Thursday, May 17, 6:30pm
17 parents present.

Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

Carlie Steen, PTO co-president, summarized the changes to the bylaws which are necessary to coincide with the DOE requirements.

Bylaws approved unanimously.

Mikael Sheikh, PTO Treasurer: Good amount of income came in in April. About $40,567, including about $8,000 corporate contributions. Total raised is $301,185. Still would like to raise $275,885 to meet the goal.

Misha Ratner, chair of Nominating Committee: 4 people in the nominating committee, including Misha, May Li, Leyla Dursunova and Lily Ruan. If you would like to get involved in the PTO and want to nominate someone or yourself, email: Nominate@bsipto.org. There is a parent meet-up this Sunday, May 20th, 2:30pm-4:30pm.

We would love to have some bilingual parents join the board so that PTO communications could be easily translated.

There will also be openings on the SLT.

Shana Norberg, Co-VP of Parent Involvement and Maura Minsky, Executive VP, : Encourage everyone to consider running for the PTO. It’s been a great group this year with a lot of energy. We need you!

Other events coming up:

Paddington 2: Sunday, June 3rd, 2:30pm. We had over 100 people at the last movie and it was amazing. We hope to invite the new kids.

Seussical: Thurs, June 14th, 5pm (doors 4:30pm) & Sat: June 16th, 2pm (doors 1:30)

May 25th, Gala program Ad deadline

June 9th: Gala + Auction at Roulette.

Mai, co-VP of Fundraising: We are counting down the gala. We have a lot of great donations, including jewelry making with Ms Rita, a chess lesson with coach Vlad, work slots at the Park Slope Food Coop, acupuncture and herbal medicine donated by a parent.
We also have a Galapagos cruise for two! We have people planning to attend the gala who are not even BSI families because they want to bid on the cruise!

Buy your gala tickets at bsipto.org. Currently $65 but will go up.

Mai leads the group in singing of “We are Family”.

Mr Havlik, BSI Principal: I will outline our current plan for enrichments and staffing, plus STEMLab.

Upcoming Events:
May 23rd, Spring Family Night
June 1, Talent Show (planned by the Student Government)
June 8, 7th Grade Dance (planned by students)
June 18-22, Senior Week

Additional Spending ask: TAOTS 5th graders and BSI 8th graders have been working together. Met with a group called the Thrive Collective. The idea has been put forth to create a mural in the school yard. Ask that you consider approving this project. TAOTS will pay for half. This would be a goodbye gift from the 8th graders, who were BSI’s first kindergarten class.

Hiring planned for 2018-19:
Full time Spanish teacher (currently substitute)
Full time Science teacher (currently substitute)
7th Grade Humanities. Ms Bush is leaving BSI for a project in India. We are really sad to lose Ms. Bush, but very happy for her next step.

Enrichments that we would like to keep at BSI next year:

BCM (K-2)
Biobus (K-2)
BEAM (Elementary TBD)

Pending enrichments, which are in process:

Together in Dance (5)
Capoeira (3)
Construction Kids (2)— Going to Construction Kids next week

New Enrichments that Mr Havlik would like to add in 2018-19:

Face Lab (4)— Partnership between DOE and RoboFun. 10 week session, includes a few parents and staff, student build robots and possibly compete in a competition. PS 10 in Park
Slope principal and staff highly recommend this program. Program is subsidized, so comparably affordable. Bonus: BSI keeps materials at the end of the program.

Consortium for Research and Robotics at Pratt (Middle TBD) — Talking about math (check video). Talking to Mr. Brian, the 7th and 8th grade math instructor, about developing a program with consortium that ties in his curriculum, scale drawings and the Consortium’s robotics facility.

Cooper Union (Middle TBD) — CU mostly partners with high schools, but they offer STEM Days for elementary schools. We are looking to have BSI 4th and 5th graders visit CU next year to spend the day in the engineering design facility. The inventors program is geared to high school students. Mr. Havlik is talking to CU about working with 7th and 8th grade BSI students. In the Inventors Program at CU, students make Rube Goldberg machines and enter a competition. It sounds like a fun and engaging way to get our kids involved in more engineering.

Billion Oyster Project (8): Ties well with 8th grade science curriculum. Students adopt and monitor oyster beds.

Will be working on the pricing of these projects and present costs.

Staffing Asks 18-19:

Mr Havlik will ask PTO to pay for TAs and 2 specialty teacher salaries. As I’ve mentioned before, we have substitute and part time teachers in some positions. Next year, filling those positions with full-time teachers will cost significantly more.

Additional Spending: Kids in the Game, School Loop and Art Supplies.

Other Initiatives:

MakerSpace/Block Room
Middle School Concentrations—giving kids a little more flexibility and choice in choosing the direction of their education
Lunch Clubs — hoping to partner with Brooklyn Game Lab to do one or more lunch clubs.
Child Mind — hope to continue the partnership and have a more robust relationship with them, more workshops for teachers.
NY Sun Works — curriculum for the STEM Lab when it is here. Great curriculum on urban farming and other aspects of science that will be connected to what kids will study in the STEM Lab.

Spoke to SCA. STEM Lab project bid is done. Next week, the SCA is reviewing the bid to make sure there are no oversights. If contractor gets the project, they will apply for permits and we could see scaffolding in the nearish future.

Q&A from PTO attendees:
Q: When might the lab be finished?
A: Supposed to be a 1 year project and that starts when the bid is awarded. Could be awarded in the next couple of weeks. But I’ve been through this and many things can affect the timing, for example weather.

Q: Can you talk more about the middle school concentrations?
A: Students would have a menu of choices, could be math, humanities, science or art. They might have an elective class during the week.

Q: Will enrichments be possible at our current funding rate?
A: Would love to fund everything. Will have more exact numbers in June. We may have to make some choices if the funding doesn’t cover all of the programs.

Q: Which programs have been left off the list?
A: Elevate study skills was left off the list after talking to teachers and students. There were a lot of great programs that I inherited. We would like to expand debate. We are considering how to do that. There’s another group, Urban Debate League, that competes more. We would like to possibly add to the debate program, but are looking how to do it.

Q: Science teacher that’s on the list to be hired is for what grades?
A: Advertising it as a K-6 position. The thought is that when the STEM Lab is here, I would want that teacher to run the STEM Lab. Would like to have classroom teachers involved in science with PD.

Q: Many families feel we are lacking band. We pay for a full time dance teacher and we pay for BCM. But band could be transformative for some kids.
A: I’ve been grappling with this all year. We are doing an experiment with the music teacher at TAOTS. Could be an after school program. I’m exploring what opportunities we could have.

Q: Advertised the science position?
A: If it didn’t happen today, it will happen tomorrow.

Q: What is happening with media literacy? Same teacher?
A: We hope to have media literacy back next year. Can’t say who the teacher will be.

Q: Some programs, like dance curriculum, Together in Dance, capoeira, are movement enrichments. Maybe as a PTO, we would like to vote on whether we would like to use that money for other priorities.

Q: Why don’t we have money left over because some teacher positions are part time?
A: Media literacy, Spanish and Science are part time to save money. I don’t know how staffing was funded in years before I got here.
Q: Besides Ms Bush, are any other teachers leaving?
A: Ms. Bush is the only person I know of. Things happen in teachers lives.

Q: Middle School Assistant Principal?
A: Considering, but right now focused on teachers.

Discussion of why now some teachers are part time. Some parents would like to assess the programs we have and how much weight/funding is given to certain kinds of enrichments.

Havlik: I don’t believe it should be a mystery about where the PTO’s money is going. I want to tell you what is happening and why.

Q: We seem to struggle with $. Is it because we are a small school?
A: Yes, we are a small school for a K-8. We are funded by student and so it’s hard to have a lot of specialty teachers compared to other larger schools, which have so many more students.

Q: A lot of 5th grade families are leaving. Usually 7 or 8 kids. This year is 17.

Discussion of creating a survey to find out why families are leaving.

A: Havlik: we are working hard every day to make improvements. We want to focus next year on STEM improvements. There are so many incredible resources in NYC that I want our kids to have access to. Please stay tuned.

Q: STEM Lab funding. Will the DOE give extra money to run the lab?
A: Funding is for the STEM Lab, not for staffing. There are some parents working on grants. NY Sun Works provides someone to maintain the lab. That’s part of the program.

Q: Will the teacher be shared with TAOTS?
A: I have been going about this as a BSI experience. We will figure that part out. A shared thing could be down the road.