Minutes - PTO General Meeting

Wednesday, October 22nd

The BSI PTO Co-president Samantha Delman-Caserta called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. There were 29 parents in attendance.

- The meeting minutes from the September General PTO meeting were read by Nick Kremer and unanimously approved.

Guest speakers

Toi Ferguson and Sara Callejo

The video recording of this presentation may be found here.
The Cluster Teachers Toi Ferguson and Sara presented to the audience regarding the topics of Tribes and Responsive Classroom. The deck on Tribes can be found here. The deck on Responsive Classroom can be found here.

Tribes:
Toi Ferguson is a cluster teacher at BSI - teaches tribes. Toi has been a teacher for 12 years. Learned about the tribes concept at other schools she was working for prior to BSI. The concept of Tribes is about creating community, and is about social and emotional intelligence. About 30 years ago in California there was an educator Jeanne Gibbs, who lived in the period of time when lots of students were dropping out of schools, students were not being well prepared, lots of educators were leaving schools, no one was sure how to deal with this phenomenon. Jeanne left the school as well and did a social research, studied different professions around the world and discovered that there are a lot of common values in various tribes around the globe such as respect, listening, collaborating and sharing. When she came back to CA and instituted the process called Tribes.

Shared mission and goal of tribes is to ensure a healthy development of every child, so that the children have the knowledge, skill and resilience to be successful in this rapidly changing world. The goal of Tribes is to engage students, teachers and families working together as a learning community dedicated to caring and support, active participation and positive expectations for all students.

- Tribes is about creating safe learning environments, so that the students can have their a balanced mind and think well.
- The group must go through the outlined process, with the community agreements being at the heart of it.
- There is a Right To Pass which is meant to create safety - some students need time to think before they speak. This is not the right to pass on the homework.
- "I-mat" is a conflict resolution tool which consists of the parts I feel, I need, Will you? Agreement, Appreciation: this tool provides students with a formula to guide their conversations in a conflict resolution.
- "Peace center" is a place for students to develop skills to manage their strong emotions.
- Think time is a tool used at BSI to help students put down their thoughts and then use them to facilitate conversations.

Responsive classroom: Sara Calleja (a.k.a. Sara Inbar)

- Sara described 3 principles of Responsive Classrooms:
  - Belonging
  - Significance
  - Fun
• Build a sense of belonging, Listen to each other and repeat what the others say.
• Interactive modeling:
  ○ Never assume that the teachers know how to do everything. Every student’s action is modeled during the first six weeks of the class, observed by the teachers but never corrected, instead they are suggested to try something else and practice when they do good.
  ○ Students are reminded before they are redirected - this helps them save face (example phrase: "We are not using cell phones during the meeting today!" instead of "Please put your cell phones away!")
• Morning meeting
  ○ Consistent format for friendly greetings, sharing of news, having fun together and warming up for a day of learning.
  ○ Followed by an activity or a game.
• Creating Rules
  ○ Taking care of selves
  ○ Taking care of others
  ○ Taking care of space
• Responsive classroom does not believe in punishments, instead they have logical consequences
  ○ Respectful of children
  ○ Supportive of their efforts to learn how to fix mistakes
    ■ "You break it, you fix it"!
    ■ Consequences are related to the mistakes
    ■ Apology of action. It is not enough to say "I'm sorry" 10 times. It's about truly correcting the behavior, if you offend someone, as an example, next day try bringing them a gift, etc.
    ■ Take a break. Student does not notice that they need a break but the teacher does. Students in upper grades appreciate that a lot as it let's them get their act together and never get in trouble.
• Outcomes
Vladimir Bugayev - the benefits of chess

Vladimir Bugayev - National Chess Master and Coach
The video recording of this presentation may be found here.

- Vladimir articulated how chess is connected to other disciplines such as geometry and math and how it furthers the logical thinking.
- One of the examples Vladimir used: in movies when the director wants to demonstrate that a character is smart, they show a chess set on the background.
- Vladimir gave parents a high level overview of the basic rules of chess in a manner that can be easily understood by the children.
- Numbers are like mothers, letters are like fathers, when fathers and mothers get married babies are made, and the babies can be named as 1a, 2a, etc.
- You can use the chessboard to play Battleship.
- You can play a memory game - name the color of a particular square. The key is to first learn the colors of four corner squares and then ask the children to guess the colors of adjacent squares. This helps stretching their memory.
- It is very important is to play with the kids. When they play they engage, they concentrate and focus, they learn better. They remember what parents tell them.
- Geometry game. What shapes you can make with various figures:
- Bishop only goes diagonally - can make a Diamond.
- Rooks can go straight ahead and sideways - can make squares and rectangles.
- Queens can make triangles.
- etc.

- Tom and Jerry game - queen and knight. Queen needs to capture the knight. Kids can play this one and on and on. The strategy to win this game is to attack the points the knight can go to, not the figure itself. To do this it's important to picture the shapes various figures can "draw".
- The games like this teach patience, concentration, logical thinking and discipline.

Presidents report

- The Executive Board has gone through multiple by-law revision proposals the previous board had made. The changes that are proposed do not impact the existing board positions and we are going to hold off on voting for these changes until further notice. Some of these by-law changes are regarding the treasury team moving to the online version, committee responsibilities, board succession plan, as well as the structures.
- Audio repairs have been left to the parent volunteers - we brought in a specialist to assess the situation as well as one of the parents who is an audio engineer also took a look at it. There are two parts to the proposed repairs:
  1. The mixing board that is being offered will have presets option for the movie night, PTO meeting, violin recital, etc. the cost for that is $3,000.
  2. The stage microphones - looking to implement a hanging mike system. The cost for this will be $2,500.
- We are reaching out to TAOTS to split the cost of the repair but have not received the final confirmation of this, therefore we cannot do the voting on the final budget just yet. We plan on getting the confirmation prior to the November meeting remain hopeful to be able vote on the budget then.
- The Harvest festival's 50/50 raffle was a blast. We raised $855 and 50% of that should have automatically gone to school, however because we had a parent who generously donated all of their winnings to the PTO, the total amount raised by 50/50 was $855.
- DOE has various regulations on the raffles and auctions that and we are happy to continue offering 50/50 donations in the future as long as they meet those regulations.
- **A motion was made to continue offering 50/50 raffles during the future fundraising and community building events** - 27 in favor, 1 against and 1 abstention
- The president made the following announcement: Next months speaker will present the BHS studies. Kira and Michael will be presenting with Donna.

The Treasurer's report

- Net income in Sep - $24,916.76. Total for the year is $47,301.79
- Cash on hand as of 9/30 - 106,567.79

Fundraising Report
Had a fabulous Fall Harvest event. It starts to morph into a true community building event. This year we are netting over $5,500 from this event. This is a lot more than this event made in the years before. If parents have any suggestions regarding this event, while its fresh in their heads now please email the fundraising at fundraising@bsipto.org, so your ideas can be captured.

The Direct Appeal campaign goes out throughout the year and we will keep sending periodic reminders throughout the year and plan to do a bigger push before the end of the year.

Fundraising committee meeting is coming up next Wednesday night at 7PM. Please come and get involved!

Next event - B&N Book fair on Nov. 16 - all day event at the B&N at Park slope where B&N pledges to give BSI a percentage of sales during the day of the event as well as for the online purchases during the upcoming week. The purchase of anyone who presents our flyer gets counted. We ask for volunteers to stand in close proximity to the B&N to give out flyers to prospective customers. Multiple BSI teachers come in and do read-alouds. We love getting the kids involved in helping us with this event as well. It's fun for them to hand out the flyers and feel how they are helping the school. We need volunteers to greet customers and wrap up presents near the register. We will be giving away the coupons and encourage you to share them with friends and family via Facebook and other online media because all of it will benefit the success of this event.

In the future we plan on introducing a possible chess tournament fundraiser.

We have about $180k in the bank right now. The events we held this year are paying off well. We are further along than in the previous year's during this time.

Also discussing the upcoming Gala and auction - seeking the venue, looking for increase in the corporate sponsorship, ice skating event, and other topics. Please contact us at fundraising@bsipto.org to submit your ideas. Also encourage others to participate.

EVP report - Celeste Ivers

Committee updates.
Giveback first event is this coming Saturday. The health center filled up really quickly. There will be other dates scheduled in the near future where those who want would be able to volunteer.
Start gathering your pennies for the Penny Harvest.
Movie night dates were introduced. The sixth graders are getting involved this year. The students will have the opportunity to usher, roll the films, etc. with adult supervision and take some ownership of movie night. They will be making choices on what movies to roll as well. Look out for permission slip for 6th graders There will be two types of movie nights - for younger and for the older audience.
Newsletter structure is being discussed now - plan to publish it 3 times a year. First issue anticipated at the end of November. Please join and help out if you have creative skills.
There was a great turnout at the initial tech team meeting. There were discussions about PayPal, Gala and Auctions technology, integration between Salesforce.com and Quickbooks, as well as regarding the deliverability of our mailings. Feel free to reach out to help or with your ideas.

**PACE update. Willow Lawson**
- PACE and the Bronx Borough President's Office are co-hosting two G&T testing forums on Nov 5th at the Bronx Library Center. As a part of PACE's push for a citywide G&T school in the Bronx, PACE is working to increase the number of children tested. The Bronx has the lowest rate of G&T testing per capita of all the boroughs. Currently, some 400 children commute to the other 4 citywide schools—TAG, Anderson, NEST+m and PS85/30th Avenue School.
- PACE had it's last meeting on 10/27 at BSI.

**SLT Update**
- SLT realized they had to refocus its efforts more to the management of the CEP and it's goals and outcomes.
- SLT is going to focus more this year on the the intent of the Chancellor's regulations.
- SLT used to function as a sounding board for the individual issues but had to be re-defined as a school-wide panel for dealing with larger issues as well.
- Every email that comes into the SLT gets printed out and discussed at the meeting in an anonymous format. Every parent email gets answered, although the individual issues will likely be redirected for handling by the school administration.
- In the past there was a concern that there was not enough communication at the individual classes about the curriculum, and the SLT took this as an initiative and now each class has a website with a syllable on it.
- Minutes from the SLT meeting will be posted more regularly.
- Observers are very welcomed and unlike in the past, now they can speak during the last 15 minutes of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10.