

**New Hope-Solebury Elementary School  
Home and School Association  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, February 16, 2010**

Call to order

President Beth Keating called to order the regular meeting of the New Hope-Solebury Elementary School Home and School Association on Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:35 a.m.

Roll Call

Present at the meeting were the following attendees: Michelle Summerson, Erika Pete, Donna Zalewski, Joanne Reszka, Beth Keating, Paula Pala, Mary Dupont, Ann Leveille, Brenda Taylor, Donna Peiffer-Both, Susan Atkinson, Amishi Castelli, Chris Antell.

Approval of December and January Minutes

The December and January minutes were approved.

UES Principal's Report

Principal Amy Mangano wasn't in attendance at the meeting.

LES Principal's Report

Principal Ken Silver was in attendance at the meeting.

Principal Silver noted that the snow days and delays in the school days were especially disruptive at the LES, where many of the kids struggled with getting back "into the swing" after schedule upheavals. He noted that it wasn't just a school problem, as home patterns change during long days off as well.

Principal Silver commented that there were some complications to the Valentine's Days parties because of the days off, but that he expected the school to weather the complications.

Principal Silver brought up the idea of a "Parent University", where a session is held with a teacher or staff member instructing parents on various aspects of school life, policy, or procedure. He commented that the best time for such events was at the beginning of the year, when parents would get the most benefit. There was some discussion about scheduling mini-courses during the HSA meetings, to encourage meeting attendance, and to educate attendees. It was explained that the HSA had a similar program a few years back. It was suggested that the March meeting may have an experimental speaker to see how things go.

Principal Silver discussed a district-wide discussion on the definition of "rigor", based on a group put together after the reading of the book, *Bridging the Gap*. The point of the discussion was to identify where the district's procedures and policies, district-wide and in individual schools, could be improved to enhance NHS students' educations and eventual results in a growing global marketplace, where several countries have consistently higher-scoring and out-performing schools and graduates. Principal Silver noted that a lot of good ideas came out of the meeting, and an enthusiastic discussion was sparked during the meeting with involved nearly all meeting attendees. Principal Silver addressed specifically the application of the discussion to LES programs and policies, and noted that cultural differences do make up some of the reason for the differences in

learning and achievement in different countries. Principal Silver further noted that the March board meeting would feature a discussion of “rigor”, and encouraged parents to attend the meeting. Principal Silver praised the high school students who were involved in the committee meetings and discussions, and said that their responses were very enlightening.

Principal Silver commented on the outstanding success of the “Money for Haiti” fundraiser held at the LES. Students were challenged to do “something meaningful”, and ended up earning over \$3100 for Haiti. He also praised family involvement in the form of meaningful discussions, though he noted that some children were disturbed by images and stories that they heard on the news while they learned about the continuing difficulties in Haiti. Principal Silver noted that the clothing drive also went spectacularly.

Principal Silver noted the importance of K-2 teachers challenging each other -- in charity event planning, in planning lessons and in sharing learning concepts. He noted that the K-2 “world” is unique, in that while the schools with older students often have teachers challenged by the students themselves, the K-2 teachers often don’t have that opportunity, simply because of student age and maturity. Principal Silver highly praised LES teachers and staff, and said that they “teach well” and “understand the world.”

#### Nurse’s Report

Nurse Elizabeth Simon stopped by with two discussion items.

Nurse Simon passed around flyers for her upcoming spring blood drive, scheduled for March 8<sup>th</sup>. She requested the help of HSA to publicize the event, and noted that she already had good staff sign-up. HSA agreed to put up tables at those events where it was possible.

Nurse Simon requested that a parents donate gently used sweatshirts, t-shirts, and pants (sizes 5 - 12) to replenish her emergency clothing cabinets at the LES and UES. She is also looking for socks and underwear (sizes 5 - 8), but stressed that all sock and underwear donation must be of NEW items. She said that while the need was greatest at the LES, the UES could benefit from the donation of a few sweatshirts. She further commented that she didn’t need, or have room for, a lot of clothing, and requested that parents not deluge her with donations!

#### LES VP Report

Mary Dupont noted that the Orange Cycle electronics recycling program is not in effect at the LES.

Mary also noted that there is an upcoming Internet Safety forum being held by the middle school. She commented that the information found in the forum could be useful for elementary parents as well. The event is scheduled for April 14<sup>th</sup>, and is to be held in the High School Auditorium.

#### Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Joanne Reszka reported that the current balance as per the bank statement is \$27,380.09, but that the actual balance is different, but Treasurer Reszka didn’t have that information at hand because of a temporary issue that needed to be sorted.

#### Pizza Bingo

It was announced that the chair would not be able to attend during the rescheduled Pizza Bingo night, February 26<sup>th</sup>. The bingo lady also won’t be there, so a laptop and software need to be arranged. A ListServ reminder will be sent out. It was noted that some refunds had been requested,

and that some new people had signed up to participate. Treasurer Reszka noted that no checks had been cashed, and commented that those who didn't want to participate anymore would have their checks shredded, or could make arrangements to pick them up from Joanne. It was suggested that the event might have to be rescheduled again so that the chair could attend.

### K-5 Events

It was announced that there had been a lot of changes in the K-5 events. The changes were briefly discussed, as was the history being the events' initial planning, briefly. President Keating shared that the choices of an Afternoon Tea and a Sports Night were picked because they were the only ideas put forward. She noted that there had been significant, recent controversy regarding the events, and that HSA had been informed that the events needed to be changed. She noted further that most people with questions and concerns, once the development of the events was explained, understood the choices and were content.

*Sports Event* - Scheduled for Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, this event will be open to both boys and girls. There is a limit of 150 children, and each child will need to bring a paying adult. It is a K-5 event. President Keating noted that the event is intended to be a parent/child bonding event, but that the changes made had been suggesting that it is a drop-off event. She commented that it is NOT a drop-off event. She noted that one parent can bring multiple children, but stressed that it is an event to bond with your children, not time to socialize with other parents. President Keating noted that some volunteers will be needed for this event, to do some PhotoShopping of greenscreen pictures. A ListServ will be going out with the request.

*Afternoon Tea* - Scheduled for Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, this event will also be open to both girls and boys. The event was announced as a fashion show, but more correctly would be described as a presentation of "Dress Through the Ages." It was noted that clothing will be both girls' clothing and boys' clothing. President Keating said that cancelling the event was debated, but the event is planned and the majority of the work is done, so the event will be opened to the boys and every attempt will be made to make male attendees welcome and comfortable at the event. President Keating commented that several volunteers will be needed (they cannot be there attending with a child) to walk the tables, pour tea, etc. The tentative times for this event are 2 - 4 pm. Parents are requested to email Chris Antell if they wish to volunteer.

There was much discussion about the changes made and the reasons behind those changes. The predominant note was that the changes were unfortunate for the children. It was noted that these changes were decided for the HSA, and that while the events were settled, many still felt that the problems that caused these changes remain unaddressed.

*Family Event* -- It was announced that a Taco Night had previously been planned, but that event had morphed into a Multicultural Night to be held in the Fall of 2010 (next school year). The event will involve a lot of parent involvement, and has been held in many districts, where it is usually a very popular event. President Keating said that the hope was that it would be a free event.

*Current Problem* -- It was noted that with the Taco Night being nixed, the HSA doesn't have a family event. There isn't a family event chair. The Diversity Committee may want to weigh in on the event. There is currently a need for a third event to bring in approximately \$2500 to maintain the HSA budget for the next school year, but it was noted that the first two fundraiser events hadn't yet been held. A second sports night was suggested, as was abandoning a third event entirely for this school year. Someone suggested Family Pictures, and named Cindy Farina as possibly being

interested in being involved in the event. Susan Atkinson will speak with Cindy about it, and volunteered to chair the event, should it all work out. One suggestion was a pot-luck with pictures being taken. There was some concern about Principal Mangano's acceptance of the event.

### Roller Skating

This event is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup> -- attendees were asked to note the date change. The 9<sup>th</sup> is a half day. The previously scheduled day was a full day off, but Staci Northrup hadn't been aware of that, and received some negative feedback about the scheduling. There was a comment that the new date may be a good thing because there are a lot of March events scheduled.

### Fit Fest

Fit Fest is scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed. Michelle Summerson apologized for not scheduling and requesting volunteers earlier. Donna Zalewski commented that she had contacted Jim DiTulio asking what help he needed, as Michelle had been ill, but had not received any information from him. It was noted that no ListServ had gone out to the UES, though the event had been noted in the UES Friday Flyer. The event will be held from 5 - 7 at the UES, and volunteers are needed to bring food, and to help supervise events. Volunteers were suggested to show up at 5 and present themselves to Mr. DiTulio. Several HSA board members volunteered to bring food -- healthy snacks -- and help out. There were many comments that attendees weren't aware that the event was coming up or scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup>.

### Science Fair

Chair Amishi Castilli reported on this event -- it is on schedule. The next meeting for presenters will be held on February 17<sup>th</sup>. The event will be held on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the LES, and April 26<sup>th</sup> at the UES. Dates are finalized. There will be a newsletter before and after to prepare the students for the event and get them energized. Amishi noted that the event would have modules again, and that the newsletter before the event would hint at the subjects of those modules.

### Parent Gala

Liaison Erika Pete was in attendance at the meeting. President Beth Keating announced that ticket sales are going well, and the event is predicted to sellout. It was noted that HSA has been informed that they are responsible for providing an auction basket, which Donna Peiffer-Both offered to do. It was shared that teacher donations are taken care of. Liaison Erika Pete gave some details, and said that she would be emailing all volunteers. It was decided that the General Volunteer List will be sent to both Erika and Donna so that they can email potential volunteers.

### Discussion

*Funding Information:* It was requested that all HSA emails and newsletters, etc., feature a listing of what HSA actually funds, as many parents aren't really aware of what is funded. The suggestion was agreed with wholeheartedly, and President Keating agreed that some statement would be put together for that purpose.

*Night Meetings:* It was requested that HAS schedule alternate day and night meetings, so that parents who cannot attend day meetings can still attend meetings. It was noted that this was done during the 2008/09 school year, and that attendance hadn't warranted, in the Board's opinion, continuation of the experiment, especially as night meetings required a lot of logistical arrangements for complete Board attendance. It was further noted that while the event had been voted down for the 2009/10 school year, it was certainly something that would be considered next year. The attendee commented that it wasn't just a matter of attendance, it seemed to her to be a

matter of appearance -- that it didn't look like the HSA was trying to accommodate working parents.

Adjournment

Michelle Summerson motioned for adjournment, and the motion was seconded by Donna Zalewski.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ann Leveille, Secretary