



Bellaire PTO Meeting – March 25, 2021

Meeting Minutes (Meeting conducted via Zoom)

Call to Order: President David Faris called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

President's Report: David welcomed all attendees to the meeting. The agenda for the meeting was displayed and reviewed.

The minutes from the January 21, 2021 general meeting were presented for review. There was a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion received a second and the meeting minutes were approved by vote.

VP of Communications: Nisha Lobo has been developing and distributing PTO newsletters. She asked members attending to forward ideas and events that should be included in future newsletters to David Faris or herself. She also asked that current BHS parents and PTO members reach out to incoming freshman families and ask them to sign up for PTO communications.

VP of Membership: Kelly Bluhm thanked all PTO members for their support. Tax information has been distributed to members. She asked that if a member has not received their donation documentation and needs one, to contact Cristina Vetrano or herself. It was also noted that work is continuing on the modernization of donation options. Members can continue to donate via mail (addressed to the school, attention: PTO) or electronically through PayPal via the Bellaire High School PTO website (bellairepto.org).

VP School Relations: Rachel Berger and her volunteers are continuing plans for the 2021 Mr. Bellaire contest. The event will likely be a combination of virtual and in-person.

Treasurer's Report: Keith Desrosiers presented a list of current projects. These include: updating the chart of accounts, ensuring that there is supporting documentation for each transaction, and working with the PTO board to protect our financial integrity and transparency.

The financials were presented. Checking account balance is \$66,223.41 and the balance in the money market account is \$31,645.75. Commitment to Learning (CTL) donations total \$21,634.37. The PTO continues to make strategic investments to get our teachers the resources that they need.

On-going projects include updating the chart of accounts, reviewing the financial records, addressing D & O insurance needs, budget building for next year, and supporting board members, as needed.

David Faris again solicited donations from membership. A large percentage of our operating budget each year comes from food sales during lunch. Without this revenue stream, our income has been significantly reduced. Currently, we are planning for our end-of-year Teacher Appreciation event which typically includes lunch and a gift card for each teacher. That event usually costs between \$6 - \$7,000.00. We will also be opening applications for Student Grants that will be awarded in May. Donations for each of these would be appreciated. Donations may be made by check (mailed to the school, with ATTN: PTO) or via the Bellaire PTO website and PayPal (bellairepto.org).

Ms. Mulet, Assistant Principal Title 1 and Testing Coordinator: Ms. Mulet reviewed information on STAAR testing to address potential sources of confusion. Specifically, there is no “waiver” or “opting-out” of STAAR this year. The exams required for graduation include: English 1 and 2, Algebra 1, Biology, and U.S. History. It is each family’s decision on whether the student will take the assessment at school on the designated day, but there is no “opt-out”. Failure to take the test on the date assigned is simply postponing the test date. Ms. Mulet stressed that she feels that the best chance for success on the exam is to take the exam during the semester the student is enrolled in that course. Campus test dates will be:

4/6 English 1 4/7 English 2 5/4 Algebra 1 5/5 Biology 5/6 U.S. History

There is no option for remote STAAR testing. Students will be asked to fill out a registration form for their exams to assist Ms. Mulet in planning for room safety / social distancing. Exam registration forms for the English STAAR tests are available now and information has been sent to student HISD email accounts. Information is also available on the testing page of the BHS website. Information has also been sent via the Remind app. Questions may be emailed to Ms.Mulet: mmulet1@houstonisd.org.

Additional Business: David Faris announced that there will be a BHS spirit wear pop-up shop on campus tomorrow from 4:30-6:30pm at the circle drive entrance.

There will be an opportunity for alumni and friends of Bellaire High to walk the building prior to its scheduled demolition. The walk-through day will be Saturday, 5/15.

Student Grant applications will open tomorrow and are due by 4/30. The winners receive their awards at the PTO meeting on 5/20.

Finally, the PTO board is looking for someone with an accounting or finance background to assist Keith Desrosiers with the Treasurer responsibilities. If interested, please contact David Faris or Keith Desrosiers.

Principal's Report: Mr. McDonough thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Last night was Cardinal Kick-Off for incoming 9th grade students. The event was held virtually and the presentations will be available on the school website. Participants could visit virtual rooms to hear information about specific programs. Approximately 400 people engaged with the program, which is probably a similar attendance and participation level as in-person events of the past.

Soccer playoffs start tomorrow.

Course selection for next year is also underway. Course selection sheets are available on the school website.

HISD is requesting input on the 2021-22 Academic Calendar. The primary difference in proposed options is the length of the Thanksgiving break (3 or 5 days) and the difference in the end of year date associated with these options. Mr. McDonough encouraged parents to vote on their preference.

A number of parents have been trying to plan events for the senior class. Mr. McDonough is not optimistic that we will have prom this year. All events must be approved by HISD, but the school is also trying to develop some type of senior celebration for early-June.

Recent awards: Two BHS students (Annie and Shirley Zhu) received the Coca-Cola Scholars Award (\$20,000, each). This is a very prestigious award with 150 scholars named from 99,000 applicants. The Zhu sisters were 2 of the 13 recipients in the state of Texas.

The Computer Science Program of BHS has also been recognized by the College Board, with our students being recognized in competitions including Code Wars and Texas Digital Divas. Bellaire High will have two tracks of computer science programs that will enable students of all levels to participate. The program is led by Alice Fisher.

AP exams will start in May. There will be three testing windows. Teachers of each subject will provide information on scheduling and procedures closer to the date.

Applications for the 2021-22 school year have opened for Cheerleaders, Three Penny Press, Yearbook, and NHS. See the school website for more information.

The move to the new building is scheduled for 6/28. Demolition and clearing of the old building site will be completed around Labor Day. Parking lots will remain the same for next year. There will be a lottery for spots in the Senior Lot. The new parking garage will not be open until the 2022-23 school year and will have approximately 700 spots.

Mr. McDonough and staff are planning for an increased number of students on campus next year. The district has also asked for development of a combination virtual / in-person plan, but Mr. McDonough is hoping that will not be necessary. He is also hoping to return to a 7 period schedule but will remain flexible as the circumstances dictate. He is continuing to receive feedback on the schedule (block vs 7 period) from teachers and parents.

The school will continue to alert parents when a presumed COVID positive person has been on campus. This information is all based on self-report, but the school is trying to keep information coming to parents.

Staff is considering some type of social event for 9th grade students. They are open to ideas from parents.

Finally, as details of the new building are nearing completion, Mr. McDonough asked for continuing parent and community involvement to ensure that all commitments laid out in the bond have been met. The building is looking great, but the community should be assured that all that was promised has been delivered.

Closing remarks: David Faris asked when parents might be able to see the new building. According to Mr. McDonough, HISD is maintaining tight control over access. Faculty tours are in process, but community tours will likely wait until late June or early July, depending on HISD guidance. So far, the district has not allowed release of any photos or videos, since the site is still owned by Turner Construction.

The next general PTO meeting will be on 5/20/2021.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm

Minutes submitted by Anne Kayl, Secretary