

Blind Brook PTA
General Meeting
Thursday, February 17, 2021
7:00pm
Blind Brook MS/HS IMC (In Person) and Via Zoom
MINUTES

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

- A. As you may have seen, the first draft of next school year's budget was discussed at this week's BOE meeting. It will probably go through several iterations. We are at the tax cap, which we're happy about. We included as many of the needs that have been determined as possible, while being fiscally responsible. The Saturday morning budget meeting will take place on March 12th, with bagels provided! The budget will also be discussed at the March 29th BOE meeting and in April. There are plenty of opportunities to give feedback. Feel free to email Dr. Byrne or our interim business official Laurie Baum.
- B. As we emailed last night, we distributed COVID rapid tests to students and employees today. We are planning to do another test pickup at the end of vacation, as well. There are 2 tests in the kits. You can choose one now and one later, or one one day and one the next day. People can also pick up a test right before coming back to school after break. We are not requiring students to submit a COVID test result to come back to school. NYS has given us many tests, and we wanted to share them out.
- C. New Schedules for the 2022-2023 school year: In the MS, Mr. Horowitz has been looking to adjust the schedule to make it more MS-friendly. It looks like his proposed MS schedule is moving forward, but there are some pieces we are still working out. The HS may have a small change, but will mostly stay the same.
- D. Questions about masks have come up. Right now, we are in a holding pattern. The governor is waiting until after the break to see what's happening and make a decision. We are meeting with our medical officials and advisors. When we get to a point where mask-wearing is optional, we want to make sure everyone is comfortable with their choice, and we want to continue to be safe.
- E. **Q: Regarding the tax cap, as we keep the budget below the tax cap, does that take into account the increase to taxes for the bond? Yes, it is confusing. You have a tax cap, an increase to our budget, and an increase to the tax rate. The bond elevates the tax cap we're allowed. I wondered whether the bond made the budget requirements need to be lower? Because of the bond and trying to stay under the tax cap, are we in a more fiscally tight situation? That would be difficult especially because of inflation?** We weren't required to plan for less spending based on the tax cap. The tax cap expanded to meet the bond.

- F. **Q: How is construction at RSS coming along?** It is still moving forward, and we still expect completion by June. The courtyard is substantially complete. There are some light fixtures and railings to finish. They are working on the enclosures of the back end of the cafetorium space. We expect to have everything completed by June.
- G. **Q: Regarding the completion of the courtyard- while touring RSS in December, I learned that any classroom adjacent to the courtyard is not available because in an emergency, students would need to exit to the courtyard, which is not safe yet due to the ongoing construction. If the courtyard is nearing completion, does that mean these adjacent classrooms will become available for classes?** Unfortunately, no, because once the courtyard is complete, it will still be adjacent to the cafetorium, where construction will still be in progress. There still wouldn't be a safe emergency exit from those classrooms. We are not planning on having those rooms available until the rest of the building is complete.
- H. **Q: I had asked about how the covid funds are being spent. Thank you for responding at the BOE meeting. Based on your response, there are some clarifying points for parents in the district. When will there be an opportunity to share those updates with parents collectively? There were some points there that you said you misquoted. I'll send out a communication to the whole district. I'll re-post the old version with the new one.**
- I. **Q: I noticed that a new ELA curriculum will be implemented. Will a committee be organized to review different programs? If so, who will be on the committee?** Ms. Taylor and Ms. Letizia are reviewing ELA curriculum programs right now. We don't have time this year to do a full evaluation. The grade level leaders will collect input from the teachers in their groups and share back with Ms. Taylor and Ms. Letizia.

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

- A. Thank you to the nominating committee for organizing last night's Meet and Greet, and thanks to everyone who came out. We are looking forward to lots of applications to serve on the next PTA Board!
- B. The PTA Nomination Committee met today. It decided to re-organize some positions: Ways and Means and Programming will no longer stand alone. Instead, they will be merged into one team, with one person for large events, one person for school spirit and appreciation, one person for smaller programs, and one person for smaller fund raisers. We thought it would be best for the community going forward. We'll see what happens.

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

IV. Membership: Stacy Kapner-Lerch and Bree Candee

- A. We currently have 533 memberships
- B. \$13,325 collected in PTA membership dues this year

V. Ways and Means: Alicia Scala and Kate Marino

- A. Spirit Wear - The PTA recently had a clothing sale in the MS/HS. We sold out of our newest pajama pants.
- B. Teacher appreciation - Teacher Appreciation Week is going to be the week of May 15th.
- C. Spring plant sale - We want to bring the plant sale to the MS/HS as well.
- D. Spring FLEX (After School Activities) - We don't know the days yet. The Winter FLEX has leveled out, there were a couple of hiccups. We are also planning programs for the spring Half Days - stay tuned.
- E. Square Art - kids got the materials in class; order information should be coming soon, too.
- F. School Supplies sale (for fall 2022) - coming soon.

VI. Programming: Amanda Gitkind and Shana Koransky

- A. 104 Kindergarteners and First Graders enjoyed the February Jester Jim program.
- B. We had a Valentine's-themed paint night.
- C. We're planning a spring-themed cookie-decorating bonanza!

VII. Treasurer: Lynn Glantz

- A. January 2022 - Net loss of \$-865
- B. Major Revenues: Gross Profit/Loss of \$3088

Programming	\$5610; net of Homecoming PTA took in is \$2915
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- C. Expense Total: \$3953

Clothing	\$2340
RSS - Indoor Recess	\$3244

D. Total Net Revenue (Loss): \$865

VIII. RSS Liaison: Rachel Lerner

- A. Kindergarten registration is moving to an online platform. As of last week, we have not started the incoming registration. Registration is estimated to be in the low 70s with 4 kindergarten class sections. Incoming kindergarten screenings are going to be held in person in April. Kindergarten parent orientation and maybe a tour of the school would also be in the spring along with family tours of the school. There is going to be a kindergarten social towards the end of the summer, maybe even on campus.
- B. We moved the Feeding Westchester collection to next month and are collaborating with the 4th and 5th grade student council. We will be collecting senior snack bags starting Monday February 28 and ending Friday March 11. Donations can be brought into school or dropped off at my house, 23 Legendary Circle. More collection details will be sent out after break. Last year our community donated over 300 bags filled with requested donations. Hopefully we can match that!
- C. The 3rd graders planned a fun school spirit week this week, which the kids are really enjoying. 5th graders are working on their yearbooks. The moving up ceremony is going to be held on June 23rd at the MS/HS field.
- D. The PTA started to bring back some indoor recess options for the 2-5th graders. The classes take place in the library. Marla Beth of Marla Beth Designs has been generously donating her time for the past 3 weeks planning fun art projects for each class. After break she is going to be offering indoor recess classes on Mondays and Wednesdays on a sign-up basis. And starting March 8, Josh Colas from the National Scholastic Chess Foundation is going to be here Tuesdays and Thursdays offering recess chess, also on a sign-up basis, until April 7th.
- E. Mrs. Taylor, Ms. Letizia, and Ms. Bova are working on a plan to unpack the library books. Hopefully the kids can start checking out books soon.
- F. New York State testing for 3-5 graders is going to be back to normal this year. The 2-day ELA testing is March 29th and 30th and the 2-day Math testing is April 26th and 27th. The 4th grade science performance test starts May 31, and the written test is June 6th.

IX. MS Liaison: Alex Boruch

- A. Congratulations to the cast of Beauty and the Beast!
- B. Last week's BBMS Movie Night was well-attended, with 80 students.
- C. The MS is currently enjoying a Spirit Week, including a pajama day tomorrow.
- D. There will be meetings for parents in March, to introduce the upcoming school year:
 - 1. March 2 - Incoming 8th grade parent meeting (7:00pm)
 - 2. March 8 - Incoming 6th grade parent meeting (7:00pm)
 - 3. March 15 - Incoming 7th grade parent meeting (7:00pm)

X. HS Liaison: Jen Savner

- A. Following our successful Senior-Staff Badminton Tournament, we'll be having a Volleyball tournament the last week of February during lunch. We're also planning an evening Dodgeball Tournament as a senior class fundraiser.
- B. The musical Footloose is March 10-12! Tickets on sale soon!
- C. We're having a Spring Pep Rally and Spirit Week at the end of April.
- D. We're also having a Senior Fashion Show on April 22nd, looking for donations for gift baskets. All monies raised will go to Corporate Angel Network (its mission is to fly cancer patients (both children and adults) to treatment at no cost to them on empty seats on both private and corporate planes).
- E. Senior Options, our Senior Internship Program occurs in May and June. We're always looking for sites where our students may intern. If you know of any business or other for-profit or non-profit organizations that would be willing to take an (unpaid) intern for 4-6 weeks, please let our Senior Options Advisors know (Jambrosio@blindbrook.org, cbarnes@blindbrook.org)
- F. Students are in the middle to end of picking courses for next year.

XI. Pupil Services Liaison: Kiki DeBari

- A. Erica and I continue to meet with Mr. Burg and Ms. Carpanzano each month, and we recently wrote up a summary of this month's meeting for the SEID committee. If you would like to join SEID, please contact me at BlindBrookSEID@gmail.com.
- B. CSE meetings started in the MS/HS in January. They'll be starting in March/April at RSS. We have at least 3 parent members. Parent members can attend a CSE or 504 meeting with you, if you indicate that you'd like a Parent Member in the meeting. We can't advocate, but it's more of a support, especially for parents who have not done CSE meetings before. You need to give the district 72 hours notice if you'd like a parent member.
- C. We had our last talk in January on Advocacy, and we held an informal chat after the meeting. We learned that members would like more informal gatherings. We'll set up more networking opportunities for parents..

XII. Community Coalition: Debra Cohen

- A. We had more than 80 students sign up for Middle School Movie Night. It went really well! The kids were really happy to be there. Maybe we can plan something outdoors when the weather is nicer.
- B. We're going to have John from the JCK Foundation come in March, to talk about mental health, reducing the stigma around mental health issues, how to get help, and other resources. In the MS, they'll talk in classrooms, in the HS they'll talk at the grade level.
- C. The JCK Foundation will also do a parent program on March 16th on zoom in the evening. Mark your calendar, more info coming soon.
- D. Any ideas for Wellness Week? We do different things at lunch. We also have Addiction Awareness Week, where students write supportive messages on hearts. We offer quick activities to engage them. Monique Tricario goes into different classrooms and leads discussions on different topics.

Attendance	
In Person	On Zoom
Alex Boruch	Nethra Bhatt
Colin Byrne	Stephanie Biderman
Debra Cohen	Bree Candee
Wendy Corbin	Catherine
Kiki DeBari	Concetta D'Inverno
Amanda Gitkind	Mindy Friedman
Katherine Hallissy Ayala	Johanna Gonzalez
Rachel Lerner	Ilyssa Karasik
Kate Marino	Kerri James
Cameron Sager	Stacy Kapner
Jen Savner	Katie
Alicia Scala	Lisa
Correy Stephenson	Nancy Parra
Monique Tricario	Della Penna
	ToniAnne Rigano
	Samantha Smith
	Stone
	Cindy Zahl