

New Hope-Solebury Elementary Schools  
Home and School Association  
General Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 16, 2016  
LES Conference Room

CALL to ORDER

President, Beth Houlton called the meeting to order at 9:36 am.

IN ATTENDANCE

HSA Board Members:

Beth Houlton, President  
Amy Hoffman, Vice President, UES  
Stacy Buck, Vice President, LES  
Deborah Peckman, Secretary  
Gretchen Reilly, Assistant Treasurer

Parent Members:

Jin Joshi, Mita Heble, Kathy Feehan

School Representatives:

Dr. Yanni, Superintendent

**I. President's Report**

A. Approval of February Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the February 17, 2016 General Meeting were reviewed and approved.

B. Cultural Heritage Night - February 19, 2016 - Beth Houlton reported that this event went very well and some families grouped together to create expanded table offerings, such as India. Ethiopia was very popular and had a line and Jin Joshi gave out money after teaching children to say Happy New Year in Chinese. Beth reported that Nan Naag won't be running this event next year because she no longer has kids in the elementary schools and Kim Madarasz will need someone to co-host with her. Jin Joshi and Mita Heble agreed to co-host with Kim next year.

C. UES Glow Dance - March 11, 2016 - Beth reported that Tracy Keyes headed up the event and it went very well. Tracy coordinated Mr. DiTulio as the DJ and a lighting person to do black lights. Previously, she had more elaborate food, but this year she had rice krispie treats, pretzels and water bottles so that kids could quickly eat and head into the gym. Kathy Feehan headed up the snack table and said that they ended up running out of pretzels and water and she and Tracy already talked about changing the amount of food for next year. Dr. Yanni reported that several girls put in requests to leave early so that they could get their nails done and he and Dr. McKenna want to make sure that doesn't happen next year. Beth said it ended up being more dressy than in past years.

D. LES Spring Dance - April 1, 2016- Stacy has approximately 60 people signed up so far. Last year, she had 316 people attend. Stacy will send a reminder as this Friday

is the deadline. Stacy needs to get in the flower order early because she has a hard deadline, yet last year, she continued getting emails and phone calls from people after the deadline begging to still come. She said this year she can allow them to attend, but can not include them in her flower order.

E. Future HSA Events:

LES Science Day - April 5, 2016 - Sarah Levinson is heading up this event. She is having an organization meeting tonight at the UES.

UES Science Day (TBD) - Amishi is still heading up this event. She is having an organization meeting tonight at the UES. We should start thinking of who may want to help her or maybe start heading up this event in the future.

Teacher Appreciation Week - May 2 - 6, 2016 - Adrienne Deussing heads up this event, but it takes a lot of people to help run the event. This event differs from our Fall teacher appreciation in that it doesn't include hot/cold dishes. At this event, we provide snacks in the teacher lounges (most on Monday but replenishing throughout the week).

Trenton Thunder baseball game - May 13, 2016 - Beth reported that the 4th and 5th grade choir, the Naturals, are set to sing the National Anthem. This event is optional and families need to pay for their own tickets. Beth is sending out a list serve after break about ordering tickets. She needs someone to help her this year so that they can take over next year. Gretchen will help put together a list, including which people want to sit together so they can assign tickets. Once tickets have been distributed, they can't reassign seats, although families often move around during the game. If Trish DiZio doesn't volunteer, Gretchen has agreed to head up this event.

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**

Dr. McKenna is at a presentation for anxiety today so he couldn't attend, and Mr. Silver is out of the district. Dr. Yanni reported that they're getting ready to start their comprehensive strategic plan (runs from 2017-2020) called NHSD 2020, which will determine where we want to be in 2020. They look at where we are today and what is the best way to move forward, not only with academics but also with social and emotional development. He said we're including these because in the nation, we are seeing a lot more kids dealing with mental health issues. He is opening it up to anyone who wants to be on the steering committee. He's also been meeting with budget committees, and while the deficit was previously at \$4.1 million, it is now at \$1.77 million so great strides have been made. There is still work to be done, but it makes next year and further out look at lot better and they are continuing budget workshops. The challenging thing is that there are so many fixed costs (salary and benefits are contractual), so there is only \$3.6 M of discretionary spending out of a \$40M budget. He said that our Business Administrator is great and there has been a lot of turnover in our leadership committee. We're also gearing up for state testing coming up. Dr Yanni has been appointed by the Governor to be part of a 6 member panel to look into standardized testing (eliminating

them for kids at 2 grade levels below) and reducing redundant tests. PA spends more money than most on tests—we spend \$900B per year on automated tests. There will be a week of reading testing, a week of math testing, and science testing for 4th graders. He feels cautiously optimistic that they'll be able to make changes in the next few years. Katherine Daalsgard is meeting with the staff today. Dr. Yanni reported that she is a wonderful, brilliant and humorous speaker who has been working with teachers, social workers, guidance counselors, etc., about how to recognize anxiety in our kids and how can we help them.

Amy Hoffman gave Dr. McKenna's report. A PSSA parent letter will go out this Friday. April 11th is the start of English testing, April 18th is Math, and April 25th is Science for 4th grade only. The parent letter will provide information on how to prepare. He thanks everyone for all the wonderful events including Cultural Heritage, the Art Show, Glow Dance, the St. Baldrick's event and the Read Across America event. Dates to keep in mind include Spring Break next week and the NHS hosted Reading Olympics (5th graders only doing a 3-round quiz show). They'll give the kids pizza and water. 4/8 is the end of the 3rd marking period so it is an early dismissal day.

### **III. VP Report - UES (Amy Hoffman)**

Amy reported that the number of lunch/recess aides has gone up. Melanie has put in the final orders for playground equipment so there will be no money available for this next year. Gretchen reported that the 5th grade promotion party is on June 10, 2016. It's a transition for kids leaving the UES and heading to Middle School. They have a ceremony over at the high school and then come back to have lunch. The HSA then runs a celebratory event that includes food and a party—all taking place during the school day. This year's theme is a Game Show. The Y may come here to lead some activities for free. Amy recommended that Gretchen check with Dr. McKenna to make sure that he is not bringing in the Y for half day events also. Kathy Feehan reported that her son had fun with the Y's activities last year. They had a Hollywood theme last year so they also had a photo booth that was very popular and a red carpet. The next planning meetings are 4/5 and 4/14.

### **IV. VP Report - LES (Stacy Buck)**

Mr. Silver sends his regrets that he couldn't attend. Although LES students don't take PSSAs, they are affected because their lunch times change and their specials will take place in the mornings instead of the afternoons. There have been a lot of assemblies recently. Yesterday's was called Character Counts and focused on being kind to others. Mr. Silver didn't mention the playground, but kids have been outside using the playground during recess.

The LES Dance plans are going well. Stacy reported that Mr. DiTulio is set to DJ and he runs it well and makes it entertaining. He doesn't want food in the dance area so Stacy will be moving things around. He also wants the lights kept on. She might skip the bubbles this year and will do them at Field Day instead. She will still have the same photo booth and students can go into the LGI to create their frames. This year, Stacy will have a ticket that allows students to enter, get flowers if they ordered them and then x off if once they've had their photo taken.

Yearbook is going well and Stacy is asking for photo submissions. She is handling yearbook by herself this year although Janine is helping her with the design/layout part. At the UES,

Robin Kilroy handles the yearbook through another company. Amy mentioned that 5th Graders can choose to be on a Yearbook committee and Robin has several digital cameras that students can use to take photos of various events at the UES.

#### **V. Treasurer's Report (Roxanne Apparies)**

In Roxanne's absence, Gretchen gave the Budget report on the HSA's income and expenses for all of the HSA's events and funded activities. Recent activity included \$3903 that Mr. Mannion made from the UES Art Show. We're doing well this year and are a bit ahead.

#### **VI. New Business**

Beth spoke about the PTG (Parent Teacher Group) Middle School invite. She said they are having difficulty getting parent participation and officers for next year. At the High School, they have the PTF. These groups don't do as much as the HSA does, but they still do need involvement. The PTG typically meets the 2nd Tuesday morning of each month.

Beth also reported that we need to nominate officers in April for next year. There will be officer positions available because Beth and Amy will no longer have children in the elementary schools.

Gretchen committed to running Holiday Shop for next year, which will now happen at both schools. Monica Steur and Trish DiZio will head it up at the UES.

Mita Heble reported that Kathy Feehan passed on the Kids coupon books to her.

Jin Joshi asked if we could switch to collecting money via credit card or debit from their accounts instead of all the check writing that parents have to do. Stacy mentioned that most parents choose to buy yearbook online, even though they have to pay extra as a convenience fee, but those are paid on the yearbook company's site. We should look into this for next year to see if there is a way to move things to an online pay method.

Amy reported that we have Administrative Professionals Day coming up on April 27th. Last year we did flowers/chocolate and a card for the secretaries at both schools. Jin Joshi can head this up and can see if she can get Pierre's Chocolate to donate something.

For future fundraising initiatives where we seek donations (one example is the Hospitality Committee), we should switch to only accepting checks from donors made out to the NHS HSA, and then Roxanne can send the committee chair one check for the full amount donated to use for necessary purchases. For the Art show, the HSA board should be the only ones manning the cash table or we should look into only using Square credit card swiping.

#### **VII. Old Business**

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Peckman, Secretary

The HSA's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, April 20, 2016 at the UES Teacher Lounge.