

New Hope- Solebury Elementary Schools
Home and School Association
General Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2016
UES Teacher Lounge

CALL to ORDER

President, Deborah Peckman, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

IN ATTENDANCE

HSA Board Members:

Deborah Peckman, President
Trish DiZio, Vice President, UES
Nancy Aguilar, Vice President, LES
Karin Last, Secretary
Roxanne Apparies, Treasurer
Jin Joshi, Assistant Treasurer

Parent Members:

Dawn René Sandy, Jean Nuzzolo, Jen Whitbeck, Patti Lund, Yana Paton, Andrea Kearney, Kirsten Cademartori, Sarah Zimov Levinson, Grace Bonanno, Frank Bonanno, Ellie Kelley, Alison Dalewitz, Liz Augenblick, Lori Zaro, Rachel Hems Miller.

School Representatives:

Dr. Mike McKenna, Principal of the UES; Ken Silver, Principal of the LES

1. President's Report- Deborah Peckman

A. Welcome/ Introduction of new HSA Board- The new HSA board was introduced, as well as parent and staff introductions.

B. HSA Bylaws Amendment Vote- Deborah Peckman made a motion to change the HSA bylaw, that currently does not allow school district employees to serve on the HSA Board. Roxanne Apparies seconded the motion. The board members and parent attendees voted unanimously to amend the bylaw, and Gretchen Reilly was appointed as the new Co-President of the HSA.

C. HSA Website/ Newsletters/ Minutes/ Poster Boards in schools - The Newsletter comes out a couple of times a year, and the website will be updated with current events and contact info. This can be found on the NHSD web page- choose the school, and click on the Home and School tab. You can also use the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/jutb8td>. This year we will have a bulletin board in each Elementary school to display items such as the HSA meeting schedule, flyers for upcoming events, etc. Trish DiZio and Nancy Aguilar will take care of updating these at the UES and LES.

2. School Administration Reports- Dr. Mike McKenna (UES) and Mr. Ken Silver (LES)

A. Dr. McKenna said that being accessible and visible at the UES is very important to him. Relationships with kids, staff, and parents are critical in education. His second year as Principal will see continual improvement, and will see some changes, as there are many areas in which to improve. We are now a one-to-one school, which means that every child has a laptop to use. Amanda Lynch, the technology teacher, is having a technology workshop for parents tonight (Wed. 9/21) at 6:30 PM in the LGI. Most teachers are currently using Google classroom, or will be in the near future. Technology Integration is very important. Library class is now called LIT (Literacy, Information, Technology) and they will be focusing on the “4C’s”- Collaboration, Creativity, Communication, and Critical Thinking.

The school is looking to develop a Maker Space in the Computer Lab, next to the Library. Mrs. Loving is using some of her Book Fair proceeds to buy some Little Bits tech kits for kids to use during lunch/ recess. They may also be asking for old computers/ hardware donations from families that are not needed anymore to use in the Open Maker Space. This will be a STEM area (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

The school is continuing to assess students, with this year’s focus being enrichment in Mathematics. Last year’s focus was Literacy, so the focus on Mathematical Practices will build on the PA Common Core, which is the current baseline for the school.

The book of the month is “Each Kindness”, which dives into character education. Every child will hear this being read, and it will tie in with activities throughout the school year.

There is a new Continuous Improvement Committee that will look for areas in the building to improve upon. There is also a Safety Committee as well.

Back to School Night was highly attended this year. There may be some adjustments on how it will be run in the future, with possibly having the Principal speak one time to parents instead of three separate times. Any feedback or suggestions are appreciated.

The Bonfire was well attended, but very hot this year. Having the food trucks there was a good idea, and he saw a lot of new faces. It was great working with the HSA on this beginning of the school year event.

Picture Day is on Sept. 27th this year.

There will be no school on Oct. 3, 10, 11 and 12, due to Rosh Hashanah, Columbus Day, Staff Professional Development Day, and Yom Kippur.

B. Mr. Silver stated the LES is continuing with its Positive Support Behavior program with emphasis on Respect, Responsibility, and Safety. The “Character Counts” program assembly was yesterday, and it is being enforced all the way from K up through high school. The Power Paws being used are a good incentive for them while they are younger, but as kids become adolescents they become less effective. They want to teach the kids that there’s more to earning a Paw Point than just doing one nice thing in the early part of the day. They want to put more meaning behind it, and have them continue kindness throughout the day.

A reminder to Parent Volunteers that there are Privacy Issues to be observed while in school helping out. Confidentiality of students is extremely important, and includes no picture taking while on recess/ lunch duty and not repeating any information that concerns a student's privacy.

Picture Day is October 14, with retakes being done on Oct. 18.

The Halloween Parade is on Friday Oct. 28, so as not to conflict with the UES Trunk or Treat, which is held on Monday Oct. 31.

Two Buddy Benches have arrived at the LES, and one at the UES, and they may want to find an artist to personalize them. These benches will help kids build relationships, and can be a place where a new child who may not have a friend can meet and develop a friendship. Roxanne Apparies suggested contacting Terri Herring from AIR (Artists in Residence), as she might be able to do a project of personalizing the benches with the students.

Back to School night was almost 100 percent attended this year.

3. Review Recent Events/ Feedback

A. Back to School Night- HSA Board

Both Back to School nights went well, and the HSA volunteer survey and upcoming events sheet was given out.

B. Online Volunteer Survey/ Event Chairs- Karin Last

The response to the volunteer survey has been pretty good, with 74 people filling it out. If you haven't already filled one out, please do so on the school website. Anyone willing to chair or co-chair any event, please let the HSA know. Trish DiZio suggested that we try and get some of the newer parents with younger kids to co-chair events, so that when the current chair's child ages out of the school, there will be another knowledgeable person to take over the event. Karin handed out volunteer lists to some of the Event Chairs that were present at the meeting- Lori Zaro (Square One Card Art), Nancy Aguilar (Box Tops, LES Picture Day), Gretchen Reilly (Kidstuff Coupon Books) and Patti Lund (UES Trunk or Treat).

C. Back to School Bonfire- held Sept. 9th- HSA Board

The general consensus was that it was too hot for such a big bonfire. Some suggested moving it to October, when the weather is cooler. One of the Fire Marshals at the event suggested making it a smaller pit for roasting marshmallows, so it is easier to get closer to. One of the reasons for having it in September has always been because it stays lighter out longer, which makes it easier when cleaning up afterwards. One suggestion was to make it a Back to School picnic, with food trucks and fun on the playground. Deborah Peckman suggested a smaller fire vs. a large bonfire.

4. Upcoming Events/ Board Updates

A. Square 1 Card Art- Lori Zaro

The deadline for turning in artwork has been extended to Monday Sept. 26. Alison Dalewitz has volunteered to co-chair this event with Lori Zaro. Most of the students will be making a drawing in Mr. Mannion's Art Class, and parents can purchase items such as coffee mugs, ornaments, and notebooks with their child's artwork on it. This has always been a great fundraiser, and all proceeds benefit the schools. There is also an option to do it at home, and send the drawing in to school. The products will be delivered before the holidays, and anyone that is able to help cut out student artwork next Monday Sept. 26, please let Lori know.

B. KidStuff Coupon Books- Gretchen Reilly

Gretchen explained that the coupon books cost \$25.00, and one will be sent home per family. You can either send in a check for purchase of the book, or return the book back to school. The books contain some local, but mostly national coupons, similar to an Entertainment Book. The school receives 50 percent of the proceeds, and the books will be going home October 11th with the oldest child. The fundraiser ends November 1st.

C. Trunk or Treat at UES- Ellie Kelley and Patti Lund

Patty Lund explained that this event will be held on Monday October 31, and involves setting up a game or activity in the trunk of your car in the UES parking lot. This year it will be held on a separate day than the LES Halloween parade, so as to avoid any conflicts with parents going back and forth to each event. They are considering possibly eliminating the prizes won at each trunk, as they tend to be repetitive and end up on the ground quite a bit. There was some discussion of doing away with these prizes, although Ellie Kelley did mention that the kids are used to getting them, and there may be some backlash if they are eliminated. One suggestion was to possibly ask the Solebury Police Department to supply a light up toy for safe trick or treating to all the kids. Andrea Kearney has volunteered to help chair this event.

D. LES: Lunch Volunteer Recruitment/ Picture Day/ Pavers- Nancy Aguilar

Nancy wanted to thank all the volunteers who have already signed up for LES lunch/ recess duty. There have been some issues with volunteers not showing up for their scheduled shift, so they are still looking for new volunteers to help out. One specific need is for Kindergarten on Thursdays and Fridays as they need the most help. She will send out an email to List Serv to try and recruit some new parents. Please be reminded that your PA clearances need to be in place before volunteering.

Picture day is coming up on October 14th, and Nancy will get the schedule out to the volunteers. They will need approximately two volunteers per hour. If you are interested in helping out on LES Picture day, please contact Nancy.

The brick pavers can be purchased for \$100 per brick, and can be imprinted with your children's or your family's name. An email will be sent out in the Fall, and one in Spring for those interested in purchasing.

E. UES: Lunch Volunteer Recruitment/ Other UES Updates- Trish DiZio

Trish stated that the lunch duty sign up genius is emailed out every month or two. If you do volunteer, please consider supporting all the kids, and not just your own. Also, please be aware that for privacy and confidentiality reasons, do not take any photos or videos of the kids at recess or lunch. If there are any issues with any of the children, please see a staff member.

F. Treasurer Budget/ Finance Report/ Donation Letters/ Paypal- Roxanne Apparies and Jin Joshi.

Roxanne and Jin have revamped the budget to make it easier to read. They left the School Kidz line item on the budget, which the HSA has since decided not to continue with this year. Trish DiZio proposed that the budget be handed out at meetings, but not to discuss in too much detail in order to keep the meetings from running past the allotted time. Assemblies are slated for October, November, and December of this year, and have already been paid for. The annual LES/UES Field day is also partially funded by the HSA.

Jin talked about the new process of accepting HSA donations via Pay Pal. A paper will go home today with every child that has instructions on how to donate, and an email also went out on List Serv this morning. She feels more people will donate with the added convenience of PayPal, and again reiterated that this is an optional donation of \$20 per child, not mandatory. Please remember to include your child's grade/ teacher when making any donation.

5. Questions/ Comments/ Other Business

Deborah Peckman informed everyone that the LES and UES are starting the Giant saver card program. A notice will be sent out via List Serv with instructions on how to register your card, and select your school. Giant will give a percentage of money back to the school.

The discussion of collecting of Box Tops continued, with some wanting to keep the program in place, and others not wanting to continue with it. Roxanne Apparies said the proceeds from last year's box top collection were \$996.00 for the LES, and \$825.00 for the UES. All funds collected are used for the teachers to purchase items.

Deborah Peckman has received many catalogues and ideas for fundraisers for possible future discussion. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions, please let her know.

Roxanne Apparies mentioned that she will be meeting with the Principals about the HSA funding some big ticket items, such as a new shed for storage. She stated that we need to look into what we want to do with the school community.

The Food truck proceeds from the Sept. 9 bonfire have not been calculated yet, but they were asked to donate ten percent of their total sales. The HSA gives a \$100 donation to the local Fire company for their help. This event is not meant to be a money maker, but serves the purpose of providing fun for all students and their families.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM.
Submitted by Karin Last, Secretary

The HSA's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, October 19, 2016 at the LES.