

## **PTSO Meeting/Election**

**June 17, 2010**

*Attending:* 38 current parents, a dozen or so new parents; for the PTSO, Carla, co-president; Nina Flores and Kristian Larsen, co-vice presidents; Adam Schechter, Treasurer; Karl Greenberg, secretary; for the Student Council, several members; for the school, Dan Rubenstein, Executive Director; LaNolia Ufodu, Principal; and six new teachers.

Meeting began at 6:39 and ended at 7:30pm; a short but eventful gathering!

***Treasurer's Report:*** Adam Schechter, treasurer for the PTSO, and Adine Schuman-Pusey, for the Annual Fund, reported that the school has raised \$20,140 this year. The benefit on June 3 raised \$10,000, quite an amazing achievement for a first-year event with only 101 families, as several speakers noted. Families and other donors to the annual fund gave an additional \$10,140 over the course of the school year.

Thanks go especially to Ruth Willner, organizer of the event; Lydia Gaston, who organized the entertainment and who performed; and the rest of the teachers and parents who helped out in various ways. The silent auction alone raised \$5,000. Liz Scheines announced that the first Scholastic Book Fair, held last week, raised about \$770 for the school on sales of \$1,542.72. Dan Rubenstein read a letter from the chairman of the board, Luyen Chou, thanking the PTSO for the benefit and for fundraising throughout the year (letter attached)

***New Faculty:*** Principal LaNolia Ufodu introduced the new faculty; all were present except for the new Mandarin language instructor, Stacy Kane.

They included:

- Ariel Sacks, 7th grade ELA, a graduate of Brown University and Bank Street in education who has most recently been at another Brooklyn school, School for Democracy & Leadership, where she taught 8th grade ELA over the past few years, and served as department chair;
- Lindsay Abrahamsohn, 7th grade math, a Pace University and University of Michigan graduate who has taught 7th grade honors and gifted math classes;
- Carol Britton, 7th grade science teacher, who has recently been science teacher and Middle School Dean at Packer Collegiate, and was middle school director at Harlem Academy; she has degrees in speech pathology, zoology, and botany;
- Aaron Coleman, PE teacher, who has a B.S. in exercise science from U. of Tampa and is in a graduate program at Hofstra U. in health education, as well as being part of the Positive Coaching Alliance;
- Sam Brill, 6th grade Humanities, who graduated this past year from Yale University with a B.A. in history and who is already enrolled in Hunter College's Teacher program;
- Deseray Hamilton, special education instructor, who has a Penn State undergraduate degree in psychology and an M.A. from LIU in special education; she is also a modern dancer.
- Stacy Kane, our new Mandarin language teacher, was not in attendance because she was on the way to Beijing to attend a program in Chinese pedagogy. She has taught 7th and 8th grade Mandarin at the Academy of the Pacific Rim charter school in Hyde Park, Mass., and has a

degree from the Univ. of Maryland in Chinese.

The new and old faculty will be going on retreat in a few weeks.

***Nominating Committee report/election:*** John Adler, on behalf of the nominating committee, presented the candidates for next year's PTSO. The group of four called every parent to inquire about interest in serving and followed up with interviews and screening to come up with a list. John requested that anyone else who desired to run announce their interest. No one did. There was a move to close the nominations; it was seconded; and the ballots were passed out. 38 ballots were submitted; Liz Helbraun, for the committee, collected the ballots; the nominating committee counted them.

At the end of the meeting, John announced the new PTSO: Liz Scheines and Alison Hess, co-presidents; Nina Flores, co-vice-president (the 6th grade will elect a co-vice president in the fall); Adam Schechter, Treasurer; Julie Triedman and Cynthia Williams, co-secretaries. All the candidates nominated had between 35-37 votes apiece.

***Title I:*** Christine Burke, Director of Finance & Operations, spoke briefly about Title I and its importance. It is supplemental funding provided by the US Department of Education to school districts that have a certain percentage of at-risk or low-income students; generally over 40% must enroll in free or reduced-price lunch program. The use of the funds depends on the school.

***Q&A with Dan and LaNolia:***

Dan began by thanking the families for taking a risk on a new school. "It's been an incredible collaboration," he said. "We've grown a lot. And I believe next year is going to be an even better year." He said many improvements were prompted by family feedback; to that end, he asked families who had not yet done so to fill out the surveys emailed to all a few weeks ago. He said there was no news yet on the location of the new facility for the 2011-2012 school year but that he would keep us posted as soon as he has something to share.

***Textbooks Return:*** LaNolia implored all families check to see that the textbooks are returned; they may include Realidades, the Spanish textbook; a math textbook; and for some students who asked to borrow them, a science or humanities textbook.

***Final days schedule/projects:*** LaNolia asked families to attend closing ceremonies next Friday, June 25 between 9:30- noon. There will be an awards ceremony followed by presentations in the classrooms, where our childrens' work and a few great collaborative and interdisciplinary projects will be exhibited and presented. There will also be a dance performance. If the weather holds, there will be pizza and refreshments served out on the playground afterwards. Children may leave at or after lunch time.

***Grades/next year's classes:*** On Friday, June 25, grades will be mailed home along with a notice indicating the student's preference of language and PE/dance next year; students will also get a note letting them know whether they have been placed in one of the three mixed-level pre-Algebra classes or are in the one Algebra I section. That placement will be based on two tests, one given earlier in the year and one assessment test taken this week; grades; and

teacher recommendation.

Please look over both the grades and choice/math class notice with your child and feel free to contact the school if you have concerns or questions.

Summer homework assignments will also go out the last week of school.

***Other 2010-2011 news:***

--The 7th graders are most likely going to have lockers next year; "they have earned them," said LaNolia, to much cheering. Sixth graders will not.

--The schedule is likely to be tweaked a bit; art and PE/dance will be alternating in a 6-day cycle, because of space issues—both Sunset Park High and BPCS will have more than 200 students apiece. The building will be full! Advisory will be paired with lunch period. Other changes in the academic schedule are being ironed out, but the flexibility of having regular longer blocks for core classes will be preserved. The day will still begin at the same time, but dismissal time has not yet been finalized (It will not be a longer day, LaNolia assured us). Remedial help for ELA and math will hopefully be offered during the school day next year.

--The art program will still be largely visual, although the school is planning on bringing in some kind of music program.

--Expect to hear from your children's new advisors in mid-August or later to set up an advisory interview Sept. 1-2.

--Summer school is now fully enrolled; the 6-week session is for students who were notified by the school that they require or would benefit by additional academic support. Families who missed the boat and wish to provide academic support to their child this summer may contact the ELA or math teacher to get some guidance on online programs.

--the school is most likely going to have Council, newspaper, and robotics next year as well as other offerings depending on faculty sponsorship and student interest.

***Miscellaneous:***

Dan noted the art program and art club have both been busy. The students recently entered a piece into a contest judged by Truck Farm, part-farm, part-performance art. In another project by the Art Club, students are working on a mural on a wall at 4th Ave and 33rd St that includes the BPCS tag. Check it out.

***Afterschool survey:*** Rebecca Gallagher, who together with Alison Hess started the successful afterschool program this past year, announced that a survey will go out this summer to see what kind of offerings students wish to have next year. Fill it in with your child's help please. The program is fee-based but if you wish to apply for a scholarship, there is some money available for that.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Triedman