

PTO Meeting Notes
September 12, 2018

Attendee Introductions

Principal Update

- Parent Coffees with Principal Elaster, AP Dicks, and Dorvil are an opportunity for parents to ask questions of the administrative team. Dates for this year will come out in an upcoming Tuesday folder.

Instructions for joining the PTO listserv and Bridges A to Z directory

- Bridges administrative team is not on the listserv so any questions for them need to be addressed directly to the administration.
- A calendar of PTO events is on the A to Z directory.

Officer Elections

Five people previously volunteered and agreed to have 5 officers, with two parents serving as co-VPs. Floor was opened up for additional volunteers who want to run for office. No additional volunteers came forward. Officers were elected by consent.

- Jana Banks, President
- Aisha Riley, co-Vice President
- Angela Ruckel, co-Vice President
- Rachel Reid, Secretary
- Sakura Emerine, Treasurer

Questions and Concerns for Incoming PTO Officers

- How will the monthly PTO meeting agenda be created? How do parents get items placed on the agenda?
 - The PTO officers will create the agendas. Parents can email items they want on the agenda to the PTO at bridgespcspto@gmail.com two weeks before the meeting.
 - Last year, the first 10 minutes of each PTO meeting was an open forum for concerns and that worked well.
- Parent would like Bridges to have cultural programs, for example an African-American History program.
 - Principal Elaster has researched how Bridges celebrates diversity and this year we will have Hispanic Heritage and Black History celebrations.
 - The Bridges staff is also focusing on equity and culturally relevant teaching.
- There is a concern that the PTO should be more inclusive, and eliminate the Spanish-speaking parents' listening session.

- Joseph Egan, Bridges ELL teacher, has organized a listening sessions for Spanish-speaking parents after the PTO meetings to recap what was discussed. Some parents feel more comfortable attending that meeting. Spanish translation is available for all PTO meetings.
- There is a concern that people accessing Fort Totten Metro Station can see Bridges students on the playground.

Purpose of Bridges' PTO

Community building, supporting teachers, fundraising to support the work of the school, and hosting cultural events as appropriate.

- While the PTO raises funds, there has been a conscious effort to balance the work of the PTO among these purposes so parents have an opportunity to give but are not overwhelmed by fundraising efforts.

Committees

Rather than identifying committee chairs, we will have a lead for each event or project

- Picture Day: Typically happens in the Fall to provide pictures for families and to serve as a fundraiser. We have a past parent who is a professional photographer and has done Picture Day in the past. She is willing to organize it again and we need to decide if this is something we want to do.
- Flex Academies: The contract has been signed but Flex Academies will not begin until January.
- Safety Committee: A standing committee that was not very active last year. Originally, it was designed to address abuse prevention which included discussion of bathroom safety and the impact of buses running in front of the school.
- Special Needs Parent Group: This group shares resources and information on advocacy for parents of children with special needs. The PTO liaison serves as a bridge between the groups and attends both PTO and SNPG meetings.
- Additional fundraising campaigns often begin based on an identified need, a decision by the PTO to support that need, and in consultation with administration.
 - PTO is a collective of volunteers so the fundraisers and events that happen are determined by whether people are willing to lead and volunteer.
- Talent Show was a big hit last year. Suggested that we do it twice a year. The past project lead has moved to Maryland so we are in need of a new project lead.

Open Forum

- Parent suggested that positive affirmations be written on the bathroom walls in various languages.
- If principal doesn't attend PTO meetings, how is information passed between the school and PTO
 - New PTO officers will meet and the President will meet with Principal Elaster
- Movie Night is a fun event that can happen quickly while the new PTO board organizes. If anyone wants to take this one, Joanne can meet with them to pass on the "blueprint."
- Playground: Is the last stage completed or is more to come?
 - Safety issues: sandbox, pooling water coming off from the HVAC, table in playhouse is not level
 - Briya staff has stated that Bridges students are not allowed to use reserved space when they put up a temporary fence. Principal Elaster is unaware of restrictions but will follow up with Briya admin. She is also unaware of the safety concerns which she will research them. If there is an issue on the playground, parents can bring them to Operations staff - Georgia Vergos. Parents are allowed to use the playground up until 4:30.
- Will parents do something for 5th grade graduating class?
 - Last year graduating class went on a class trip and had a class shirt with everyone's name on it. Plans for this year haven't been discussed between the school and the PTO yet.
- If you have additional project ideas for which you would like to volunteer, please add your name to the volunteer list with your idea or email the PTO at bridgespcspto@gmail.com.
- Room Parents: This program is coordinated by the PTO. Room parents support the classroom teacher.