

Benjamin Franklin Middle School Home and School Association
Zoom Meeting Minutes - February 10, 2021

Attendees: Carol Waldman, Mayumi Brescia, Meghan Agatep, Jen Tesseyman, Laura McGrath, Valerie Auyeung, Anne McAskin, Sandy Santangelo, Sheila Brogan, Susan M., Nancy Sabatiel, Allison Brown, Laura Waisnor, David M., Stacy Malmberg, Lisette Ramos, Mr. Wu, Ms. Stovall, Mr. Orsini.

Welcome:

- The Zoom Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. The BFHSA Co-President Carol Waldman welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The December 2020 minutes were approved. 1st Approval - Gregory Wu; 2nd Approval - Laura McGrath.

Agenda Items:

- Principal's Report - Mr. Orsini
 - Shauna Stovall - Testing window is March 15th - June 11th. Currently, we are in the preparation phase and waiting for direction/guidance from the State of NJ as to what testing will look like, next steps, etc.
 - Greg Wu:
 - Student Council Update - "Souperbowl" collection - 300 cans donated to Social Services.
 - Reading Marathon is underway
 - 15 active Clubs including Brain Busters, Mind Design Sports Club, BF Cares
 - Possibly will do another 6th Grade Fundraiser
 - Introduced Tommy Groenert - RHS Junior - presented Eagle Scout Project
 - Build a Greenhouse at BF - building foundation with a water drip system. Location would be by the Track near the benches facing the Cemetery. Would be beneficial to BF Science classes, the Green Club and would allow space to grow and maintain plants and allow for donations to the food pantry.
 - Covid Numbers have stabilized for the first time since Thanksgiving, haven't seen any in-school transmission and we are beginning to see Virtual students returning to Hybrid. Currently, 40% are Virtual.
 - Parent Question - is there a transition plan for kids returning to Hybrid from being Virtual to assist with the emotional/social transition; especially for a 6th grade student who is new to BF?
 - Reply - Guidance Counselors will work with the families of returning students. Email the Guidance Counselor and set up a meeting to discuss the return to school.
 - Currently teaching an 8th Grade Peer Leadership class and can see how extremely difficult it is to teach in this environment and the increase in time spent on planning; however, there is a benefit in getting to know the kids and building relationships.
 - Parent Question regarding a possible daycare program at BF 7am - 6pm and why is this acceptable when we can't open schools for the students for an entire day?
 - Reply - no decision has been made regarding location (Sommerville or BF). An Outside group would be running this program and numbers would be limited due to safety guidelines (classrooms- 15 people; cafeteria- 25-30 people).
 - Sheila Brogan added that Alphabest is the outside group providing before and after care at the elementary schools. This possible daycare program is designed to assist teachers who have young children as well as a small group of Ridgewood parents. It would only have 5-15 kids. Express any concerns to the Superintendent.
 - Diversity/Equity/Inclusion:
 - Stacy Poelstra - District Presentation to Principals and HSA Reps.
 - Professional Development for Staff- 20 Day Equity Challenge
 - February 5th - First District Parent committee meeting
 - a. BF currently does not have a Parent Diversity/Equity/Inclusion group but open to the idea of starting one.

- Rocket Launch- ends the day.
 - The website (as well as FIOS 33 and district site) will include at least 23 presenters with 5-8 minute selfie videos about an interest in science. Invite students to do a “selfie” presentation on their science project as well (3-5 minutes).
- Tic Toc Talks - Sandy Santangelo:
 - New initiative through Tic Toc - similar to TED Talks - to inspire kids and open their eyes to all of the creative professional fields that exist. A variety of professionals will talk about their career, the path they took and answer 5-10 questions about their field of interest.
 - Promoting to Middle School and High School students
 - Located on the website - tictoc.org
 - Variety of Speakers:
 - Authors, Video Artists, Graphic Designers, Youtubers, Radio Hosts, Gamers, Broadway, Rappers, Poets, etc.
 - Check out the first speaker, Dani Spies who is the host of a YouTube cooking show, blog and coaching platform. She has over 1.5 million followers and is from Glen Rock.
- New Business - Carol Waldman
 - Pandemic Response Team - meet weekly to discuss Hybrid vs. Virtual, touch base with Nurse Reilly and our Local Health Department.
 - Reading Marathon - Lisette Ramos is the chair. Ben & Jerry's coupons will be distributed to the kids who sign up to participate. Information is on Facebook, Groupspot and the Ridgewood Library website.
 - Parkwood Deli No Cook Fundraiser - January 15th - \$40/meal. Made \$270 which included a \$50 anonymous private donation.
 - Parent Questions:
 - What is the correct avenue for Parents to express concerns? Are our kids ok?
 - Suggest HSA to send out a parent survey to ask what the gaps are and what can be changed to help our kids?
 - Administration is constantly changing the way they are teaching and approaching kids to try to find new/better methods. Studying grades each marking period and looking at on average how grades have changed. Create individual plans for students who are struggling. Administration has noticed a larger number of kids not joining zooms/videos since January. Trying to encourage kids to come back to Hybrid. Administration also provides Professional Development for the Teachers and encourages them to talk with each other to share experiences, ideas, etc.
 - Suggest creating a Parent Support Group by Grade to share ideas, best practices, concerns. Possibly create smaller groups for kids to make connections.

Meeting was concluded at 8:30 PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Anne McAskin, Board Secretary