

Candidate Bios - May 2024 Election

Candidates for PA Executive Board

Jennifer Allen-Cheng, Co-President

My name is Jennifer Allen-Cheng and my daughter is a junior at Bronx Science. I recently retired after a thirty-four-year career as an educator, serving as a social studies teacher, a guidance counselor, an assistant principal and a school principal.

Over the past three years, I have become very involved in the Bronx Science community as a Gala Committee volunteer and at a variety of PA and school functions. I also served on the Executive Board as a Co-Vice President and a Co-President this year. In those capacities, I have utilized my strong organizational, collaborative and leadership skills and my understanding of how schools function to support the PA and school's goals. With the experience I have acquired this year as a Co-President, I am confident that I can continue to contribute to our community in this role.

I believe in public education and have been privileged to support the growth and development of thousands of children throughout my career. I have successfully led schools for decades and believe that my experience will allow me to contribute greatly to the PA, our students and Bronx Science's administration and staff. I look forward to continuing to serve the entire school community.

Xia Li, Co-President

This is Xia (Lisa) Li. My daughter Maggie is a rising junior at Bronx Science. I am honored and humbled to apply for the position of co-president for the Parent Association. My motivation is to take the high school journey closely together with my daughter. I want to show her how much I value her school and how important and fun it is to volunteer and contribute to the school community. I served as a member-at-Large my daughter's freshmen year and as corresponding secretary her sophomore year. I have co-chaired 3 open-house events and volunteered at various events the past 2 years. I am highly responsible and dedicated. I am capable of advocating and making changes. In 2021, I was a leading parent who initiated an open letter to the DOE Chancellor and urged the DOE to establish a curriculum that is inclusive of Asian-American history and culture. In 2023, I created the first AAPI book exhibit at the college I currently work at. Besides the parent role, I am an associate professor at a CUNY college. I have served as the deputy chair for my department for many years. I hope to have your support! Thank you!

Arthur Wong, Co-President

Arthur Wong is currently a Bronx Science PA Member-at-large and is running for PA Co-President in a slate with Jennifer Allen-Cheng and Xia (Lisa) Li. He is father to Bronx Science student Suri Wong. Arthur was the vice president of the Parent Association for 8 years at Suri's previous school, Hudsonway Immersion School. Most recently he was helping organize the annual Gala at Bronx Science. Arthur works at IBM on the mergers and acquisitions team and the family lives together on the Upper West Side. Arthur is eager to learn all about Bronx Science and to serve the Bronx Science community.

Helen Goldman, Co-Vice President

I'm excited to nominate myself for the Co-Vice President position on the PA Executive Board! After serving as a Member at Large this past year and observing the dedication of our board members, I am energized to play a more active role in shaping our school community.

As a Co-VP with a focus on Community Relations, I hope to be our school's bridge to the broader community. Having been a Bronx resident for nearly two decades, I'm passionate about fostering strong partnerships with our local community district leaders and am eager to work alongside other school and parent leaders to build relationships that benefit both Bronx Science and the community at large.

My background in Human Resources has honed my ability to navigate complex issues, collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders, and serve in an advisory role. I am committed to fostering open communication, active collaboration, and consensus-based decision-making.

Aligned with the PA's objectives, I am dedicated to promoting education, student well-being, and parental involvement, while ensuring our school has the resources it needs to thrive. I am excited to work together with other parents to enhance our children's educational journey and prepare them for success in the ever-changing world!

Helen Qiu, Co-Vice President

Hello, my name is Helen Qiu, and for the 2024-25 school year, I am running for co-Vice President for the Bronx Science PTA. I am the mother of twin boys, who are currently in the 10th grade. I also have an older daughter at Brown University. I have been a Member-at-Large for two years, and I enjoyed participating in fundraisers, open houses, and merchandise sales. In China, I also studied accounting. As a co-Vice President next year, I am excited to organize fundraisers to help improve our children's school experience.

Ernie Sander, Co-Vice President

I am Ernie Sander and I am running as a Co-VP of the Parents' Association, as part of a slate that also includes Helen Qiu and Helen Goldman. My daughter is a sophomore.

This past year, I've been leading the PA's merchandise committee. We've streamlined how we stock and order items, made it easier for shoppers to navigate our in-person sales, and added some new styles to our product list.

Before that, I helped with the tech during the monthly PA meetings, with the aim of making the experience as smooth as possible for both in-person and remote attendees. Beyond that, I've been volunteering at debate tournaments as a judge and helping to serve food.

I was an active volunteer at my children's elementary and middle schools as well.

My professional background is in media and publishing, at big companies as well startups, managing teams of writers/editors/producers, launching new products, and overseeing content strategy. More recently, I've moved into executive communications, where I help leaders of all kinds build their personal brands. I hope those experiences and that expertise will be beneficial to the PA.

Julie Chin-Tom, Co-Treasurer

My name is Julie Chin-Tom and I have a 9th grader. I have experience as the Co-Treasurer at East Side Middle School during the 2022-2023 school year. I have an accounting background and am a licensed CPA. I have strong communications and organizational skills, a controls mindset and am very detailed oriented. I think taking on the role of Co-Treasurer is a great way to get involved in the PA and the Bx Sci community.

Amy Xue, Co-Treasurer

My name is Amy Xue, the parent of a 10th grader of Bronx Science. I hope to serve the Bronx Science community as Co-Treasurer of the PA Board during the 2024-2025 school year. I am passionate about helping ensure Bronx Science provides an excellent education for all of our students. As a proud parent of a Bronx Science graduate who was well-served by our school system, I know what Bronx Science can deliver. I want to contribute my skills and time to help our school and kids. I hold a MS in accounting and have over 20 years experience working in accounting and finance. I am currently working for the NYC government with a flexible working

schedule. If elected, I will utilize my accounting experience to serve our community.

Mary Ann Carlese, Assistant Treasurer

I am the parent of a ninth grader and served this year on the Bronx Science PA as Member At Large. I was involved in our by-laws sub-committee this year helping make a number of updates. My child Leo graduated from Lab Middle school, where I served on the Parents' Association for two years, including as Co-Assistant Treasurer and Co-President. On the Lab PA I ran the annual pie sale, organized fundraising events, student events and family workshops. I have coached soccer with Downtown United and baseball with GVLL. At Columbia, where I work, I am one of the leaders for our LGBTQ employee resource group, which raises awareness about LGBTQ inclusion. I would like to serve on the Bronx Science PA to help the school and the PA continue its long tradition of successful events and support for the teachers, staff, students and families. I find joy in building community, valuing differences and making all people feel welcome. I believe my prior experience would be an asset, along with my current commitment and passion for service to our school community.

Wendy Stryker, Co-Recording Secretary

My name is Wendy Stryker and I am the parent of a Bronx Science sophomore. I have enjoyed getting to know the Bronx Science community by serving as Co-Recording Secretary this year, and by serving as a member of the Gala Committee for the past two years. I have been continuously impressed by the skill, enthusiasm and organization of the parent community, and am thrilled to have this opportunity to run again for the Co-Recording Secretary position. Professionally, I am the co-chair of the employment practice at my law firm, and serve as the Board Chair of another nonprofit organization. Through these experiences, I have had the privilege of learning how to bring groups together, engage in clear and transparent communication, listen closely, and take accurate and detailed notes. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to apply these skills for the PA Executive Board.

Mark Yim, Co-Recording Secretary

I am excited to become more actively involved in the Bronx Science PA because I suspect I'm not getting the full story of the school from our daughter. Seriously though, my husband Peter and I are grateful to be part of the community, and we want to get to know more parents and help the school in any way we can. We were volunteers at both galas this year and last, and I have been a judge at Emi's congressional debate events. For the past 12 years, I have been on the Board of our residential co-op in Manhattan, the most recent six as President. Previously, I had served as Secretary and Vice-President. As for my day job, I am an international portfolio manager at GAMCO Investors, Inc.,

focusing on Japan. I had previously worked in a similar capacity in San Francisco, Chicago, and Tokyo. I was born in Boston and grew up in New Jersey. We currently live with our two cats in Washington Heights.

I have an MBA from Chicago and an AB in comparative literature from Princeton. I enjoy the Great Books and playing the piano. Our family travels frequently to New Zealand, Japan, and especially Greece.

Nicole Allen, Corresponding Secretary

A resident of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, Nicole Allen is a parent to a graduating senior and freshman. She is currently member-at-large, having helped with comedy night, and now looking to serve as Corresponding Secretary. Nicole enjoys volunteering in her local community, particularly on environmental stewardship initiatives. She enjoys running projects, getting other volunteers involved as needed and generally lending a hand. Professionally, Nicole is a fintech product director and currently at the London Stock Exchange. She speaks several foreign languages and spent much of her formative years living in Europe, Canada and China.

Ashok Eastman, Member at Large

I am very excited for and appreciative of the opportunity to run for a position on the executive board of the PTA. As the father of a 14 year old, first-year student at Bronx Science and an 11-year-old in middle school, I have always been deeply involved in supporting their institutions, primarily through leadership roles in parent advocacy councils, educating prospective students and their families about the schools, as well as in helping school administrators better understand parent needs. At Bronx Science, I recently took a leadership role in helping to organize on the Gala Committee, where I managed timings, locations, and responsibilities for 60 volunteers across 78 roles, and I'm now eager to escalate my commitment by joining the executive board of the PTA.

By way of background, I grew up in Vermont, received a B.S. from MIT and work as an Investment Manager at UBS. This experience has honed my skills in organization, team-based problem-solving, and proficiency with technical applications like Google and Microsoft suites.

Having worked with various members of the BxSci parent community, I've witnessed the energy and dedication within that group, and feel I can fit in well and be impactful in that environment.

Candidates for PA Rep on the SLT

Kate Sussman, SLT

I am the parent of Charlie Hawn, ninth grader. I also have two other children—a son who recently graduated from college, and a third grader at Bank Street, where Charlie and his brother went as well. Throughout my years at Bank Street I have volunteered as a class parent, I have held different roles on the PA executive board, and I served a three year term as Parent Associate Trustee to the Bank Street College Board of Trustees. I have also volunteered as a facilitator for two different affinity groups for parents at the school: an antiracism group, and a group for parents of children with learning differences. I am deeply invested in participating in my children's school community, developing community with other parents, and creating spaces where people can share and learn from one another.

My background is in special education, and I have spent the last 30 years working in schools (public and charter) with students, teachers, and school leaders. I will bring to this role my experiences of working with all of these various constituents, my eagerness to support Bronx Science, and my strengths as a listener, collaborator, and an advocate.

Dimitra Koutsantoni, SLT

My name is Dimitra Koutsantoni and my son is a freshman at Bronx Science. I feel extremely fortunate and grateful that my son is receiving an excellent education in this amazing school, and I am eager to work with the school leadership, teachers and parents to continue to promote its academic excellence.

I have served on the School Leadership Teams of MS54 Booker T. Washington and PS 9 Sara Anderson schools, and have been involved in those schools' PTAs in various roles, including as VP for Fundraising, co-chair of the annual fund, and class parent.

A social scientist by training, I have a PhD in Sociolinguistics, and I am a Senior Director of University Corporate and Foundation Relations at Columbia University. My long career in education spans teaching, research, research administration, and university development in higher education institutions in the U.S and U.K.