

Alexander Hamilton HSA Meeting Minutes September 14, 2010

Attendance

Sue Lawlor	Majorie Galinkin	Tezheeb Grossman
Patricia Cristadoro	Nadine Genrich	Preeti Arora
Diane Barilla Kay	Sonu Razdan	John Rickershauser
Jenn Smith	Susan Minehan Kevis	Nancy Alessio
Josephine Noone	Christine Nuccio	Kathy Heher
Beth Vataker	Jane Della Peruti	Cora Porter
Lynne Boucher	Deanna Quinones	

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:32am

Welcome: Sue Lawlor introduced the new Executive Board members: Sue Lawlor, Patricia Cristadoro and Diane Barilla-Kay as Co-Presidents, Josephine Noone as Vice President, Jen Smith as Treasurer, Lynne Boucher as Day Secretary, and JoAnn Van Sciver as Evening Secretary).

Approval of Minutes: The minutes for the June 2010 meeting were approved.

Presidents Council Report:

Pacticia Cristadoro reported on the Sept. 13, 2010, President's Council meeting with Thomas Ficarra, Superintendent of the Morris School District.

- Dr. Ficarra announced that the district is using Digital Backpack in order to save money and become a Green District. He announced that the Morris School District will no longer send home out of school district related flyers (scouting and recreation depts., etc.). Parents must go to the Morris School District website and click on **Digital Backpack** to view these flyers. AH is also going paperless. We will be posting all information on our website and sending it out via eblast this year. Please be sure to give us your email address. If you do not have access to email, we will send home hard copies of important information.
- Dr. Ficarra announced that a Resource Officer was retained at Frelinghuysen. The district increased our funding to \$35,000 to retain the officer.
- Dr. Ficarra also indicated that the district has retained one translator in an attempt to translate flyers and school documents into Spanish. Across district consistency in documents will help this process.
- Dr. Ficarra acknowledged that there were bus problems during the first days of school. He indicated that two of the contracted bus company drivers did not show up the first day of school. The contractor sent out substitute drivers that were unfamiliar with our school routes, resulting in missed stops, late pick ups

and late arrivals. The bus company apologized for the contracted drivers and will not be paid for such. Regular bus drivers are now in place.

- Dr. Ficarra was proud to announce that Morristown High School was ranked 66 in the New Jersey Magazine list of the top 100 high schools in New Jersey. We moved up from previous years.
- The council requested schools not duplicate fund raising.

Principal's Report: Josephine Noone thanked all the parents for their efforts in helping achieve a smooth and successful opening week of school. Mrs. Noone made special mention of parents that helped this summer and the first days of school:

- Thank you to Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Nourbakhsh for organizing our Staff breakfast. It was greatly appreciated!
- Thank you to Mrs. Boucher (and family) for WATERING and caring for the plants and flowers in front of our school and in the Ecology Center.
- Thank you to Mrs. Broseker and Mrs. Familo for planning our Cultural Arts programs for the 2010-2011 school year.
- Thank you to Mrs. Vataker, Mrs. Kay, Mrs. Russ, Mrs. Quinones, and Mrs. Cristadoro for organizing and running our first Open House on Sept. 2nd.
- Thank you to the HSA for purchasing bookcases for our 3rd and 4th grade classrooms. We hope to have a very successful Walkathon so that we can purchase bookcases for 5th grade and specialists' classrooms.
- Thank you to the HSA Mini grant Committee for approving the following generous grants to our school:
 - Soccer balls for P.E., enrichment, and after school programs (Mrs. Camelotto)
 - Mileage Club supplies for our recess walk/jog program (Mrs. Camelotto)
 - Backpacks, books, and reading/writing supplies for summer learning activities for ELL students (Mrs. Pietersen and Mrs. Kelly)
 - DVDs and supplies for Digital Portfolios for Art (Mrs. Brown)
- Mrs. Noone asked parents to please continue to send in forms that were sent home on the first day of school.
- Mrs. Noone also reported on The Morris School District paperless initiative and Digital Backpack. (see president's report above)
- Mrs. Noone reported on the many staff changes. She indicated that AH will miss many wonderful staff members who lost their positions or were moved to a different school due to budget cuts and a reduction in force.
- **Mrs. Noone welcome our excellent new staff at Alexander Hamilton School:**
 - Betsy Rescorla—Language and Learning Class

- Randy Sconiers—Social Worker/Counselor
- Wilter Hoppe—Building Foreman
- Linda Baker—Teacher Assistant (Yorston)
- Susann Femia—Teacher Assistant (Skrod)
- Gloria Weiss-Allen—Teacher Assistant (Carey)
- Trudy Specht—Teacher Assistant (Vanderhoef)
- Haley Pellegren—CABAS Intern (Hill)
- Suzanne Francois—CABAS Intern (Wiehe)
- Timothy Yeager—CABAS Intern (Vanderhoef)
- Crystal Lo—CABAS Intern (Vanderhoef)
- **Mrs. Noone indicated that Alexander Hamilton also welcomed back:**
 - Peggy Barnicle—Clerk
 - Maria Galvin—Grade 5
 - Kimberly Smith—Assistant Behavioral Specialist
- **Mrs. Noone recognized staff who retired, moved to a different school, or changed classrooms/grade levels:**
 - We wish Mrs. Curran a wonderful retirement!
 - Lori Monetti has moved from 5th grade to 4th grade.
 - Elizabeth Ferraiolo has moved from 5th grade to 3rd grade.
 - Darren D’Alconzo is back teaching 4th grade.
 - Stephanie Little is teaching 2nd grade at Woodland School.
 - Joe Scala is the building foreman at Lafayette Learning Center.
 - Nancy Nutt and Christine Walter are kindergarten assistants at Hillcrest.
 - Anne Long will be substituting at AH this year.
 - Aatifah Hammond is back at Lafayette Learning Center.
- **Mrs. Noone further acknowledged staff who have gotten married and changed their names:**
 - Jean Bowers, our instrumental music teacher, is now Jean Graziano.
 - Irene Gacki, one of our 3rd grade teachers, is now Irene Giuliano.
- Mrs. Noone requested that parents review the Parent Handbook which is on our website.
- Mrs. Noone discussed **cell phones**: Students who bring cell phones to school **must keep them turned off or on vibrate in their backpacks**. Phones may not be used in school without the permission of the classroom teacher in case of an emergency. Please call the main office if you need to contact your child during the school day.
- Unified Plan information: Mrs. Noone indicated that AH has been designated as a School in Need of Improvement because fewer than 59% of our special education students were proficient in Language Arts Literacy on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) for the 2nd year in a row. We will continue to focus our efforts on improving our students’ reading and

writing skills and knowledge. Mrs. Noone needs parent volunteers to join a School Improvement Team to help review AH goals and initiatives as required by the No Child Left Behind regulations for a School designated in need of improvement. Please contact Mrs. Noone if you are interested in volunteering. A school improvement plan must be in place by December.

- We will receive NJ ASK Individual Student Reports around 9/24 and they will be mailed home as quickly as possible.
- **Mrs. Noone reported on Curriculum Updates:**
- New Social Studies Curriculum (3rd grade still learns about New Jersey and communities, 4th grade continues to explore regions of the U.S., 5th grade focuses on U.S. history through the American Revolution)
- New Mathematics Curriculum and new edition of Everyday Math materials purchased for all classrooms/students.
- We will use Rosetta Stone for Spanish Language instruction. Students will have online access to the program in school and at home. The program is completely individualized so that students progress at their own pace.
- Reading and Writing Continuums will be shared at November and April conferences. Third Grade will receive new Progress Reports in February and June. Fourth and Fifth Grades will receive new Progress Reports in June.
- Professional Development for teachers for Reading Workshop this year (presenter: Olivia Wahl)
- Mrs. Noone and Mrs. Bonkoski attended a seminar on Keeping Learning on Track (best practices in using assessment to support learning) and will provide Professional Development for teachers on such.
- Fifth grade teachers will receive \$500 per classroom to spend on non-consumable science materials. This funding is part of the Bayer Grant for Science.
- Through the Partnership to Improve Achievement in Physical Science Grant—Mrs. McLain will receive professional development at Stevens Institute of Technology through the National Science Foundation funded PISA² Grant. Teachers in the program are committed to taking 5 graduate courses over the next 5 years to keep them up to date with best practices in teaching science. Currently, Mrs. McLain is taking courses in Earth Science and Physical Science content and pedagogy.
- We will continue the Cool The Earth Environmental Program and Coupon Books-look for more info coming home in October. Thank you to Sonu Razdan, who will be coordinating this program.
- Honeywell-Remember to update your contact information. Please press 1 to acknowledge receipt of Honeywell messages.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jenn Smith reported that she made minimal changes to the 2010 – 2011 school budget. She added a line for the Walk-a-thon and decreased the expectations for some donations, due to the fewer number of children in the school this year. We are hoping for another very successful Walkathon. The 2010/ 2011 Budget was voted on and approved.

Committee Reports:

Sue Lawlor reported that the Staff Appreciation breakfast held on Sept. 10, 2010 went well. Cora Porter and Susan Nourbakhsh did a wonderful job. Sonu Razdan is working on the Directory and hopes to have it out soon. Please send in your directory forms. There will be a room parent tea on Monday, Sept. 20, 2010. The Fall fundraiser/Walk-a-thon chaired by Kathy Heher, Jenn Smith and Beth Vataker will kick off on Friday, Sept. 24, 2010 and take place on Friday, October 15, 2010. AH is participating in the Box Top program chaired by Katie Skilton. The first collection will take place on October 21, 2010. Please send in your Box Tops. We are looking forward to the wonderful cultural arts programs this year put together by Debra Broseker and Amy Familio. Michelle Kratochvil and Debbie Hessels will hold the first school store on October 5, 2010. A volunteer flier will be out soon. The Bookfair chaired by Dawn Bertha, Katie Skilton and Kelly Woods, will be held the October 18 – 20, 2010. Many volunteers will be needed to run this event. There are still open committee positions.

Old Business:

- Purchase of bookcases for 3rd and 4th grade was approved at June meeting. Amount was a little over the voted-on gift of \$2000. Plan to purchase balance of bookcases for 5th grade and specialists (as needed) as this year's HSA gift.
- Ecology Center: the center was finally weed wacked in July. We did a major overhaul last spring, and it will need it again this year as there was some loss due to deer and the hot summer. Thanks to Mrs. Robin Bruen who kindly added a watering bag to the front yard dogwood tree.
- Cookbooks are still available for purchase. Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society/Relay for Life. \$12 each or 2 for \$20. Make checks payable to "AH HSA."

New Business:

- Please send in pink HSA forms provided on first day including Direct Donation forms (which are greatly appreciated!), Room Parent Request form, and Directory form. We will be going paperless and need your e-mail to get you on the e-blast list for HSA and School related information. All e-blasts are blind to ensure that all e-mails remain private. All outside flyers will be on the District Website under Digital Backpack.
- Picture Day is next Tuesday, the 21st. Volunteers are needed. Please see signup sheet. Schedule to come.
- Back to School Night: Thursday, September 23rd, 6:30 pm. Last year's AH Spirit Wear, car magnets, and cookbooks will be available to purchase.
- Morristown Education Foundation (MEF) Colonial Challenge 5k: Sunday, Oct. 3rd @ 10 am. Kathy Heher will present event details at Back to School Night. Link will be posted to our website. The school with the most registrants will receive \$1.00 for every registrant. Whether you run or walk, join other AH families for a fun event and support our school!
- Pickup notes: We need to have more printed this year, and are in the process of getting quotes.
- Stop & Shop A+ Bonus Bucks Program: We will be registering again this year. AH receives a percentage of your shopping purchase when you use your customer card. Info will be posted to the website.

Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 11:10am.

Next Meeting: October 13th, 7:00 pm. Progress Report Presentation