

Alexander Hamilton HSA Meeting Minutes

May 12th, 2010

Attendance:

Kathy Heher	Josephine Noone	Joann Van Sciver	Diane Barilla-Kay
Nancy Caputo	Jennifer Smith	Sue Lawlor	Patricia Cristadoro
Lynne Boucher	Nadine Genrich	Gloria Oddoye	Abby Mehlin
Susan Kevis	Susan Schulte	Heather Dobbs	Deb Wild
Tehzeeb Grossman			

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

Special Presentation:

Mrs. Horan and Mr. D'Alconzo gave a presentation for a program they would like to pilot next year. They would co-teach two fourth grade classes. This program is still pending Board approval and will be presented at the next Board meeting. Only if it is approved will the program be implemented. It will involve Mrs. Horan teaching both classes writing and Mr. D would teach both classes math. They would each teach their own classes reading and it will tie in to the writing program. Only the kids in these two classes will not be separated by ability for math. The benefits were discussed. If the program is approved by the Board, 3rd grade parents will receive a letter with an option to opt out of this program. You cannot opt in. More information will follow and will also be available on the AH website. Please contact Mrs. Horan or Mr. D with any questions. Thank you to Mrs. Horan and Mr. D for the interesting and informative presentation.

Welcome / Thank You's:

Parents were welcomed and thanked for attending the meeting. The following chairs and volunteers were also thanked:

- * Lynne Boucher, refreshments for the meeting
- * Susan Schulte, delivering money collected from Coins for a Cause to Provident Bank
- * Laura Ishmael & Michelle Kratochvil, for selling the Science Fair boards at School Store
- * Sonu Razdan & Jane Della Peruti, for their help with the voting booths for Coins For a Cause.

Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes for the April 14th HSA meeting were approved.

*Please note the minutes from the HSA meetings will be posted on the AH website and will remain there.

Executive Board:

The slate for the 2010-2011 Executive Board was introduced. Since there will be 3 Co-Presidents next year, a motion to amend the Alexander Hamilton HSA By-laws was proposed. The amendment motion was passed and will be added to the by-laws. The by-laws will be posted on the AH website. The slate for the Executive Board was formally voted on and unanimously approved. The 2010-2011 Executive Board is as follows:

Co-Presidents: Sue Lawlor
Diane Barilla-Kay
Patricia Cristadoro

Vice-President: Josephine Noone

Treasurer: Jennifer Smith

Day Secretary: Lynne Boucher

Evening Secretary: Open

President's Council:

Sue Lawlor reported on the May 3rd President's Council Meeting.

- PACE representatives, Nancy Hedinger and Cheryl Kannisto inquired about offering school tours prior to the beginning of the school year. This may ease the transition for children that may have anxieties about starting school. They suggested HSA's could take this opportunity to sell clothing and provide boxes for parents to drop supplies off for their child's classroom. They suggest that parents with children who have IEP's or 504's request a tour. Dr. Ficarra and the principals are receptive to this idea. We need to be considerate of the timing of the tours as public areas are often not ready until just before school opens.
- Dr. Reilly, Director of Curriculum (6-12), and Ethel Minchello, Principal of Frelinghuysen, discussed changes to the World Language program. Beginning in September (2010) there will be only one "level" of World Language instruction: Honors Level. Research has shown that by effectively implementing differentiated instruction in the classroom all students can acquire effective and meaningful language acquisition at this level. They are working with Greg Duncan. Math and Language Arts will still be offered at "regular" and "honors" levels.
- Dr. Ficarra thanked presidents for their efforts to encourage attendance at budget presentations and for voting. He believes there is a direct correlation between parent involvement and the quality of a District. He then addressed the following topics:

Summer School: The District recognizes that the complete elimination of summer remediation courses will make it difficult for struggling learners to achieve proficiency. The District is currently fine-tuning the program cuts that must be made within the framework of the budget. Because there have been several additional and unanticipated retirements announced (providing salary “breakage”), and carry-over Title I funds available, it is expected that some essential summer school programs will be offered. Transportation will also be provided for these courses if, as anticipated, it is determined that financing can be provided within the framework of the approved budget.

Length of Coins for a Cause: Coins for a Cause is infused into the civics curriculum. Instruction culminates with Election Day. The curriculum is designed to work backward from that day so that all of the components (Bill of Rights, Voting Rights Act, Voter Registration process & time frame, etc), can be taught by that date. The restriction on “fundraising” during this period pertains to in-school fundraising; HSA fundraising (out of school efforts, i.e., magazine drives, etc.) is permitted.

- Kathy Heher reported that Elliott’s Florist has generously donated 1,000 roses for the Morris Educational Foundation’s Teacher Tribute Program. This program is a great way to honor teachers & support the MEF. Please consider supporting Elliott’s. MEF now provides an online PayPal option for donations (MEF website: www.morriseducationalfoundation.org).
- Melissa Spiotta, HSA President of Hillcrest, reported they will hold a **Welcome Tea** for kindergarten parents shortly after Kindergarten Orientation. The purpose is to introduce the HSA and to encourage involvement. She asked that we share our committee structure and their responsibilities. It’s always helpful to share ideas and find out what other schools do that are successful.
- Class field trips are still on for next year. They will still include a driver, gas, nurse, etc. as additional costs. Currently we have a \$20 cap limit on contributions for trips.
- Because we are all going paperless, it was mentioned that we may not have hard copies of the District Calendar in the future.

Principal’s Report:

- Thank you to parents and community members for supporting our schools on April 20th.
- SNAP won the student vote for Coins for a Cause and received over \$10,000 that was raised from donations throughout the Morris School District plus an additional \$1,000 from Provident Bank.
- Thank you to Mrs. Dobbs for organizing our Environmental Education Center Clean up on April 24th and thank you to all the students and family members who made that day a success. The EEC looks great!

- Thank you to the HSA, all of our families, and staff members for working so hard all year to make Alexander Hamilton School a wonderful place to learn and grow!
- Due to the large cuts in state funding for the 2010-2011 school year, there have been layoffs of support staff members effective June 30th. Please note that lay offs of teacher assistants, assistant behavior specialists, and lunch aides are based on seniority as per the union contract. If students need specific support staff based on an IEP, support staff will be provided. However, we cannot guarantee a specific person. These layoffs sadden all of us and we understand your concern.
- We will begin using the new 3-5 Report Cards next year with reading and writing assessments based on a developmental continuum. The report cards will not include letter or number grades, but will give very detailed information regarding students' progress on a wide range of objectives. There will be information sessions for parents in September/October to explain the new report cards. 3rd Grade students will receive the new report cards in February 2011. 4th & 5th Grade students will receive the new report cards in June 2011.
- Parents: Please do not allow children to play on the blacktop at pick up time as cars and buses are driving around the back of the school. Students may play on the field and in the playground as long as they are supervised.
- Please send reusable water bottles to school for your children as the weather is getting warmer.
- Please check the dress code on the website for information on acceptable warm weather clothing: no flip flops or tank tops in school.
- **Past Events in April/May:**
 - April 15th – Students enjoyed the informative Jackie Robinson Assembly which was funded by the HSA.
 - April 29th – 5th Grade students showed off their musical talents on Solo and Ensemble Night. Thank you to Ms. Bowers for her hard work all year!
 - April 30th – We had another beautiful day for our Arbor Day Celebration with wonderful Chorus and Band performances (thank you Ms. Vogt and Ms. Bowers)
 - Third Grade students have begun the Swim Program at the MHS Pool (check the calendar for upcoming dates.)
 - NJASK Testing Grade 5-Thank you to parents for getting 5th grade students to school on time and ready for testing. We only had one absence on one day!
- **Upcoming Events in May/June:**
 - May 14th-All Children Exercising Simultaneously (ACES) at 2:30
 - May 18th, 19th, and 20th- Buy One Get One Free Book Fair

- May 19th-Art and Science Fair, 6:00-8:00
- May 20th and 21st-Grade 4 Career Days
- May 25th-Grade 4 Great Swamp Trip
- May 26th-Instrumental Music and Chorus Concert at 6:30
- May 27th-Grade 4 Field Day 9:15-11:15, Grade 3 Field Day 1:15-3:15
- May 28th-Students off, Staff In-service
- May 31st-Memorial Day
- June 1st & 2nd –Grade 4 Foot and Fiddle Residency
- June 2nd –Grade 5 Field Day 9:15-11:15
- June 3rd –Family Fitness Night 6:30
- June 7th –Grade 2 students come to AH for Grade 3 Orientation 9:45-11:00
- June 8th –Parent Orientation for incoming 3rd Grade Parents 7:00 in Auditorium (refreshments will be served)
- June 11th –Grade 4 Shindig (10:00 Little Hawk, Square Dancing 11:00, Lunch 11:30)
- June 11th –Grade 3 Pool Party at Streeter Pool (raindate June 14th)
- June 14th –Staff Appreciation Luncheon
- June 14th –Jazz Night 6:30
- June 15th –Grade 5 Picnic and Pool Party at Ginty Pool (raindate June 16th)
- June 16th –HSA End of Year Meeting
- June 17th –Grade 3 Picnic at Budd St. Park (raindate June 18th)
- June 17th, 18th, and 21st –1:30 dismissal days
- June 21st –Last Day of School, Grade 5 Moving Up Ceremony at 9:30

Treasurer's Report:

Jennifer Smith reported on the budget. The year to date balance (5/12/10) is \$17, 436.89. Please contact Jen Smith with any questions regarding the Budget.

Committee Reports:

Ecology: Lynne Boucher, Sonu Razdan and John Rickershauser will chair the Ecology Committee next year. The committee is asking for an additional \$500 to finish the clean up and beautification of the Ecology Center. The money would come from the CFL light bulb fundraiser which was a huge success. The motion for the additional funds was approved. \$50 will be given to Mrs. Brown for an outdoor kids project she is working on for the Center.

Mini Grants: Abby Mehlin reported on the Mini Grants approved. A total of four grants were approved, totaling \$200 or less.

Mrs. Camelotto was given a grant to buy incentives for her Mileage Club and additional soccer balls, which will be used for gym and recess as well as after school clubs.

Mrs. Brown was awarded a grant for DVDs to catalog the kids artwork, which she does every year.

Mrs. Kelly was awarded a grant for Summer Enrichment backpacks for 10 ELL students. The backpacks will contain educational materials that will help the students maintain academic skills over the summer.

Art & Science Fair: Volunteers are needed for the Art & Science Fair. Please contact Phyllis Levy. Volunteers will be needed Tuesday, May 18th from 9:30 am to hang artwork.

Book Fair: Volunteers needed. The Book Fair schedule went out in backpacks.

Fifth Grade Picnic: The Fifth Grade Picnic will be held on June 15th, rain date June 16th.

Fifth Grade Yearbook: The Fifth Grade Yearbook is still in need of additional funds. The \$600 raised from the Talent Show was given to the Yearbook fund but it is not enough. Please place Booster ads if you have not already done so. Fifth grade parents if you have not already made your \$20 contribution please send to Kathy Quinn asap.

Old Business:

- The AH Cookbook will not be available at the concert or the Science and Art Fair. More information will follow.
- Family Fitness Night will be held on June 3rd at 6:30 pm. Please mark your calendars and come join the fun. More information will follow.

New Business:

- There are still Committee Chairs open. Please contact Sue Lawlor if you are interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm. The next meeting will be the Social Night Out meeting on Wednesday, June 16th. The time and location will be announced.

Tehzeeb Grossman
Evening Secretary