



MINUTES

MS54 PTA General Meeting

December 8, 2020 @ 7:00 PM, Zoom Mtg

BTW54PTA@ms54PTA.org

Call to Order & Minutes (7:00 - 7:05)

- **VOTE ON MINUTES. Minutes Approved.**

Presidents' Update (7:05 - 7:10)

- Good News:
 - Broadway Night on Sunday was INCREDIBLE! Fun, full of stars, joy and surprising moments, including Dr. Elster in her Booker T PJs to kick off the show. The school raised \$10K (double last year!)
 - There are so many people to thank, including Fabiola Dia, Yun Joo Shin, Lee Uehara, Stacey Katzen, Marni Aarlev, Vicky Kahn, all our amazing parent performers, and of course, the woman who made it all happen: Anne Pejovich!!
 - November was an insanely busy fundraising month:
 - The Turkey Trot got people outside, exercising and meeting up while raising over \$7K!
 - The Pie Sale brought in @ \$2K
 - And we had our first ever Charleston Wrap event that brought in \$700
 - We opened our own school store selling classic gear, which has made about \$1200. The third party store only sells limited edition/holiday gear. The Booker T store sells the classic gear (versus our third party which sells speciality items!)
 - High School Virtual Tour Page + Calendar - please submit additional info as you learn about more schools and their plans: <https://www.ms54.org/high-school-information.html>
- SLT Update:
 - Grading/how best to support students who receive incompletes
 - Midweek Holiday make-up - no further mid-week holidays until June, so will revisit in March to see whether we're in person or still full remote
- CEC/Accelerated Learning Update
 - This is the official advocacy body for the DOE for District 3 - easy to attend the meetings if you want now that they are online
 - The district had 55% blended in September; now up to 60% after the opt in (Booker is 76%)
 - Still no clarity on high school admissions; the superintendent is aware this is a matter of concern to parents.
 - Advocacy groups for and against the SHSAT are writing to the governor.
 - The Mayor recently announced that the SHSAT would be administered, but no details were provided.
- Safety Update
 - All required Safety/Fire drills completed prior to school closure
 - Arrival and dismissal flows moving well
 - Testing prior to schools closing demonstrated that air exchange requirements could be met with only two windows open, so that classrooms could be warmer but still safe
- Giving: There are several ways you can give back to the community over the holidays:

- Teacher/Staff gift collection - all contributions will be pooled and distributed
- Family to Family Gift Drive on Amazon
- Family to Family Food Drive on Amazon - hundreds of bags of food have been distributed since this was set up this summer
- Amazon Smile

Principal's Update (7:10 - 7:20)

- Second open house held on 12/8 - continue to spread the word about Booker T!
- Teachers sharing ideas on keeping engagement high and social emotional strategies
- DOE has communicated that students who opted for blended but haven't come to school will be moved to remote - more info to come!
- 2 more confirmed cases of COVID among students on 12/8 (neither student in the building since 11/18 so no risk of exposure)

Treasurer's Report (7:20 - 7:30)

- Overall Update: \$900k in account - raised about \$150k so far this school year. \$20k expenses related to fundraising activities, pie sales, school supplies and teacher grants, etc.
- Funding Request for EPIC Reading Program. Program is targeted to kids who struggle with reading. Existing program has offered the free option which is only available during school hours. This request will allow them to get full access including after school/weekends. The Executive Board recommends covering the full cost which is \$6,400 for the ~100 students in the program.
Vote taken and approved with 98% approval.
- Budget Adjustment Recommendation -
 - \$200K reduction in funding needed for Educational Consultants on budget
 - This allows us to eliminate the Online Auction and still end the year without a deficit
 - Terrible year to solicit from the kinds of small businesses/restaurants
 - No one has offered to run the auction
 - **VOTE: Approved with 86% Yes; 5% No; 9% abstaining**
- Annual Appeal: \$120k raised out of \$250K goal
- Grant Status: None

Community Updates (7:30 - 7:35)

- Fundraising - happy we are able to try to new things.
- Wellness Committee - continue to discuss ways to serve the social and emotional well being of the students at the next meetings. Sundays @ 10am walks will continue through the winter!
- Equity Team - No update apart from the Epic reading program.
- 108th Street Construction - much of exterior complete, but inside work continues. Targeted completion May 2021.

HS Panel (7:30 - 8:30)

Panel of specialized HS students from schools many Booker T students consider applying to (Stuyvesant, Brooklyn Tech, Bronx Science, HSMSE, Lehman, Brooklyn Latin). The panel was organized and will be moderated by two Booker T. alums, Marina Gallo and Talulah Lametrie. Marina attends Bronx Science and Talulah attends LaGuardia. Together, they've started a business, Study Buddies, that coaches eighth grade students through the HS application process. Contact study buddies for all your questions!

Today's focus on the specialized schools:

- 5 speakers: Corrine (Bronx science), Anna (Stuyvesant), Gordon (Brooklyn Tech), Benjamin (Lehman), and Zoe (HSME)

Brief overview of the school:

- Stuyvesant - Big school focused on individual communities for each student. Located downtown, simple commute from Upper West, really strong academics
- Bronx-Science: Big school. Easy transition from Booker T. Flexibility with classes, with a great range of options
- Brooklyn Tech: Largest technical high school in the US! Incredible range of opportunities. Students can specialize in over 19 majors.
- HSME: Very academically rigorous; Stem school. Smaller school. On the city college campus, easy commute from upper west side
- Lehman: Small school in the Bronx. Highlight is the American History program.

What languages, clubs, sports?

- *Stuy: 6 languages; over 100 clubs (environment, red cross, board game, etc.); Sports (cross country, gymnastics, dance teams - competitive, drama, etc.). Weekly opportunities bulletin to get involved in things out*
- *Bronx Science: Lots of languages and 100+ clubs. Notable: debate, journalism. 30 sports (including golf! And traditional sports). Opportunity board for more limited engagement.*
- *Brooklyn Tech: 3 languages. Lots of clubs like debate, model UN. Great way to make friends. All sports (great swim team undefeated!)*
- *HSME: More limited in languages - only German and Spanish. Lots of sports as well - check out the website.*
- *Lehman: Lots of sports, clubs. Most popular: model UN, debate, etc. Any class can be taken at the college.*

What is the community like?

- *Stuy: competitive but supportive! Most clubs and teams offer time to do homework. Office hours for extra help!*
- *Bronx Science: Very laid back depending on classes. Supportive environment. Teachers make effort to reach out but you need to reach out given size! Office hours for extra help!*
- *Brooklyn Tech: Big and because of that clubs are the way to make friends! You won't have the same people in your classes! You need to advocate for personal relationship and participate. Office hours for extra help!*
- *HSME: Small so everyone knows each other from class. Lots of communication. Welcoming community. Lots more boys than girls! Office hours for extra help!*
- *Lehman: Community very close and everyone knows each other.*

How much homework?:

- *Stuy: Lots of homework depending on class. AP only 1 hour per night; non AP 30 minutes. 1-2 hours of homework per night. Not busy work, either reinforcing the day's lessons or*
- *Bronx Science: Similar to Stuy, Not overwhelming; if you don't abuse it you can get extensions*
- *Brooklyn Tech: Similar to Stuy/Bronx Science.*
- *HSME: Very reasonable, even if balancing sports, or extracurriculars, 1-2 hours/night.*
- *Lehman: 2-3 hours/night (on average).*

What should applicants know about your school?:

- *Stuy: so much to offer. Makes you want to learn. Lots of choices. Driven students and ones who want to be challenged. STEM and humanities!*
- *Bronx Science: Science and math oriented. Lots of flexibility with classes. Need to be organized. Need to be ok with test taking. Need to be ok in a fast paced environment.*
- *Brooklyn Tech: Great education in all subjects. Math/science school. Incredible humanities as well. Not artistically inclined*
- *HSME: Focused on STEM but humanities are so strong. Consider going in you have an aptitude on math science - would be hard if not inclined towards that. Wants rigor without the big environment.*
- *Lehman: likes humanities because great strong in both STEM and humanities.*

Q&A:

1. *How diverse? All panelists reported being very supportive and diverse. Lots of clubs.*
2. *How did you manage the transition from Booker T to larger schools? Panelists reported that Booker T prepares you well for the rigor, time management, organization and studying practices. Some panelists reported programs like Big Sib, office hours, etc.*
3. *How did school change with remote? Panelists reported ongoing rigor including studying for Regents and AP exams, etc.*
4. *Which school would you go to if you could go to another school? Bronx Science, HSMSE, Brooklyn Tech*

Next General Meeting: Tuesday, January 12