuss this with Wingspan immediately.

- The school started writing the 7th grade curricula. They have began interviewing and looking for 7th grade teachers. It’s a good time to do this because other schools are not looking yet, so we get a chance to get the “Creme of the Crop”

- The school band is coming along nicely. They are working together to prepare the ensemble to the winter concert. They have new drums and sax sections. The full ensemble sounds really great together. They are gathering in the music room every month. May 13th is the big band concert. Need help with putting together a drum kit from the parents who are drummers. Need help from parent volunteers to put it together, so it could be accessible to everybody in school.

- One of the large concepts the school has been working on for the past 6 years is family involvement and engagement, and not being a district school, having the ability to open the doors so the parents have a feeling for what’s happening in school and how they can better support their children at home. Last week we had 5th grade round tables and parents were inspired by the way the kids participated in this. It seemed almost like it was a show. The feedback is that this was the most impressive and the most productive time the parents have ever been in the classroom. Children were being critiqued by each other and somehow were very well accepting the suggestions. They worked together and really cared about each other. The group dynamic was amazing. They say in tables of 4 and read everyone else's essays, then made the notes and critiqued the essays of each other. Everyone spoke for equal times, everybody listened and responded appropriately. This promotes the concept of inquiry. Students learn much more from one another than they ever do from the instructional teaching. This roundtable
concept came from math. Much of what we do for math is inspired research that’s done in the country and the teachers present this at the national conferences. This year Donna will be presenting this concept at the Council of Supervisors of Mathematics. They call this work the “Gallery work” - the children learn the practice of the giving not just positive feedback or a blank praise but a very specific, precise, situational feedback with behavioral and consequential examples. The kids are completely engaged, articulate and are helping one another. The 5th and 6th grade kids are doing similar work on their Google drives where their classmates provide specific comments to one another with examples of what specifically they liked or disliked in each other work. This Thursday there will be a 6th grade roundtable and there will be other roundtables and parent workshops offered throughout the year, so the school is really making an effort to bring parents into the conversation, so that they know what’s going on. Unfortunately due to us being a citywide school where most students are being bused in we will never be able to do enough of this.

- Many good ideas that have grown up at BSI actually came from parents and Donna encouraged parents to not hesitate if they have good ideas and asked to continue bringing these ideas and solutions to her.

- One of the parents mentioned that last weekend they participated in a Chess tournament at another public school, a wonderful event that she thought could benefit our school. Donna said that Mr. Nick is working on creating a Chess club, however it’s a complicated matter. because for anything run by the PTO after school there should be a separate treasurer, and there are a lot of rules and regulations and even brought up an example of a principal losing her job and that was related with the improper operation of the after school Mandarin language program. Therefore due to the large amount of scrutiny, the DOT is applying to such initiatives, the PTO needs to be very careful when running various events after the school hours and follow the chancellors regulations when conducting the awesome events and initiatives like the chess club.

**The presidents report: David Orsolino.**

- TAOTS had a PTO meeting at the same time as us and just announced to us that they just voted and agreed to co-fund 40% or $2,200 of the $5500 for repairs and improvements of the auditorium sound while the BSI will put the remaining 60% or $3,300.

- The question came from a parent regarding what vendor we will be using to conduct this work: We will utilize a DOE approved vendor. This proposal includes the purchase of a new sound board for the auditorium. as well as enhancing the sound by implementing a new mic system for the stage performances. There was a motion to vote on approving the proposal to finance the repairs of the Auditorium sound, which was second. All 16 parents voted unanimously to accept the proposal and go forward with this implementation in partnership with TAOTS and provide the remaining $3,300 towards the repairs of the soundboard.

**Treasurers report:**

- November contributions: grossed a profit of $16,437.50. This included Barnes & Noble proceeds as well as a small amount of corporate contributions. There were about $13,000 in Direct Appeal and a little over $700 from Amazon. The total income YTD is over $137,000. The total cash on hand is over $196,000.

- The B&N event this year does not receive the Barclays match any longer because they are only matching one event per year now and the board chose to match the proceeds from the Gala as this is the largest fundraising event of the year.

- One of the parents brought up a concern that many parents are not aware of the charges that the PTO has to pay to PayPal when they contribute to the Direct Appeal and suggested to provide additional education to parents about this.

- David had introduced Robert Yee - the Co-President of TAOTS PTO. Robert congratulated us on completing the vote on the restoration of the auditorium sound. Robert shared how TAOTS is
addressing the lice situation and proposed to put our joint efforts together to fight the infestation. They voted to have a $1000 budget to deal with lice. They are putting the children’s coats in the bags that the PTO will be procuring. They plan on doing several preventative measures. He suggested that we think about passing a budget item to have the plastic bags in the classrooms that could help keep the coats separate and prevent transmission of lice from one coat to another. There was also a suggestion to apply treatment to the items that are put into the lost and found room. They are willing to split the cost to put the lost and found items in the bags prior to placing them in the shelves to prevent further spreading of lice. Also there should be emphasis on the parent education on how to deal with lice.

- One of the BSI parents proposed to discuss with Donna the possibility of funding the lice expenses from the "trip budget" money - $100 per student that was already collected by the school. We are asking to appeal to Donna to dedicate a portion of that money towards the needs associated with the lice checks and preventative measures.

**Fundraising.**

- DA note home was just backpacked. Asking to consider making a DA donation before the end of the year.
- We are sending home the BSI postcards designed by our parents. One of the cards will go to our past Gala donors.
- Gala search was very exhaustive. Saturday June 6th the year end Gala will be held at the Roulette.
- B&N book fair we raised $2600.
- We are not voting on the Chess fundraiser at this time but will be doing this in the future. We want to make sure that we will have enough parents participating in volunteering.
- Most Other chess events held at other schools are free but parents can buy chess sets, food and other items the PTO can make profit on. But due to the very limited space in our school we may not be able to conduct such free event.
- Ice skating is booked for a Sunday in Feb 8 at 5PM at Prospect Park Lakeside. We will have fee hot chocolate, free snack, will have a bake sale and BSI gear sale. They also have a cafe on site that they agreed to keep open throughout the event. The pricing structure will likely be $32 per family with a lower pricing option for a single scatter or a teacher. Tricia and Celeste worked really hard to get Lakeside to negotiate and be persistent with organizing this event.
- In the past some parents who are skate instructors used to be able to give free skating instructions.
- A proposal to offer parents and grandparents an option to donate money to the school as a means of the holiday present.
- A parent proposed to create memorable gifts (certificates or something like that) for the kids of those families that donated.
- Grandparents may be encouraged during the grandparent day to provide their email addresses to allow us communicating the giving opportunities to them.
- Ella Royzman will be leading the Gala program effort once again this year.

**EVP report.**

- Coat drive is in full swing. Some extra care will need to be applied to it swine we have a lice situation.
- Movie committee is still on hold. Hopefully if the audio equipment upgrade is completed in Jan we may be able to start the Movie nights on Jan.
- Mobile bidding was proposed for the gala event and the technology team as well as the fundraising committee are collaborating on this. We had an invitation to attend events at other schools to observe the mobile bidding options. Contact Willow Lawson to coordinate this. Anderson will be doing this as well. The word is that this will make parents a lot happier going through the bidding process.
• Comprehensive Education Plan is now finished up and will be submitted this month.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 AM.