



## 9/16/10 PTA General Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm. There were approximately 150 people in attendance.

Linnae Hamilton, PTA co-president, opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking parents for their food contributions to the potluck preceding the meeting and those who had helped organize and run the dinner. She then introduced and thanked Executive Board members (visit <http://www.bhsec1pta.org/contact-us/> for list of board members and their contact information) and also briefly explained the difference between the PTA and Friends of BHSEC. She invited parents to participate in the full range of activities sponsored by the PTA.

She introduced parent coordinator Carol Turitz, who explained her role and encouraged parents who have questions about school matters to contact her.

The Co-Presidents delivered their addresses (appended below).

Co-president, Abe Suleiman, explained the voluntary nature of the PTA, the critical contributions made by the PTA and urged parents to become involved, to join committees, to provide in-kind donations of services and goods and to respond generously to PTA calls for monetary donations. He also urged parents to keep up with PTA events and news at the website, [www.bhsec1pta.org](http://www.bhsec1pta.org).

Sulieman pointed to the exciting year ahead for BHSEC with a new principal, Michael Lerner, the largest 9th grade class in the school's history, the upcoming 10th year anniversary. He also reported that because of state budget cutbacks the school had lost \$400,000 in funding. In the wake of these cuts the PTA has made pledges to make up as much of the gap as possible. Because the PTA is committed to continuing the full range of excellent programs, including the sports and arts programs, it is critically important that parents support the school. He also announced that the school had just been awarded a Challenge Grant of \$250,000 from an anonymous foundation. To receive the money however, the BHSEC PTA must raise funds over and above what we have raised previously which has been approximately \$100,000. He concluded his comments by pledging to give \$600 to the PTA and challenging the assembled parents to do the same.

Hamilton introduced Sam Weisner, chair of the Advocacy Committee. He briefly described the lobbying efforts undertaken by the committee, explaining that the NY State grants we have been able to secure have added an extra \$1000 per student. This includes, for example, \$500,000 for our science and math programs, in the governor's budget. Unfortunately additional funds, those requested by individual Assembly members, were lost when this money was vetoed by the governor. Weisner encouraged parents to join the committee and explained that the committee's work includes preparing and send parents packets of letters. Parents could help simply by signing and sending them along to the appropriate NYC and NYS Council and Assembly members.

Other volunteer opportunities can be found in the Sports Committee, the Music and Arts Committee; the Garden Committee and the Architecture Committee. If interested in joining these committees go to <http://www.bhsec1pta.org/pta-committees/> where you will find descriptions of the committees and email addresses for the chairs.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of two meetings held earlier in 2010. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Eileen McColgan, Year 2 SLT [School Leadership Team] representative briefly explained the purpose and function of the SLT as a committee composed of parent, student, teacher representatives to advise the principal. Nominations were opened for 9th grade parent representatives. There were 4 nominees:

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|----------------------|--|
| Rhonda Zowel         | <a href="mailto:rzowel@yahoo.com">rzowel@yahoo.com</a> ,     |
| Ellen Straus         | <a href="mailto:ellenal83@yahoo.com">ellenal83@yahoo.com</a> |
| Nancy Sher           | <a href="mailto:nancyjshe@yahoo.com">nancyjshe@yahoo.com</a> |
| Fabiana Carbo-Chavez | <a href="mailto:fabicarbo@msn.com">fabicarbo@msn.com</a>     |

Candidates will forward a statement and a vote will be taken at the next PTA meeting on Oct. 21st.

The highlight of the evening was the Principal's address by Dr. Michael Lerner. He thanked parents for coming, thanked his administrative team, and teachers and commented that in his first days as a principal he has learned that one never stops saying "thank you." He briefly discussed what was happening in the first week during the "Writing and Thinking" week. Visitors to the school have been impressed with the positive student response to this "academic bootcamp" and he reported that 91% of students attended school on the "stray" day (school opened on 9/8 followed by two days off). This, he said, signalled to him that students were excited to return and committed to the project.

He outlined what he sees as the mission of the school, mainly its commitment to the early college idea. BHSEC is not a high school but strives to provide an authentic college experience and the right preparation for continuing on to a four year college program. BHSEC has become a national model for rethinking education for secondary school students. His goal is to nurture the culture which has made BHSEC noteworthy, namely providing adequate support for students to do high level work, encouraging personalized and individual attention, and maintaining a diverse student body. Also critical is respecting students as young scholars and treating them as young adults.

Lerner reiterated that the school's success depends also on parent support. What does he need: Time, money and stuff. All donations are welcomed. He also noted that parent participation is critical. His goal is 100% participation and he humorously challenged the group to step up with their support. Everything will be gratefully accepted.

Linnae Hamilton outlined the schedule for future fundraising efforts, asked if there was any new business, winning raffle tickets were drawn and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Susan Yohn, BHSEC Manhattan PTARecording Co-Secretary.

## PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

### **BHSEC Manhattan PTA's Mission**

Welcome and Congratulations! As a BHSEC Manhattan current parent you are automatically a voting member of the PTA. We all share the same questions and concerns and our number one priority is the welfare of our children. The PTA's mission is to make the BHSEC years the best they can be for all of them.

We are an all-volunteer community. Your participation strengthens the PTA's voice to advocate for our children and it provides a larger pool of resources to enrich the programs here at BHSEC Manhattan. It's the extras that make our school stand out among others.

Take a look around you – behind every great kid is a great family. *You are the PTA* - by working together we can make our extraordinary school even better.

### **What the PTA Does for You**

We are here to help:

#### **1. We help you make your voice heard at BHSEC Manhattan.**

- We listen: we answer your calls and emails and hold monthly meetings to learn about your ideas and concerns.
- We talk: we meet regularly with BHSEC faculty and staff to convey what we hear from you - then relay this information back to you.
- We maintain an active website to share news and pertinent information throughout the BHSEC community.

#### **2. We help you support BHSEC Manhattan.**

- Because our school is a unique public / private partnership, there are two organizations raising money here: The BHSEC Manhattan PTA and The Friends of BHSEC.
- ***What's the difference?*** Contributions to Friends of BHSEC go to Bard College which supports both BHSECs in Queens and Manhattan. Contributions to the PTA supports the BHSEC Manhattan campus only.

To clarify the differences further, the BHSEC Manhattan PTA, Friends of BHSEC and Principal Lerner met over the summer to work on fundraising strategies designed to minimize overlap and maximize each group's efforts. We're happy to report that an agreement was reached: **the PTA focuses on current BHSEC Manhattan parents while The Friends of BHSEC targets Alumni, Foundations and Corporations.**

***This is an extraordinary year for an extraordinary school: Bard High School Early College.***

1. The succession of a dynamic and energetic teacher to the leadership position of School Principal....Dr. Michael Learner.
2. The school welcomes its largest ever number of incoming 9th grade students.
3. Established in September 2001, Bard High School Early College gets ready to enter its 10th anniversary year.

This year however, this great institution has suffered \$400K in funding cuts. The programs and educational initiatives that make this school special and benefit our children are imperiled.

Tonight, the PTA pledges to support this great school and its extraordinary teachers and staff. With our funds, and our combined time, energy, and creativity we will help the new principal succeed in his mission, and enrich our children's experience at BHSEC.

**Tonight we ask for your help in three ways:**

1. Give to the PTA your in-kind donations of supplies and services.
2. Sign up and volunteer to assist the PTA in our fundraising campaign.
3. **Reach deep within your heart, and give generously to the PTA.** It's one of the most important investments you can make today in your child's future; before you know it, you will be the proud parent or guardian of a bright individual with both a high school diploma, and an associates degree.

**We make it easy for you to give to the PTA:**

1. You can use **Pay Pal on the PTA's website** to give a one time donation, or a fixed amount each month. *Just Set it and Forget it.*
2. You can **write a good old fashioned check** to the **PTA of BHSEC** for any amount anytime.
3. And you can **always use your credit or debit card**; here you can be a little extra generous, and reward yourself with miles and points while you're at it.

Your donations to the PTA, whether \$300 or \$3000, are 100% tax deductible, and every dollar goes to keep BHSEC Manhattan great and to benefit your children.