

New Hope-Solebury Elementary Schools
Home and School Association
General Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 17, 2016
UES Teacher Lounge Room

CALL to ORDER

President, Beth Houlton called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

IN ATTENDANCE

HSA Board Members:

Beth Houlton, President
Stacy Buck, Vice President, LES
Deborah Peckman, Secretary
Roxanne Apparies, Treasurer
Gretchen Reilly, Assistant Treasurer

Parent Members:

Trish DiZio, Dawn René Sandy

School Representatives:

Dr. McKenna, Principal of UES, Mr. Silver, Principal of LES and Dr. Yanni,
Superintendent.

I. President's Report

A. Approval of January Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the January 20, 2016 General Meeting were reviewed and approved.

B. Pizza Bingo (follow up) - February 5, 2016 - Deborah Peckman and Trish DiZio reported that Pizza Bingo went very well and we made 50% more money than the previous year. We also maxed out in terms of attendance. The only issue we had was that tables weren't able to be set up in advance because of after-care using the room. Dr. McKenna assured us that we'd be able to set up earlier next year.

C. Cultural Heritage Night - February 19, 2016 - Beth Houlton reported that this event will take place on Friday night, starting at 6:30pm and that Nan and Kim still need some volunteers to help out. They need someone to pick up paper supplies and a runner to run around and help the people hosting tables. Kim Madarasz will also need someone to co-host with her next year.

D. UES Glow Dance - March 11, 2016 - Beth reported that Tracy Keyes has everything under control in planning this event. Mr. DiTulio will be the DJ. Dr. McKenna said that he met with Tracy, and he has arranged with Dave Hansel to provide security for the event.

E. Science Day - April (date unknown) - Sarah Levinson is heading up Science Day at the LES and Amishi Castelli is heading it up at the UES. Beth reported that she gave them their budgets from the HSA. Dr. Yanni said that both events were very successful last year.

F. Future HSA Events:

LES Spring Dance - April 1, 2016 - Stacy reported that the theme had been 'Bring Your Personal Hero,' but people were confused so she will make it an 'Under the Stars' theme to tie in with the theme of this year's LES yearbook. Mr. DiTulio will be the DJ. Stacy and Dominique are heading up this event. Stacy is changing some of the event's details to make a better flow.

Teacher Appreciation Week - early May 2016

Trenton Thunder baseball game - May 13, 2016 - Beth reported that the 4th and 5th grade choir, the Naturals are set to perform. This event is optional and families will need to pay for their own tickets.

5th Grade Promotion Party - June 10, 2016 (tentative date).- Beth reported that there is a conflict for band students in older grades who are going to Hershey (along with parent volunteers). The conflict will only affect parents of 5th graders who were planning to attend the older child's band trip.

II. Principals' Report

LES Principal Ken Silver welcomed the parent members of the HSA to the LES and informed them about several events at the school. He reported on the successful Cradles to Crayons initiative. This year, the collection campaign was expanded across all four schools in the district. High school students helped pack up the donations, and our district outperformed other area school districts.

Mr. Silver also reported that we now have Buddy Benches and thanked the HSA for offering grant money for that initiative and for Artist in Residence as well as the standing desk pilot. He's found that the kids have really benefited in the 2 classes in which they've piloted the standing desks. The HSA supplied 2 adjustable standing desks (and other desks were just made higher) and Mr. Silver would like to try expanding the program. Jump Rope for Heart is coming up next week. We're also sponsoring a March of Dimes relay at the end of April. At recess, they are still trying to get the kids outside as much as possible even with the snow, and Mr. Hansel is getting an estimate to fix the playground's ladder.

Trish DiZio asked both principals about the Box Tops awards. The Box Top chairs previously promised donuts and hot chocolate as the award to the classes in each grade who brought in the most Box Tops. Winning classes in each grade have not yet been announced because Trish was waiting to figure out what to do with the new food restrictions in place. Dr. McKenna mentioned that he allows individual teachers to make the decisions for their classes and said that if we have nutritional info with ingredients listed, we can work with the winning teachers. Mr. Silver said that he might prefer something other than a food reward. Trish concluded that once we announce the 3 winners at each school, she will talk to the teachers of those classes to figure out appropriate rewards.

Dr. McKenna reported that the UES had a jump rope assembly last week with a demo team of UES kids performing, and the students all seemed excited about the event. Bingo night went well and was very well attended. Instead of using the playground for recess which is still snow covered, students have been given the choice to go out on the blacktop or stay in the cafeteria.

Dr. McKenna reported that throughout K-12, the school community has been doing a lot of work on literacy. He talked about 5 predictors of academic success, including: Academic level of mother of the child, socio-economic level of family and community, how much kids read across settings, kids' vocabulary, and opportunities to write 12-14 times during a school day. He said that teachers are trying to give as many opportunities to write throughout the school day (in specials too) to incorporate Literacy across the curriculum. Last Friday in Professional Development, the staff spent 3 hours just talking about incorporating Phonics into teaching (something not taught in undergrad teaching programs). Dr McKenna also reported that Katherine Dahlsgaard is coming to New Hope on March 16th. She is speaking at the 3 older schools and will have a program for parents that evening as well as a session on March 4th for professional school staff. He thanked everyone for all their support and lastly, listed some important upcoming dates such as the Art Show, Glow Dance, etc.

Beth Houlton briefly talked about the Read-a-thon for the public library. It was a great success this year with the UES having 145 participants (over 140 the previous year and 62 the year before that). The LES had 174 participants up from 157. Overall, we had 330 participants over the 314 from last year. Beth appreciates all the support from the LES and UES. They announced the winners during lunch and kids cheered for each other.

Dr. Yanni wanted to thank us for our support and said that we are back on track with the campus revitalization plan while also working to reduce our district's budget deficit. We've started a budget gap revenue subcommittee where people can suggest ideas as they work through the budget challenges. Dr. Yanni said that they're not touching the education program. Several teachers are retiring this year including Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Berringer. He gave an open invitation for parents to contact him anytime to discuss any issues we're facing. Our school calendar was approved at last night's Board meeting and it will go out on ListServ today. The next school year will begin on Mon., August 29, 2016, and in October, there will be a group of days off from school. School will end in on June 9, 2017. Dr. Yanni mentioned that he's been meeting with some Private schools to find out about accepting donations. He also reported that they have revitalized the Ed. Fund which gives grants to help the school and is co-headed by Mita Heble and Collette Martino. Feb. 27 is the Ed Fund's Community Variety Show. Dr. Yanni is a co-host and they have 15 acts signed up to perform. These grants are different from Mini-Grants in that mini-grants are for teachers to use in a classroom (\$1500 per school). Ed Fund grants are larger and broader (two examples are when they started a Maker Math course at the High School and needed 3D Printers or how they're getting mountain bikes to use for Phys.Ed at the UES. Next year, the Ed. Fund will have a family event and an adult-only event.

III. UES Report

Beth reported for Amy Hoffman that lunch/recess volunteers at the UES have been a little low so Amy will send out more requests for volunteers. Dr. McKenna mentioned that they have two lunch aides and sometimes have instructional assistants helping, and Dr. McKenna is often there too.

IV. LES Report

A. LES Spring Dance

Stacy Buck reported that she will need a co-chair to help organize the LES Dance next year.

B. LES Yearbook

Stacy turned in yearbook money for people who ordered yearbooks via paper rather than online. She only accepted checks this year. Student pictures are in the yearbook.

C. Holiday Shop

Assistant Treasurer Gretchen Reilly, who chaired Holiday Shop said that they have to decide if they're going to offer this event at the UES next year. She would like to continue heading it up at the LES. If we sign up by 3/15, we can get a free bike that we can possibly raffle off at Pizza Bingo next year. Trish DiZio and another parent are happy to help with the UES's Holiday Shop. Dr. McKenna has approved it for next year.

V. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Roxanne Apparies gave her Budget report on the HSA's income and expenses for all of the HSA's events and funded activities.

VI. New Business

No new business was introduced.

VII. Old Business

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Peckman, Secretary

The HSA's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at the LES Art Room.