

Blind Brook PTA  
General Meeting  
Wednesday, April 20, 2022  
7:00pm  
Blind Brook MS/HS IMC (In Person) and Via Zoom  
**MINUTES**

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

- A. **Budget:** We had our final budget review and adoption last night at the Board of Ed meeting. The topic of Kindergarten enrollment came up. We had originally budgeted for four sections, but now it looks like we have enrollment for a 5th section. We will potentially have to move money from one budget area to another, or we could take money from the reserves.
- B. **COVID Protocols:** I went into the board meeting with one set of facts, and during the meeting, I got a different version. We're working on releasing a revised version of our COVID protocols.
- C. **Summer School:** I have received a few questions about the summer school program. We haven't had time to sit down and get it organized. We're going to run 2 two-week sessions. We're narrowing down when they are. We'll get the information out.
- D. **Construction:**
  - i. The temporary certificate of occupancy (TCO) has been extended to June 30th. The last date we had was April 15th. The NY State Education Dept has been phenomenal in terms of working with us. We are now extended for the remainder of the school year.
  - ii. There was quite a bit of work done over break. We hope to stay on time and on task.
- E. **Q: We're buying 2 new buses. I know there was a recent discussion about cameras on buses. We don't have cameras currently - we only have backup cameras. There are cameras on buses in many other districts, but we don't have that. We can't document when a student is bullied or vaping, or how fast the bus is going, or what happened in an accident. If we are getting new equipment, are we getting the most current technology?**
  - i. We do have GPS on all the buses, which gives us a lot of insight into how fast a bus is going and where that bus is located. We considered budgeting for cameras on the new buses, but that feature was cost-prohibitive.

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

- A. We are looking for a Blind Brook PTA representative to the Heard In Rye board. Heard in Rye is a collaboration of parents from area schools and school districts. It hosts a series of education and parenting topics. Let us know if you'd like to be our rep.

**III. Acceptance of last month's minutes: Approved.**

**IV. Treasurer: Lynn Glantz**

- A. March 2022 - Net loss of \$(1,977)
- B. Major Revenues: Gross profit/loss **\$3754**

ASA	\$2,480
Cash	\$1,607
Cookie Making	\$657

- C. Expense Total: **\$5,730**

BB Athletics (Homecoming)	\$2,547
Clothing	\$1,240
Trills and Thrills (Chorus)	\$1,000

- D. Total Net Revenue (Loss): **\$(1,977)**

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

- A. The Mother's Day Plant Sale is coming up, May 3rd/4th/5th. The pre-sale will start next week, which makes our ordering process much easier! Parents will be able to pick up plant purchases at RSS.
- B. Blind Brook will celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week the week of May 16th! (Nationwide, Teacher Appreciation Week will be May 1-7, but since the PTA is

running the Mother's Day plant sale that week, we will honor our teachers the week of May 16th.)

- C. Corbin's Crusaders registration, for the RSS half days, is happening right now.
- D. The deadline to order Square One Art is coming up - April 29th.

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

- A. We are excited to bring back Olympic Night! Anyone who wants to help, especially anyone who has coached before, please reach out to us!
- B. Our spring virtual cookie decorating activity was a hit!
- C. Our event with Coach Christina is coming up! Everyone should get an email later this week.
- D. We're bringing back the Harlem Wizards! Friday, June 3rd!

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

- A. The Creating Connections program was a success! Next year it will most likely move back to the fall, and hopefully include classroom presentations and more parent involvement. Thank you to the parent volunteers!
- B. The internet safety and social media talk led by Westchester County Assistant District Attorney (ADA) Laura Forbes was extremely insightful and well received. This talk was not recorded; however, there are some helpful tips posted on the school's website. We're hoping to have Laura back next year – maybe even in September.
- C. Kindergarten registration has jumped to almost 90 students, so there will be 5 kindergarten sections next school year.
- D. Parent/teacher conference sign-ups are next week, 4/26 @ 7:00 pm. The dates and times are 5/6 12:30-3:30pm and 5/12 5:00-8:00pm. Both days are ½ days and Corbin's Crusaders is offering after school programs.
- E. The 1st graders have a fun school spirit week planned for next week!
- F. Monday, April 25 - Favorite Color Day - Wear your favorite color!
- G. Tuesday, April 26 - Bring a Book to Share with a Friend
- H. Wednesday, April 27 - Show and Tell
- I. Thursday, April 28 - Wear School Colors (Blue and White)
- J. Friday, April 29 - Pajama Day - Wear pajamas to school!
- K. The PTA Indoor recess art program is running until the end of next week, and we're hoping to have chess start again next week for 5 weeks. 1st grade classes are going to have a couple of chess lessons taught by Josh in their classrooms. Corbin's Crusaders is organizing indoor and outdoor recess games

- L. Parent placement input forms are going out shortly. While they're not mandatory, it's highly encouraged. Your responses are only seen by Tracy and Teresa. This is not meant to hand pick the teacher you would like your child to have next year. You can mention any negative direct experience you have had..
- M. Teacher appreciation week is May 16-May 20.
- N. Math state testing for 3-5 graders is next week, Tues, 4/26, and Wed, 4/27.

**VIII. MS Liaison: Alex Boruch**

- A. Today was the first day of the 4th and final marking period of the year.
- B. We are thrilled to have community and PTA member Mariela Cohen-Sabban join us as a Spanish leave replacement teacher for the remainder of the school year. Mariela reached out after hearing about our need at the last PTA meeting and has had a great first few days with us!
- C. Our Nitroball Tournament was held on March 24th. We had approximately 30 students join us for an evening of fun. Thank you to the PTA for sponsoring pizza and snacks.
- D. Prior to vacation, the 5th graders had an opportunity to visit us for an orientation, tour, and Q&A session with some of our 6th grade students.
- E. We continue preparing for the rollout of our new schedule for next year and are excited to be moving full speed ahead. Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks.
- F. The building principals met with our PTA co-presidents this week to discuss and solidify the plans for Moving Up and Graduation. Information will be communicated to our 8th grade parents in the coming days.
- G. Next Tuesday and Wednesday, students will be taking the New York State Math Exam. Students currently taking Algebra I have been exempted from the test and will, instead, be taking a practice Regents exam on those dates.
- H. Next Tuesday, April 26th, we will be hosting a parent workshop focused on how to help students develop a growth mindset. An email was sent yesterday with information and the link to RSVP.
- I. We are currently in the process of finalizing the end of year schedule and hope to have it out in the next week or two.

**IX. HS Liaison: Jen Savner**

- A. No news to report.

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

- A. At the end of March, we had our first in-person SEID event in two years! It was wonderful to get together and share ideas as a community. We had a great turn-out.
- B. We are planning a follow-up event the evening of June 9th for parents, Pupil Services, and the Superintendent. We hope it will be an opportunity for all in attendance to collaborate and bring ideas to improve services as much as possible.
- C. Erica and I met with Pupil Services yesterday. I will email my update to the SEID community as soon as possible.
- D. As always, please email [blindbrookseid@gmail.com](mailto:blindbrookseid@gmail.com) if you would like to join the SEID email list, or if you have questions.

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

- A. We have no new PTA members this month.

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

- A. April is Drunk and Drugged Awareness Month. Today was DoNut Drive Distracted Day. Students had the opportunity to sign a pledge to commit to not be in a car with someone who is drunk or distracted etc. The High School pledge was: I won't allow anyone I'm in the car with to be drunk, drugged, or distracted. Students got a donut for signing a pledge.
- B. Next Monday 4/25 - The police are going to come outside at lunch, and there is going to be a drunk driving accident staged. The police dept will narrate what is going on and walk students through the situations. It's serious and it is probably going to look serious. It will be happening all over the parking lot. They'll have this scene play out as if it really happened. We'll videotape it as best we can.
- C. Next Wednesday 4/27 - We will host a speaker, [Jacy Good](#) - if you have a junior who intends to drive to campus next year, they will be required to attend Jacy Good's presentation. It's much more impactful in person. Jacy's parents were killed by a distracted driver, and she was paralyzed. There is a quiz afterwards, just to make sure students pay attention. Parents can come and attend if you are interested- let me know.

**XIII. New Business: Meet the Board of Education Candidates (The BOE election and budget vote will take place Tuesday 5/17/22)**

**A. Naomi Schafer Riley:**

1. My kids started in the BBMS two years ago. I haven't gotten as involved as I would have liked over the past 2 years, due to Covid. Some aspects of Blind Brook have been great, some things have not been as great as I expected. Our academic standards should live up to the Blind Brook reputation. We should make sure that the reputation of the district remains as strong as it has been.
2. I've been a journalist for a long time - 24 years now. I have been most interested in, and care most about, the humanities instruction in school. Our kids need to be reading and writing more. I've had a lot of really interesting conversations with people from Kindergarten through 12th grade, and I've listened to their concerns specifically regarding academics.
3. A lot of the discussions on the BOE have been around finances and COVID the past couple of years. There is more we could do academically without breaking the bank. Improving instruction and making sure our kids are reading a lot and writing a lot is attainable. There will be a curriculum review coming up next year, and I really want to be part of that. I want to understand the goals at all grades and make sure the teachers have the tools they need.
4. If you'd like to reach me, my email address is: NaomiSRiley@gmail.com. I'd really love to talk with you about your concerns. I only have experience with a small portion of the grades, but I look forward to learning more.

**B. Samantha Smith:**

1. I grew up in Rye Brook. I moved back here 9 years ago with my family. I have three children, who are in grades 8, 6, and 3. Next year, they'll be in the 9th, 7th and 4th grades, which means I will have a child in all three schools.
2. I have a masters in Special Education, and I taught in public schools for many years, at the elementary level. I have served on the RIPL committee, the Shared Decision Making committee in the MS, and as a class parent.
3. One goal I have is to encourage more community involvement. There must have been 300 people at the shut down town hall meeting. We need more people involved all the time, not just during a crisis.

**C. Rick Buzin:**

1. I agree with both of my colleagues on the issues they presented. I was in the front row when Samantha Smith graduated from Blind Brook! Her husband and my son graduated together.
2. Before Tina Steinberg left, I promised to stay on top of the issues she felt were important. I came in at a time where many of you were quite upset with what went on in the school district. People told me that I was crazy to take that seat. It was actually worse than I or you knew. At my first BOE meeting last summer, the first thing I saw was the resignation of our school business official. I'd had no idea this was coming down the pike.
3. I offered the board my passion for the district. I have been in the community for 35 years. I have been a board member of the Community Coalition. I chaired the rec council for 2 years. I spent 2 years as president of the League of Women Voters. In addition, prior to COVID, I spent 6 years in the Hadassah Read Right program. I read with first graders on Monday mornings, and I am the only male who has done that. It's even more fun now because now I have grandkids that age.
4. The Board of Ed has moved the bar up from when I started, but we aren't where we need to be. Kudos to all of the administrators who are still here, but frankly the district is not doing well. We've probably lost about four years as far as academics go. Joan Pinkerton is a wonderful consultant, but we need someone full-time, in-house, running our curriculum. We talked in September about the curriculum, discussing the same ideas we had when I was involved 25 years ago. The problem is, that in order for those ideas to bear fruit, you have to have consistency in the administration. The administrators will only have that stability if they feel supported by their teachers and community. We have interviews for a new athletic director this week. Regarding our facilities - we talk about the new renovation, but we need enough of a staff for the facilities to be maintained. We are thin, but we are nimble. Dr. Byrne will right the ship. We need a world class person who is running the curriculum. I want someone who will commit to this district so that whatever programs this district deems important will bear fruit.
5. Part of my passion for the district is a thank you for the district. 1997 is the year I first ran. Blind Brook did a really good job with my kids. They are happy, they're healthy, that's part of the passion that gets me to do this. I hope the community will come out and support me.

Attendance

In Person	On Zoom
Alexandra Boruch Rick Buzin Colin Byrne Bree Candee Debra Cohen Amanda Gitkind Katherine Hallissy Ayala Stacy Kapner-Lerch Shana Koransky Rachel Lerner ToniAnne Rigano Naomi Riley Cameron Sager Alicia Scala Samantha Smith Correy Stephenson	Nethra Bhatt Stephanie Biderman Hedy Cordozo Kiki DeBari Richard Donohue Mindy Friedman Lynn Glantz S. M. Goldsmith Johanna Gonzalez Seth Horowitz Kerri James Itzel Piserchia Afton Rosenfeld Patricia Schofield Ann Sedrish Susie Williams Katie Wolff Cindy Zahl