



Bellaire PTO General Meeting – September 21, 2023

(Meeting conducted at Bellaire High School – Room 1232 (LGI))

Call to Order: President Amy Allen called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Amy began the meeting by publicizing BHS' annual campaign, Stronger Together, and encouraged everyone to donate so that the PTO could reach its goal. She also promoted other ways to get involved with the PTO and encouraged attendees to scan the QR codes. Amy also announced the Board's approval to waive the PTO membership fee for 2023-2024 to open PTO membership to the entire BHS community.

2023 Student Summer Scholarship Recipients. Presentation by recipients of 2023 Student Summer Scholarships. Each recipient received a \$500.00 scholarship funded by the PTO.

- JJ Silk (11) – Spoke about using his scholarship to attend BBYO International Leadership Training Convention in Pointelle, PA and Space Camp in Huntsville, AL. He hopes to return to Elite Space Camp next summer.
- Joshua Black (11) – Spoke about studying language and culture in Seville, Spain. He lived with a host family while attending language classes three hours per day. He highlighted his experiences of language and cultural immersion.
- Elijah McCall-Johnson (11) – Shared his experience with the CIEE language program studying Spanish in Madrid, Spain for one month over the summer. He spoke about improving his language skills and learning about the culture.
- Aiden Cooper (12) – Shared his experience with the CIEE language program studying Spanish in Madrid, Spain. He also shared about learning more about the Spanish culture and language.
- Lilie Oliver (12) – Not present but used her scholarship to study in France over the summer.
- Anthony Nguyen (Class of 2023) – Not present but reported using his scholarship to work with Vietnamese-American refugee program to help refugees integrate into the community.

Presentation by Magnet Coordinator Yabei Yin. Ms. Yin made a proposal to the PTO regarding Teachers of Critical Language Program (TCLP). TCLP is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Dept. of State and implemented by the American Councils for International Education which provides foreign language teachers through an exchange program. Bellaire would like to apply for exchange teachers in Arabic and Mandarin. Ms. Yin advised the BHS community will need to provide support for the exchange teachers by helping to host the teachers and provide a community liaison to aid in the cultural exchange.

Approval of Minutes from 5/18/23: The minutes of the May 18, 2023, general meeting were posted on the BHS PTO website. Reena Jogi made a motion to approve the 5/18/23 minutes. Julie Goldberg seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

PTO Board Reports:

Treasurer's Report. Dawn Pennington reported.

Summary of Finances

1. Texas First Bank Checking balance at 8/31/23 - \$46,126
2. Bank of Texas Checking balance at 8/31/23 - \$18,147
3. Bank of Texas Savings balance at 8/31/2023 - \$31,731

Bank Change

In July 2023, the PTO opened a new checking account with Texas First Bank. We are still in the process of moving all automatic payments/receipts over from Bank of Texas. Once automatic payment transfers are complete and a backordered teacher grant from the 2022-2023 year is fulfilled, the Bank of Texas checking account will be closed. The savings account at Bank of Texas will be transferred to Texas First Bank in the next month or so. Texas First Bank is a corporate sponsor, so we are supporting them in-kind, but also they will accept coins for deposit, which Bank of Texas will not accept coins. There is a cash deposit limit, but with analysis on the account, we will have plenty of room to offset those fees if they happen.

Summary of Budget

1. General - Credit Card fees through Square are now included with each payment. For example, if a contribution is made, the credit card fee will be netted against the payment.
2. Homecoming – Expenses include the deposits on Dance Floor & DJ.
3. Food Sales – The \$500 expense reflects cash for change to be maintained in the 5 cash bags, with \$100 in each bag in denominations of \$10, \$5 & \$1.
4. Annual Campaign - Non-Corporate – reflects donations to date of \$7,617. Corporate Sponsorship reflects donations of \$17,766, which has already surpassed the budget of \$10k! The \$584 of expenses is the purchase of yard signs. These were current as of 8/30/23.
5. Principals Discretionary Fund – Reflects payments made for the repair of the inflatable cardinal Repair (\$900) & Hootsuite (\$300).
6. Teacher Classroom Needs – Expenses reflect purchases made for Index Cards & Math Dry Erase Boards and Markers.
7. Class of 2024 Funds – Ending Balance for Class of 2023 will be transferred to Class of 2024. Cardinal Camp lunch sales and proceeds from the Sept, Fun Food Sale on 9/13 will be allocated to the Class of 2024 fund.
8. As of 8/31/23, the PTO has a net income of \$18,884.

VP of Membership: Melissa Bayne reported. Membership is at 30% of its goal. The money raised is used to support teachers. Melissa encouraged attendees to ask if their employers participated in company-matching. Membership will email and provide information to company for matching. Class of 2024 signs are available for purchase.

VP of Communications: Myra Phillips announced no report but advised how to submit info for PTO newsletter.

VP of School Relations: Rachel Berger reported. Homecoming is October 21, 2023. The dance will be held at the school. Rachel asked attendees to encourage their students to attend. There will also be a Sign Up Genius for volunteers.

Question: Is there a cap on attendance? We should be able to host approximately 750 students.

Parliamentarian: No report.

Secretary: No report.

Past President: Judy Cheng reported. Judy emphasized the QR Code for the survey to HISD Board of Managers and encouraged attendees to participate.

President-Elect: Julie Goldberger reported. Julie announced the Freshmen Parent Meet and Greet on October 4th at The '401.

President: Amy Allen reported. Amy announced that the first Coffee with the Principal held on August 31st was a big success and recognized Deirdre Rozowski for her efforts in planning the event. Amy also announced other Committee Chairs – Kim Rexford, College Center; Surabhi Presse, Corporate Sponsorship; Mindy Kaplan and Lauren Blackburn, Food Sales; Brian Smith, Grant Committee; Ali Septimus, In Kind Sponsorship; Tricia Onufer, Parents on Patrol; Tiffany Morrissette, Popsicle Sales; Reena Jogi, Spirit Nights; Farrell Diamond, Teacher Appreciation; and Maureen Maillett, Wraparound Liaison.

Amy also informed attendees that over the Summer, PTO funds were used to purchase a golf cart for use with the athletic fields (turf maintenance) and supplement campus security. Funds were also used to purchase equipment for track such as hurdles and other equipment.

The Teacher Grant program is open for submission for this semester. The Teacher Grant program is the largest budget item of the PTO budget (42%) and has awarded over \$600,000.00 to teachers since it began. A teacher can apply for a grant up to \$3,000.00. Applications will be accepted until October 27, 2023, and will be reviewed by the Grant committee.

The PTO is now selling USDA compliant Chick-Fil-A every Thursday during Cardinal Hour. There are also popsicle sales during Cardinal Hour which help to supplement the transportation budget for athletics teams because of significant cuts towards team transportation by the District.

Question: What is the nutritious Chick-Fil-a option being sold and cost? A ½ portion of the cool wrap for \$5.00 and an off-menu chicken slider for \$4.00.

Amy also announced that the College Fair is Wednesday, October 11, 2023. She also announced other dates visiting colleges will be at BHS.

Principal's Report: Mr. Niggli reported. He announced Open House was big a success and was “standing room only” in the auditorium. He noted that parental involvement is good for the kids. He then provided the names of the new College Center personnel (Jelicia Hunt, Samaya Allen, and Candis Quinn) and said he would like to hire one more College Center counselor.

Mr. Niggli also said the cellular enhancement project had been completed. Antennae had been installed on the roof and in building. Cell reception in the school had improved. However, he noted that the TEA says no cell phones allowed in classrooms.

Mr. Niggli announced that the athletic fields are done. The community has been asking about the use of the track. The community is allowed to use the track if it is not during school hours or in use by the school, but is not available for use after sundown. He is asking everyone to keep their eyes on the use. We do not want use of the track equipment or turf fields by others because we are concerned about possible damage and misuse. The track is available for running before sundown. He will try to work on signage so the community is aware.

The summer was brutal to the trees and landscaping because water was not available. The District has made an investment for new trees at BHS and the baseball fields along with an irrigation system. The District has really stepped up with this project.

BHS is also looking for a Chinese hourly lecturer. The school is looking to hire someone part-time. Attendees are encouraged if they know someone to encourage them to apply.

Mr. Niggli also emphasized the 90% attendance requirement in effect. He asked that parents/guardians please submit notes if their student has missed school.

The parking lottery has been offered to Seniors twice. BHS is now offering the parking lottery to Juniors. There have been 130 applications. They are in the process of seeing how many of the applicants will accept a parking spot.

Question: Are Juniors not currently licensed eligible for the lottery? Requirements are current license is necessary to get a spot.

Mr. Niggli also encouraged attendees to participate in Parents on Patrol. He said there is no minimum time requirement. If interested, talk to Tricia Onufer.

Mr. Niggli then gave academic updates. He told attendees NWEA testing is ongoing. NWEA is national testing that has been implemented by the new District Administration. Progress on NWEA is part of the equation for school, principal, and teacher evaluations. The SDMC will be meeting on Tuesday at 4:30pm to review the new evaluation formulas. The Science Wing also received new projectors and other tech upgrades in classrooms that were overdue.

Question: Is there an issue with ventilation for Chemistry rooms? The District has provided portable ventilation units but some science teachers question whether the units provide suitable ventilation.

Question: The A/C in one Freshman English class has been out about a week. What is the status of it being fixed? There have been HVAC problems but Mr. Niggli believes they have been addressed. He will check to make sure there are not any more issues.

Question: Will there be College Center meetings with Senior parents? Yes, there will be meetings for parents but the date has not been set yet.

Question: Some attendees expressed concern over the weight of backpacks. There was some discussion about possible options because there have not lockers in schools since 1999.

Mr. Niggli explained BHS is an earned autonomous school. This means BHS controls its master schedule and staffing. Mr. Niggli will listen to the community if there is interest in a NES/NESA school.

Question: Do we get to choose our own curriculum? Yes, BHS does choose its own curriculum. Since the start of school, the District has been at BHS learning from our AP classes.

Question: Teachers mentioned at Open House classes are full. What is enrollment? Enrollment is 3170 currently. The current Freshman class has over 1000 students right now while last year it was 800. The current Senior class is 580.

Question: If my student doesn't like his CTE classes can he switch? Please have your student talk to his/her counselor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Minutes submitted by Robin Wexler, Secretary.