

Blind Brook PTA
General Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 2020
Via Zoom
MINUTES

- I. **County Executive George Latimer** honored co-presidents Correy Stephenson and Cameron Sager with a proclamation thanking them for their service.
- II. **Superintendent's Report: Dr. Patrick Brimstein**
 - A. Our district has been remarkably fortunate in that we have not had a COVID case yet. Some parents have asked when we can fully open. That's a little premature given the cold and flu season coming up.
 - B. Dr. Ross is planning to retire at the end of the year. He has been part of the district for more than 2 decades. We will miss him very much. We went through an arduous search process for a new Asst Superintendent of Finance and Facilities. The candidate we have selected is an experienced business official, and that knowledge and experience will be very helpful to us. Mary O'Neill will be joining us at the beginning of November.
 - C. The district is engaged in strategic planning. How do our actions now position us for the future? How can we make our schools stronger and our students even more prepared for their future? Discussion will follow at BOE meetings.
 - D. We may survey families regarding the district's implementation of our hybrid model and next steps. Can the PTA offer questions that would be helpful to include in such a survey? --- RESPONSES:
 1. Children are coming in for special education classes outside of the hybrid classes. It can be hard to manage the schedule, and it can be hard to get them back into a "remote learning" mindset when they come back home. Could those children be moved into the same cohort at some point? Or could children with IEP's come in for a full day? .
 2. Is there going to be any consideration to swapping the AM and PM cohorts at RSS? The PM cohort is at a disadvantage in my opinion.
 3. Q: The Google Classroom headings are not consistent. Some people post their zoom links in Classwork, and other teachers post their zoom link in the header. There's no consistency.
 4. Parents are not supposed to be in the Google Classroom, but often teachers post messages to parents in the GC. How should parents respond? Communication is not streamlined.
 5. Could we have kids go in on Wednesdays on a rotating cohort? A number of districts are having kids go 3 days/2 days and flip the following week. Using the Wednesdays for in-person instruction could also help balance things out during holiday weeks.

6. When it rains, the drop-off lines are very long. In bad weather, can school let students come in 5 minutes earlier?
7. With regards to the AM/PM cohort, would it be feasible to schedule the AM specials a little later in the morning? My kids start the day with the specials. When they're done with them, they don't want to sit and do the academic work.
8. Could the district work with an outside agency that could provide childcare, and transportation could be provided to/from school? It would be very helpful to many families.
9. Moving specials could help those children with IEP's, who have to go into school for resource room, therapies, etc.

III. Acceptance of Last Month's Meeting Minutes: Approved

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

- A. Hand sanitizers were delivered to school today. They'll be installed very soon.

V. Treasurer's Report: Lynn Glantz

- A. Hand sanitizer was our largest expense
- B. Sept- Membership brought in about \$4,945, from membership dues and dial-a-friend orders (in addition to \$1,761 from August that hit in September)
- C. Plant sale, clothing sale were successful fundraisers, bringing in \$8,425.
- D. Major expense: Deposit for hand sanitizer dispensers: \$3,650
- E. Total Net Revenue: \$10,333.07
- F. Not yet deposited -
 1. Box Tops: \$287.50
 2. Flex Academy: \$2,266
 3. School Supplies: \$5,909

VI. Committee Reports

A. Ways and Means: Alicia Scala and Kate Marino

1. The September mum sale made a great profit! We got a lot of positive feedback, which led us to start planning a winter plant sale, possibly on Dec 5th.
2. We are working on the Scarecrow Fundraiser. We are sold out! People can still donate to the district through the Scarecrow Fundraiser if they wish.
3. Square Art is virtual. Elementary and Middle School and even High School students can do it. Due 10/30.
4. We are planning a food truck at the schools later in October at RSS and the MS/HS for the faculty/staff as a thank you.
5. Spirit Wear - An online store will open soon and close after 2 weeks. We will have some new items for the winter sale. Please watch emails for

details on the sale. It's difficult to accommodate outside of sales, given the restrictions on our closet.

B. Programming: Amanda Gitkind and Stacy Sakellariou

1. We are planning to discuss a virtual Harlem Wizards fitness program that would happen late fall/ early winter.
2. Looking at a virtual magic show in the winter.

C. Building Liaisons

1. High School: Jen Savner

- a) Remote learning- teachers and parents so far are very pleased. It's going well. They're being very strict, which has been working.
- b) We could make some of the remote days more engaging/social for some of the HS students. They're in front of the computer for a very long part of the day. Dr. Chirles is working on ideas to make it better.
- c) Mental health of the kids is a priority
- d) BBHS is still a closed campus. Kids can't leave for lunch or during a free period. If we had a COVID case, all of the sudden the contact tracing would be that much more complicated.
- e) Having things dropped off (lunch, notebook, etc) at school is not allowed. Dr Chirles will look into whether there could be a bin for academic supplies that kids forget.
- f) The seniors are busy with college applications.
- g) Dr. Chirles is very excited about Halloween. Underclass students will be dressed in black, but the seniors will have colorful costumes and stand out.
- h) Dr. Chirles appreciates the warm welcome she has received from the community.
- i) Possible fundraising suggestion- partner with Minted.com. The PTA could get proceeds when families order holiday cards, for example.

2. Ridge Street School: Rachel Lerner

- a) Things are running much smoother than in September.
- b) One persistent issue is cars lining up starting at 8:00/8:10 in the morning even though school doesn't open until 8:20. There is a significant traffic back-up. The RBPD asks parents not to line up on Ridge Street and instead wait until 8:20 to drop off.
- c) Monitors have come to recognize which drivers do not want their car doors open- that is running smoother.
- d) Parent/teacher conferences will be held virtually in November. Dates will be announced soon.

3. Middle School: Alex Boruch

- a) For those MS parents who haven't visited the [Open House](#) yet, you can view teachers' pre-recorded messages online.
 - (1) All clubs will start soon
 - (2) Debate Team
 - (3) Drama Club
 - (4) Green Club
 - (5) Jazz Ensemble and Select Band
 - (6) Yearbook
 - (7) Student Government
 - (8) Youth to youth - Leadership development
 - (9) Cheer Club and Dance/Choreography Club have been proposed. They would be open to 6/7/8th grades, and they would feed into the HS programs.
- b) Intramurals are running after school, including Tennis, Cross Country, and Soccer. The program is open to a different grade each week. All walk-ins- no need to register.
- c) All middle school students have completed the fall STAR assessments in ELA and Math. The results will be analyzed by teacher teams during team meetings. The goal is to identify strengths and weaknesses in key learning standards. These data are used to help identify students in need of intervention as well as provide baseline info regarding reading levels to help teachers align materials. This is important in all subjects especially ELA, science, and social studies.
- d) Our students have been impressive with their commitment to social distancing and wearing masks. Hopefully their efforts will help keep the schools open as we enter this period of the resurgence of COVID.
- e) Progress reports for the first marking period are available today on the parent portal. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teachers and/or guidance counselor if they have concerns or questions about their child's progress.
- f) We continue to monitor the mental, social, and emotional health of our students. Anxiety appears to be on the rise. We ask parents to reach out with any difficulties your child may be experiencing. Our mental health professional staff is working with students to help in the development of coping skills. We're here to help!

g) This morning, there was a Principal's Coffee. The next one will be November 19th at 9am. It was very informative and specific to MS.

(1) The teachers are assessing where the students are, since they missed so much last spring.

(2) Teachers are doing a lot of professional development to improve remote learning and take advantage of the technologies available.

4. Pupil Services: Kiki DeBari

a) SEID has created its own executive committee. We had a very productive meeting last month. We are organizing topics to explore this year.

b) We brought parents' concerns to Harry Burg. We are setting up a Q&A Coffee on Thursday 10/29 at 7:30pm. We will send out the meeting details with an invite. We're still deciding the format. We will solicit questions in advance of the meeting, and there should be opportunities to ask questions during the meeting, as well.

c) The PTA sent out an email inviting families to join the [SEID Committee](#). We want to create a safe environment to share ideas and experiences regarding learning differences, disabilities, and neurodiversity. Parents who are concerned should join as well to learn more about the evaluation process. We have a stronger voice with more numbers.

D. Membership: Stacy Kapner and Bree Candee

1. PTA membership is at 612,, including families and teachers.
2. Dial-a-friend ordering closed Oct 10th. We received orders for 230 books. We are formatting the dial-a-friend and will submit the order soon.
3. We will continue to keep membership open, but Dial-a-Friend orders are closed for the year.

VII. Community Coalition: Debra Cohen and Monique Tricario

A. We held a 9th grade transition program yesterday. We brought a speaker to discuss leadership and decision making.

B. Red ribbon week is coming up the week of 10/26. We ordered white masks and hand sanitizer to give out to students (Monday for Cohort 1, Thursday for Cohort 2, Wednesday for all-remote students). We are inviting students to decorate their mask and post it on instagram. In red ribbon week, students take a pledge to be drug free. There will be a lawn sign at school, as well, to celebrate the week. At the end of the week, we will have a drive-in movie on 10/30, featuring the

original Ghost Busters film. Any village resident can buy tickets through community pass.

- C. Parents are invited to a virtual lecture Tuesday, 10/20: [I Am One, and I Make One Choice for Health: A Data-Informed, Youth-Driven Prevention Message for Parents](#). Learn how parents can promote the Once Choice youth are making to be substance-free. Register [here](#).
- D. [HEARD in Rye](#) has author Jonathan Mooney speaking on 10/26: [The End of School and the Future of Learning](#). Mooney will speak on re-imagining “disabilities:” Different isn’t deficient, and we can “flip the deficit script” by investing in children’s strengths. If you can get to these presentations, they are great opportunities.
- E. HS students need community service hours. If non-profit organizations need volunteers, kids can volunteer during the lunch hours in Ms. Tricario’s office. Send projects so Ms. Tricario.

Attendance:	
Lucas Adelson Nethra Bhatt Stephanie Biderman Alex Boruch Shy Biswas Patrick Brimstein Arpita Buesing Bree Candee Hedy Cardozo Catherine Debra Cohen Wendy Corbin Robyn Cohn Deutsch Kiki DeBari Stephanie Fehr Mindy Friedman Jody Frieman Amanda Gitkind Lynn Glantz Katherine Hallissy Ayala Stacy Kapner Rachel Lerner Karen Lin	Susan Lutinger Leah Mittelman Yvette Montvelisky Nancy Parra Rebecca Reiss Naomi Riley Perri Ross Ann Rossman Weisz Cameron Sager Stacy Sakellariou Jennifer Savner Alicia Scala Pamela Schloss Patricia Schofield Correy Stephenson Ali Stern Monique Tricario Ashley Welde Sara Wolf Cindy Zahl Rebecca Zaltas Luci Zimmerman