



## **Bellaire PTO Meeting – September 17, 2020**

Meeting Minutes (Meeting conducted via Zoom)

**Call to Order:** President David Faris called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**President's Report:** David welcomed all attendees to the first PTO meeting of the year. A primary focus for the PTO this year will include being flexible, agile, and patient with all of the changes that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The agenda for the meeting was displayed and reviewed.

The recently adopted change to the criteria for Bellaire High School (BHS) PTO membership was presented. In accordance with the Board's desire for increased inclusion and participation from BHS families, all parents of BHS students and BHS teachers / staff are automatically members of the PTO. We will be seeking financial donations to meet our proposed budget. More specifics will be provided by our VP of Membership, Cristina Vetrano. The PTO also plans to enhance communication with families and the community through monthly PTO newsletters.

The proposed slate of PTO board officers was presented and reviewed. The meeting was opened to comments or additional nominations (none). A motion to accept the slate of officers as presented was made (Mindy Travillian) and seconded (Cyndi Ruiz). The motion was passed and the 2020-21 BHS PTO Board was approved.

The winners of the 2020 BHS Student Summer Awards were announced. Each student received a \$500 award for a summer project. This year's winners were: Annie Zhu ("e-Hack for Charity"), Shirley Zhu ("Project Untold"), Rachel Pontes ("FEdream"), Owen Zhang ("i-Engage"), and Simon Baek (MobilizeGreen-Forest Service YCC). Each student was invited to give a short presentation on their project. David Faris recognized the hard work, courage, and commitment of these students, as well as their willingness to adapt to the unusual circumstances of this summer.

### **Title 1 Update: Ms. Mulet**

Ms. Mulet provided a Title 1 update for attendees. Her presentation will be posted on the BHS website, under the "Academics" tab. Briefly, Title 1 funds help school districts that have a large number of low-income families. Title 1 status is obtained from data from the Socioeconomic Information Form that each family is asked to complete every school year. Bellaire High is a school-wide Title 1 campus, with approximately 47% of families classified as economically-disadvantaged. As a Title 1 school-wide campus, Title 1 funds may be used in a manner to benefit all students. For example, the BHS Title 1

funds are used to extend our library hours, purchase basic materials and supplies, provide tutoring services for STAAR, SAT, and PSAT, offer summer school recovery credit, increase parent involvement and offer parent English classes, as well as pay for several staff positions (graduation coach, college counselor, student academic counselors).

Ms. Mulet also noted that some dates for school-offered standardized testing have been changed. Those dates are included in her PowerPoint presentation that will be posted on the BHS website.

### **Approval of 2020-2021 Budget**

David Faris presented the proposed 2020-21 budget for attendees to review. The budget looks a bit different at this point, since we will likely lose income from food sales and from few school events being planned. Projected income is \$65,000.00. The PTO's main expenses fall under four line items (Total Staff Support Projects, Student Support Projects, Other Administrative, Other Expenses). The proposed budget is balanced, but may need to be adjusted / amended if circumstances change. Meeting was opened to questions / discussion. In response to a question, David noted that no expenses were cut. We set our proposed income at \$65,000.00, which included income from membership, food sales, and corporate partner line items from last year. Attendees made some suggestions regarding ways to improve donations, including providing families with information regarding specific projects that families might support and developing a presentation that showcases the work of our student grant winners and teacher grant winners. Debbie Campbell (BHS Teacher Liaison) offered to assist with this project. Awards and achievements will also be highlighted in the monthly PTO newsletters. A motion was made to approve the proposed 2020-21 budget as presented. The motion was seconded and approved by vote.

**VP of Communications:** Nisha Lobo welcomed attendees. Approximately 94 persons had joined this virtual meeting. She asked for suggestions on ways to improve PTO-family communication. Nisha also asked all attendees to go online and sign up for PTO emails ([bellairepto.org](http://bellairepto.org)). She also mentioned the planned monthly PTO newsletters

**VP of Membership:** Cristina Vetrano has been receiving donations (approximately 40 families, so far). She thanked those who have donated and asked attendees to go to the website to check out the benefits offered at different giving levels. She has expended the benefits to include a coffee with Mr. McDonough.

**VP School Relations:** Rachel Berger described her role in assisting each class raise money for their after-prom parties. She noted that the class of 2024 has three co-chairs. At this time, no specific events are being planned. The class chairs will make changes and plan events as allowed by COVID-19 restrictions.

**Treasurer’s Report (by David Faris):** Financials look fine – the PTO ended the 2019-2020 school year “in the black”. We had excellent support through membership contributions and school food sales, and were able to fund all requests.

**Parliamentarian:** Kent Cantrell had no formal report.

**Secretary:** Anne Kayl had no formal report.

**Principal’s Report:** Mr. McDonough thanked everyone for joining this first virtual meeting. As we near the end of the second week of school, he noted that things have gone well (aside from the initial connectivity issues). He praised the BHS staff for their efforts in essentially “re-inventing” school. Some UIL sports have started, with health protocols in place. He reiterated the importance of Title 1 funds to support our school – all families should complete the Socioeconomic Information Form that is on the parent portal. On Monday, September 21, the Bellaire city council will be discussing construction of the baseball / softball complex that is proposed for the Bissonnet – Avenue B area. Construction of the high school is moving along and they will likely start moving in to some portions of the new school within a year. He reminded parents to please set up their parent portal accounts (information was sent to your student’s HISD email account). Students should also be checking those HISD email accounts on a daily basis.

Mr. McDonough presented data on AP test data for 2020.

	2013	2020
Number of testers	926	996
Number with a “3” or better	762	833
Number of tests given	2567	2902

	“3” or better in world	“3” or better in Texas	“3” or better in BHS
2013	60.9%	50.5%	82.3%
2020	61.1%	51.5%	83.7%

As a reminder, the AP program is open to all students at BHS. Students may self-select for AP classes, but administration also tries to identify students who have the potential to do well, but may not self-select. The success of our students is atypical for a large, urban district and the BHS community should be proud of these successes. Approximately 48% of BHS graduates will score a “3” or better on at least

one exam during their BHS career. Bellaire High also had 35 National Merit Semifinalists this year. That is the most of any school in HISD and the 5<sup>th</sup> most in all Texas high schools (public or private).

Regarding the potential return to in-person classes next month, HISD is requesting that parents make a choice for virtual or in-person learning by next Friday, September 25. The default choice is a return to in-person classes. At this point, Mr. McDonough reported that he is not sure what face to face classes may look like. Much of that determination will depend on how many families opt for in-person learning. The district will be limiting the number of kids in a classroom and will have health protocols in place. The in-person learning will not look the same as it did last spring. Mr. McDonough's goal is to develop a plan that is stable, sustainable, and relationship-focused for students and teachers. He hopes to be able to provide more information during his planned Town Hall (virtual) meeting on Tuesday, Sept.22, 6:30pm.

Floor was opened for questions. Many parents expressed concern about stability in their student's schedules (i.e., will they keep their current teachers?). Mr. McDonough noted that keep the current student - teacher connections is important to him, as well as to the BHS teachers. His focus is on navigating the fall semester with a stable, sustainable, relationship-focused plan. The spring semester may bring changes. Parents raised the question of how the district will handle a positive COVID-19 case. Mr. McDonough indicated that administration and nurses will receive training on these protocols. He referred parents to the HISD re-opening plan.

**President's Reminders:** David Faris encouraged parents to attend the Town Hall meeting scheduled for next Tuesday evening. He also reminded all parents to complete the Socioeconomic Information Form through the parent portal and to make sure they are connected with the school and PTO via Remind, Twitter, and weekly emails.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm

Minutes submitted by Anne Kayl, Secretary