

Blind Brook PTA  
General Meeting  
Thursday, May 19, 2022  
7:00pm  
Blind Brook MS/HS IMC (In Person) and Via Zoom  
**MINUTES**

**I. Superintendent Update and Q&A: Dr. Colin Byrne**

- A. **The budget passed.** Thank you for supporting us as a school district! We do not take that for granted. We had one of the largest turn-outs we've had in the last ten years. The budget passed by a large margin. Thank you, everyone, for that.
- B. **Upcoming June 7th board meeting:** We'll be discussing curriculum and the strategic plan we've been developing this year. We'll also be talking about advanced learning. We have done various surveys this year and considered possibilities, but we haven't summed it all up or announced what we're going to do yet. More curriculum news coming. Please attend if you can.
- C. **Water bottle filling stations at RSS** have been installed. It only took a year or so to get that done! Thank you PTA for supporting us in that area, as in so many areas.
- D. **May 9th water main break and school closure:** I do recognize that the communication on that was not great. We tried to get the message out to people in a timely fashion, but the texts/calls went out an hour after the email. Plus, there were contingency pieces we didn't communicate, such as what would happen in case parents of younger kids weren't home. We should have done a better job communicating that in general. I had a few conversations with parents, and I realize we haven't done a good job of communicating in general. We don't always follow up or fully explain. We as an administration have to do a better job on that- myself included. We will work on relating things effectively.
- E. **Q: Because you talked about communication- with this recent election, we heard a lot about curriculum. I didn't hear anything from the administration saying, "No, we do, in fact, have a curriculum." Another thing I wanted to ask with regard to communicating- staffing has come up at previous PTA meetings and the election- could you share some information about that and communicate that out to the community?**
  - i. The curriculum piece- I did not address some of the comments publicly because I didn't want to make comments that might seem directed against a specific candidate. I planned to address a lot of the comments at the next board meeting. We do have a curriculum. Our teachers have for years had a solid curriculum that they have created, have followed, and continue to adapt as needed. They work hard to maintain that. We are putting in a

few more pieces, reviewing curriculum, addressing alignment. There has been a curriculum for years, based on NYS standards at a minimum, as well as things that our faculty and admin feel are important for students to learn. I should have come out and dispelled that sooner, but I will talk about that more on June 7th.

- ii. In terms of staffing, it has been challenging. Some areas are very hard to fill. You may have heard about the challenge we had filling a Spanish position. In the positions we've had to fill lately, we've been able to find highly qualified candidates. A high school ELA position was recently approved. A new social worker should be approved soon. We do have good candidates for those positions; we are finding good solid people. There is a shortage of people going into education. Hiring is difficult. The most difficult to fill is the substitute teacher position. We are trying to reach out and find people who would be willing to help us out. For the most part, we're doing ok now. I'll let people know if we run into challenges.

- F. **Q: Where are we with the search for a new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment?** We are at the end of the process. We've had a search committee screen candidates, and the board has interviewed candidates. We are at the last step, trying to cross the T's and dot the I's. I don't want to jinx that by saying more.

## II. **Acceptance of last month's minutes: Approved.**

## III. **Co-Presidents' Report: Cameron Sager and Correy Stephenson**

- A. (none)

## IV. **Treasurer: Lynn Glantz**

- A. Please send me any receipts for reimbursement asap. If there are expenses we can get ahead of, send me things in advance when you can (such as orders for graduation).
- B. April 2022: Net loss of \$(8,834)
- C. Major Revenues: Gross Profit/Loss of **(\$1,628)**

Half Day Program	\$5,062
Plant Sale	\$1,535
Corbin's Crusaders	(\$8,250)

D. Expense Total: **(\$7,206)**

Teacher Appreciation Week	\$2,400
Community Coalition	\$2,302
Various Ridge Street	\$,1433

E. Total Net Revenue (Loss): \$(8,834)

**V. Ways and Means: Alicia Scala and Kate Marino**

- A. The plant sale was successful at RSS, not so much at the MS/HS. It was really great to be selling plants during the school day again at RSS.
- B. We are wrapping up Teacher Appreciation Week. We have hosted two successful lunches from Bellefaire Catering (one at RSS, one at the MS/HS). We had a Sweets and Treats day yesterday for the entire district. We will wrap up the week tomorrow with a dessert truck at the elementary school. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Sweets and Treats day.
- C. Square Art raised \$1800.
- D. The annual school supplies sale is underway. An email will be going out shortly.
- E. *Comment: thank you from the faculty, who have enjoyed your efforts all week. We did send an email to Cameron and Correy saying thank you so much. At the June PTA meeting, we're going to provide some sweets and treats for the parents.*

**VI. Programming: Amanda Gitkind and Shana Koransky**

- A. Harlem Wizards tickets are on sale! We have already sold 168 tickets. If you haven't already, click the link in the email and get your Harlem wizards tickets.

We need volunteers to sell merchandise and refreshments. The event will be June 3rd at 7:00pm.

- B. Tomorrow we are hosting our Fun Fit Friday with Kindergarten and first grade, outside on the green at Ridge Street, with Coach Christina. For anyone who's listening, write "blacktop pickup" on the dismissal note. Amanda and I will meet children on the blacktop and escort children to the event.
- C. We submitted a date for Olympic Night- we are trying to get it on the June calendar, but June is already pretty busy.

## **VII. RSS Liaison: Rachel Lerner**

- A. Kindergarten numbers are really strong – over 100 students, definitely 5 sections. There may be an ICT class in next year's kindergarten grade.
- B. Last week was kindergarten orientation, parent/teacher conferences and the 4th grade circus. The circus was a lot of fun! Today was the Kindergarten Sing, and that went great. The kindergarten tours have been going well.
- C. At this point, while the numbers in our area are spiking, masks remain optional. Lunchtime seating has been moved around, and there are no restrictions. This decision was made due to needing the downstairs gym for events. It was getting too tight with the way things were, and unfortunately the weather has not cooperated, so we're not able to use the outside as much.
- D. There is extra seating in the lunchroom, so if parents do want more spacing, that is an option. The windows are open and the air purifiers are on.
- E. Today an email was sent out with last week-of-school details: Please note there is no school on Monday June 20 (Juneteenth) and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of that week are ½ days with 11:30am dismissal.
- F. The 5th grade moving up ceremony is on June 23 at 10:00am at the HS.
- G. The class placement form is closed now. Many parents submitted their information.
- H. Summer program is set to run for 2 weeks this summer at RSS. Tracy and Teresa are not coordinating it; however, if you have any questions, please reach out to Joan Pinkerton.
- I. As far as the construction update is concerned, we know as much as the community knows. Hopefully the BOE will update the community soon on what the plan is and the timing of completion.
- J. State tests results get mailed in September, and then reports go out to parents. Final report cards will be on the parent portal June 24th at 3:10pm.

## **VIII. MS Liaison: Alex Boruch**

- A. Thank you to the PTA for all of the wonderful Teacher Appreciation Week events! Your thoughtfulness and unwavering support was very much appreciated by all faculty and staff.
- B. The End of Year Schedule was sent to parents. It will be included in this Sunday's weekly update and all future updates for easy reference.

- C. We look forward to celebrating our 8th graders' accomplishments at this year's Moving Up ceremony on June 23rd. An email with the RSVP link was sent out yesterday. Parents are asked to RSVP by Wednesday of next week.
- D. We look forward to our upcoming Chorus Concert on June 8th.
- E. Next year's Incoming 6th Grade Orientation will take place on the afternoon of Thursday, September 1st. All current 5th grade parents are invited to attend with their incoming 6th grader.

**IX. HS Liaison: Jen Savner**

- A. Dr. Chirles is sending out a Senior Class memo to give details on all upcoming Senior events.
- B. Mr. Ambrosio and Dr. Chirles are working on brainstorming ideas and itineraries for a Junior class trip and Senior class trip for 2023.
- C. Elections are coming up.
- D. Senior options are going well. Students seem to be enjoying their “jobs” and they are getting excited for the Senior Showcase on June 8th. They are hoping that many students attend!
- E. And..... the class of 2022 has donated a new podium to Blind Brook! It is beautiful!

**X. Pupil Services Liaison: Kiki DeBari**

- A. If you are interested in joining the SEID community, please let me know, we'll add you to the distribution list. It doesn't necessarily apply to parents who have children who need accommodations, but you might need to be able to advocate for your child regardless.
- B. We are holding a SEID event in person at the Crawford Mansion on June 9th at 7pm. This time, we have invited Pupil Services and the Superintendent. We will share with them things we discussed at the previous meeting, and we'll ask about what the future looks like for special education. We'd like to build upon what is already in place. I hope everyone who is interested will attend on June 9th.

**XI. Membership: Stacy Kapner-Lerch and Bree Candee**

- A. We have had a couple of new members this month - membership is still increasing!

**XII. Community Coalition: Debra Cohen, Community Coalition Coordinator and Monique Tricario, Student Assistance Counselor and Prevention Coordinator**

- A. Next Thursday 5/26, during lunch, we're having a NAMI walk- National Association of Mental Illness. The Youth Leadership Club made posters to promote the event. Students can take a break from studying, take a walk, and de-stress. Monique and I will be outside encouraging kids to take a walk, increase awareness, and reduce the stigma around mental illness.
- B. The JCK foundation led programs here in March, and now we have two students doing senior options with them, as interns. JCK is happy about all of the help the students have been able to provide.
- C. D.A.R.E. is wrapping up at the elementary school. Detective Bruno just finished a lesson on vaping. We plan to re-introduce D.A.R.E. at the MS, which is now possible because the schedule is changing. There was a lapse in outreach after 5th grade, so this should be a great change next year..
- D. We're busy planning for next year, looking for some new speakers.

**XIII. New Business:**

- A. Next meeting: Thursday, June 16th, at 7pm - the last meeting of the school year.

Attendance	
In Person	On Zoom
Alexandra Boruch	Alena
Colin Byrne	Nethra Bhatt
Hedy Cardozo	Robyn Deutsch
Debra Cohen	Lynn Glantz
Mariela Cohen-Sabban	Seth Horowitz
Kiki DeBari	Kerri James
Amanda Gitkind	Rachel Lerner
Johanna Gonzalez	Lisa
Katherine Hallissy Ayala	Yvette Montvelisky
Shana Koransky	Rich
Karen Lin	Afton Rosenfeld
Kate Marino	ToniAnne Rigano
Cameron Sager	Perri Ross
Alicia Scala	Ann Sedrish
Correy Stephenson	Katie Wolff
Cindy Zahl	Laura Wolther
	Mia Zimmerman