

**New Hope-Solebury Elementary School
Home and School Association
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 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, March 16th at 9:36 a.m.

Roll Call

Present at the meeting were the following attendees: Ann Leveille, Donna Zalewski, Joanne Reszka, Susan Atkinson, Michelle Summerson, Jennifer Primavera, Mary Dupont, Chris Antell, Amishi Castelli, Francine Verwiel. Beth Keating and Principal Amy Mangano also attended the meeting.

Approval of February Minutes

The February minutes were approved.

HSA President's Report

President Keating reported that the election process for the 2010/11 and 2011/12 school year are underway. A nominating committee has been established, consisting of Juli Vogelsang, Susan Atkinson, and Amishi Castelli. An email requesting nominations will be going out via ListServ. President Keating stressed that a nomination doesn't necessarily have to be made for a specific position. The names will be collected by April, and interest will be verified by the nominating committee. The slate of nominated officers will be presented at the May general meeting. The positions of Treasurer and Secretary are definitely open. There are also places for Vice Presidents and an Assistant Treasurer.

President Keating discussed her preliminary HSA calendar for the 2010/11 school year, and said that it would be available after it was discussed with the building principals. There are lots of events spread out across the year, including some small weekday event. President Keating expressed that her goal was to have small events requiring minimal effort on the part of HSA volunteers.

President Keating updated meeting attendees on the status of the HSA page on the NHSD website. She acknowledged that there had been issues in the past getting information posted, but assured attendees that the site is now up-to-date. President Keating noted that she would very much like to have HSA info posted on the UES and LES school sites, and commented that she hoped that having the website updated would eliminate some paper usage.

President Keating discussed the HSA budget. There will be meetings with the building principals to discuss the HSA budget. The goal will be to verify priorities and the amounts budgeted. Some aspects to be discussed specifically include AIR, and Teacher Grants. There is a question if Teacher Grants are needed now that the NHS Education Fund has been established.

There was a brief discussion of UES clubs and Ms. Mangano's offer, made earlier in the year, to allow parents to come up with club ideas for lunch and recess, as long as they were to be consistent in running them. It was noted that two HSA members have made plain their desires to become involved in a gardening club of some sort.

President Keating brought up a major budget item – the Teacher Grant program. The program was introduced – it was explained that HSA budgets \$2500 per school per year through the program. Each school can opt to use the entire amount for one project, if they choose. Amishi Castelli suggested that HSA coordinate more with the NHS Education Fund, and possibly that HSA cap grant amounts, possibly at around \$500, as the NHS Education Fund gives grants for larger amounts. Attendees were assured that there is a process established to screen grant requests. Treasurer Reszka commented that it would be important to be assured that there was a representative from the LES/UES committee on the grant review board if the decision was made to give the money to the Education Fund on an annual basis. President Keating assured meeting attendees that she intended to discuss grant/funding needs with the building principals.

President Keating noted that AIR, and the assemblies funding will also be discussed with the building principals.

LES Vice President's Report

LES Vice President Mary Dupont reported on the recent food drive at the LES. It went well. Vice President Dupont did pick up some late donations, which will be delivered to Fisherman's Mark. She commented that there was not a lot of food donated, and suggested that next time a reminder be sent out. President Keating reminded attendees that it is district policy that only one ListServ can be sent out for any event or notice, with some special exceptions. Vice President Dupont noted that the entire district participated in the UNICEF food drive, including the UES, which had no formal program for it. President Keating discussed her desire to do a more organized, formal donation campaign, possibly around Thanksgiving. It was noted that the middle school and high school have similar programs. It was also suggested that donations be taken at all HSA events, as is done in some districts, and that reminders are sent out that donations are always accepted at the UES.

UES Principal's Report

UES Principal Amy Mangano and UES Vice President Michelle Summerson spoke about the Artists in Residence (AIR) program. Vice President Summerson said that she was very impressed by the program, and that she found the recent 5th grade project particularly impressive. Principal Mangano noted that the project will be permanent, and is due to be completed in May. She confirmed that there are no big revelation plans for the project. President Keating suggested a reminder of some sort that the project is an AIR project, paid for by the UES and the HSA, possibly at the upcoming Art Show. Principal Mangano assured meeting attendees that if the HSA wants more info, the artist's blurbs are available to be sent to parents.

Principal Mangano didn't have anything specific to report. She commented that it's getting close to the end of the year so the school community is occupied with PSSA testing and class placement.

LES Principal's Report

Principal Ken Silver wasn't in attendance at the meeting.

K - 5 Event Reports

Pizza Bingo: This event was tentatively rescheduled for April 30th, but will have to be rescheduled again, as April 30th is an Open Gym Night. Board members noted that they felt it was important to have a UES Pizza Bingo event this year as there wasn't a UES Pizza Bingo event last year. Possible dates for rescheduling are May 7th or May 21st, but a lot of people have to verify the date before it can be officially announced.

Frenchtown Skating: This event is tentatively scheduled for April 9th, but that hasn't been confirmed with the event chair. It was noted that this event hasn't yet been officially announced.

Afternoon Tea and Historical Dress Show: This event will be held Sunday, March 21st, at the UES. Chair Chris Antell reported that the event is coming together well. Boys have signed up to attend. Volunteers aren't needed at this point. Current sign-up numbers are 70 attendees. There will be a prize that includes wearing the costumes, and raffles at the event.

The meeting segued into a brief discussion of the effectiveness of Backpack Mail versus ListServ announcements. President Keating noted that printing costs for Backpack Mail are expensive, and tend to eat the profit of events. Vice President Dupont noted that the UPS Store had agreed to give the HSA a discount on printing, but President Keating noted that even with the discount, printing through Staples was still cheaper. The best places to get flyers printed, it was shared, are online printing shops, but flyers must be done early to take advantage of their prices. It was also suggested that the HSA provide paper for the school printers so that copies can be made in the school. Vice President Summerson noted that the relatively recent policy of not allowing HSA to make photocopies through the school was a result of problems in years past.

Science Fair: Scheduled to be held on the 23rd and the 26th. The assemblies for the Science Fair have been paid for by a private donor, who needs a receipt from HSA. Chair Amishi Castilli said that they were attempting to put together a follow-up project after the fair, which will culminate in an event held one evening at the UES to show off student projects. Vice President Summerson noted that Principal Mangano had spoken highly of the Science Fair at the 3/15 School Board Meeting. Chair Castilli told the board that she'd found it very easy to work with the principals if one was flexible.

Locks of Love: This event has been approved. It is tentatively scheduled for May. Vice President Dupont asks that any hairdresser suggestions be sent to her -- participation earns them a thank you card and public recognition, but their time and expertise must be donated, not paid for.

5th Grade Promotion Party: Planning is underway for this event.

Author Visit: Though not an HSA event, Vice President Summerson brought it up, wondering if Ms. Riva needed parent volunteers. She was asked to contact Ms. Riva and inquire.

Reading Olympics: This is not an HSA event/program, but the HSA has been asked to help with T-shirt purchases in the past, so the event/program was discussed in relation to HSA expenditures. It was noted by some attendees that they felt there wasn't enough information sent to parents about this event.

Odyssey Of The Mind: This is not an HSA event/program, but HSA has been requested to help with T-shirt purchases in the past, so the event/program was discussed in relation to HSA expenditures. Attendees were informed that the middle school division had progressed to the state competition. It was noted that there was no teacher representative for the 2009/2010 school year, and further noted that the program is often run by the gifted teacher, but not only for gifted child participation.

United We Play, United We Win: (Sports Night event) - There were nine walk-ins to this for this event, which were handled well. The only real issue was a plate issue -- it had been planned that

each person would get one plate but many attendees took multiple. The event is on the calendar for next year as an open gym night. Some attendees noted that the event had seemed somewhat chaotic or disorganized, with too much “wait time” for kids at some points. It was noted that the count for the jar is still undone.

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Joanne Reszka took a moment to explain how the Treasurer’s job worked and how exciting it is to be Treasurer.

It was noted that the School Board had praised the HSA for its detailed analysis of the budget in the President’s Newsletter.

The current account balance is: \$17,335.14. This includes \$514.10 in Band Booster money.

Treasurer Reszka noted that Mr. Mannion was recently paid \$6000 for the Art Show frames, and that the money hasn’t yet been recouped. A list of bank account activities for the month of March was passed out.

Treasurer Reszka noted that there are still bills to pay, and money to be made, even though it may not look like it.

Treasurer Reszka noted that the United We Play event brought in around \$1000, though a donation to Mr. Mannion’s Art Department still has to be discussed.

Yearbook

Chair Susan Atkinson was present at the meeting and discussed the evolvement of the LES newsletter. Chair Atkinson noted that she’s getting questions about the UES Yearbook, but doesn’t know anything about it. She asked that meeting attendees get the word out about the current status of the LES yearbook, because parents have a lot of concerns.

Chair Atkinson noted that at the beginning of the year she sent out detailed “how you can help” emails to parents, but that she finds she has to reject many photos because they only feature one child, or because they’re taken with a cell phone. She’s asked that parents don’t send in pictures. She’s obtaining the rest of the necessary pictures on her own, as she needs three to four children in each picture, and they must be taken with a high resolution camera. She stated that her goal was to have one “relaxed” picture of each child, so that each child would have the formal picture day picture and at least one other picture. She noted that due to events, clubs, etc., that some children may have more than two pictures in the yearbook, and noted that some children look very much alike -- mostly siblings -- and that she asks parents to understand that she’s put a lot of work into the yearbook and assuring that there are two pictures of each child.

Chair Atkinson said that the majority of the orders were received before December 15th, the date which orders had to be made online. She admitted there was an online situation, but that it was cleared up. She ordered more yearbooks than she received orders for, but less than the total number of children. There are some yearbooks left, but more cannot be ordered because the covers had to be ordered by December 15th.

Chair Atkinson verified that she's taking the LES yearbook very, very seriously, and reiterated that she'd like it if meeting attendees could spread the word about the current yearbook status and the topics of major concern.

President Keating thanked Chair Atkinson for her hard work on this committee.

Chair Atkinson commented that she hadn't signed a contract for the 2010/2011 school year, that she was choosing to wait to see the final product before moving forward. She will also be speaking with the middle school and high school about their chosen yearbook companies. The price will also be a determining factor.

It was commented that there are still pictures forthcoming from the Ultimate Sports Night/United We Play event, and that pictures will be taken at the Afternoon Tea.

UES Yearbook

This is not an HSA project. The UES staff is in charge of the yearbook this year.

Picnic/Family Event/Movie Night

Chair Paula Lewis has taken up this event, and is looking for the perfect function. The LES event will possibly be held in conjunction with the Peaceful Playground event at the LES, which is scheduled for the first weekend in May, in coordination with Pam Lang. It may be a movie night at the UES. This will not be a fundraiser event, Treasurer Reszka explained, but is expected to pay for itself. There is a possibility that snacks may be sold or a donation can be presented. The contact for this event is Vice President Dupont.

HSA Clarity

President Keating commented that it must be absolutely clear to attendees that every event that HSA holds is an HSA event.

Make-up Days

It was commented that the School Board has said that March 26th and March 29th will be in-school days to make up for snow days, but it was not verified that the in-school days had been voted upon by the school board.

Relay for Life

Vice President Dupont noted that the Relay for Life is coming up on the first weekend in June, and encourages anyone interested to attend. She noted that there will no longer be a mini-relay at the UES.

Ice Skating

An ice skating event was suggested for the 2010/11 school year. Treasurer Reszka said that she would speak with parents she knows who are involved in ice sports.

Parent Gala

This event is scheduled to be held on March 19th. It was commented that tickets are still available, and that ticket sales haven't been very good this year. President Keating commented that it should be a fun night, and that the raffle baskets are reportedly very interesting.

Trenton Thunder

Ticket sales will start soon for this event. A notice will go out through ListServ and Backpack Mail. The event will be held on May 14th. It was commented that last year there was a minor refund after ticket sales were processed, but Treasurer Reszka informed attendees that she hoped never to have to coordinate that again. Last year ticket cost was \$11/ticket, but this year the price will probably rise to \$12/ticket because the price is going up for HSA. It was noted that this year the Naturals will perform early, and that you get a hot dog with your ticket purchase. This event is a fundraiser.

New Jersey Devils

President Keating commented that she'd been contacted about possibly having an event with the NJ Devils like the Trenton Thunder event, but that she hadn't heard back from Ms. Van Praag about a possible Naturals concert at the event. She wants to hear from Ms. Van Praag before she calls the Devils representative back.

Spirit Wear

President Keating commented that she hoped that there would be another Spirit Wear sale in the spring.

Treasurer Interest

Chris Antell declared that she may be interested in the Treasurer position.

Bylaws/Officer Service Requirements

President Keating declared that the most important aspect of volunteering for a board position was that the volunteer must be willing to attend all HSA meetings -- two a month, generally. She further commented that she's concerned about continuity of the organization and the terms of service as now established. She informed attendees that four of the seven board members wouldn't be returning for another term, and that she had concerns about those who may want to volunteer for board service, but couldn't commit to two-year terms. She commented that she would like for there to be a progression from Vice President to President incorporated in the organization.

Secretary Ann Leveille commented that President Keating's concerns had merit and suggested that a committee be formed to review the HSA Bylaws to address those concerns in the organizational documentation, if changes were decided upon.

Sports Night/United We Play

The question was raised if the controversy surrounding this event impacted attendance and enjoyment of the event by participants. It was reported that there were some complaints at the event. Some discussion of the controversy of the event was embarked upon. President Keating commented that she had heard from a school board member, who told her that school board members could not unilaterally squash events, but can only make recommendations. President Keating commented that she was told that the HSA can hold a Father/Daughter dance in the future. Comments arose that such an event would logically require a Mother/Son event, which leads back to the original controversy of restricted-sex events. One attendee did comment that Girl Scouts have a "Special Someone" Dance that involves girls and male partners, most often fathers or brothers, though there are no formal restrictions on the gender of any escort.

Academic Rigor - Parent Perspectives

Treasurer Reszka briefly went over the Academic Rigor concept which had been discussed at the March School Board Meeting, and briefly at the February HSA meeting by Principal Silver.

Treasurer Reszka commented that there was no parent input involved in the discussion at that point,

though she felt it would be welcomed by the school board and principals. The discussion is based on the book *Global Achievement Gap*, which has been a subject of discussion for a small group of high school students and the counselor and some teachers during this school year. Principal Young of the high school brought the ideas discussed to the School Board for discussion. Treasurer Reszka expressed interest in setting up a parent group to discuss the topics presented by the book and the ideas expressed by the various principals and the School Board.

Adjournment

Chris Antell motioned for adjournment, and the motion was seconded by Vice President Dupont.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ann Leveille, Secretary