

Stuyvesant High School Parents' Association

General Meeting

April 24, 2018

Minutes

Welcome

Heather Higgins opened the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

On motion duly made and carried, the minutes from the March 2018 meeting were approved.

Principal's Report

Principal Contreras reported that the school is working with the Goethe Institute to develop a more robust training for teachers and eventually to create opportunities for students. It also is working with SHSAA regarding an upgrade of the robotics lab to create a larger space to accommodate the three teams and upgrade very old equipment. The next project will be hydroponics. Next September, the school is looking to install more ecofriendly water fountains on at least four floors. He commended the PA for a fabulous Spring Feast.

Parent Coordinator Report

Dina Ingram noted that more than 150 college reps are expected at Thursday's College Night and thanked the PA for providing dinner. She corrected a calendar issue: this Friday will be the choral concert and next Friday will be the spring concert. Students will be able to log on and see report cards on May 9. Breakfast with principal has been rescheduled for May 3; it will be the last for the year. The school is preparing for the last parent presentation on May 31, which will be co-sponsored with PA, "What to Expect in College", which will be open for all grades to attend. AP exams will come out soon so watch online. Wellness Night may change some, scheduled for May 10.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Higgins gave the PA financial report on behalf of Ms. Lam. She noted that a proposed engagement letter for the PA to retain Bill Oster as its external auditor for the 2016-17 audit is available as a handout at the meeting for review. She explained that the PA has engaged an auditor, who is a former Stuyvesant parent, for years at the rate of \$6,500, but that there have been many delays and that the auditor's new firm has demanded a fee of \$25,000 for the audit. She explained that tax filings are due May 15 and that the PA's financials must be filed with DOE. Ms. Higgins explained that Mr. Oster is an independent CPA who has agreed to do the audit and tax filing for the fee that the PA had been paying, which will allow the PA to complete its financials and file its taxes on time. The EB has been assured that the PA will obtain a release from the old auditor and there will be process started to find a new auditor. She responded to inquiries, including regarding the existing engagement letter with the firm that is not completing the work. On motion duly made and carried, the membership voted to approve engagement of Mr. Oster as the PA's external auditor for 2016-17 and the current tax filing.

Proposed By-Laws Amendment

Ms. Higgins introduced a proposed by-laws amendment. Suzanne Cruse, Second Vice President, explained the discovery of inconsistencies in the by-laws and the attempt to ensure they are compliant with A-660. She explained that, although the proposed amendment is available at the meeting and has been sent by email, the changes are extensive and will be posted on the PA website, to give the membership sufficient opportunity to review. There will be a vote to approve the amendment at the next meeting. Ms. Higgins explained that these are not clean-up or cosmetic changes, but are only changes to comply with the DOE regulation. She advised that the DOE has fully reviewed the proposed amendment and that the PA's by-laws may become the DOE's model by-laws. She further explained that the EB had voted to split the amendment process into two parts: amendments for regulation compliance now and clean up changes to follow in the next revision. She explained that there are explanatory notes in the margin and noted certain of the proposed amendments: the DOE advised that the "savings clause" was not effective to make the by-laws compliant; a budget committee is not required, but the amendment builds in an ability to add one; changes were made regarding the nominating committee composition; the fall election must be in September, not October, to allow the freshman SLT representatives to be elected and to participate in the first SLT meeting. Ms. Higgins noted that additional changes will be made to the A-660, that will require additional by-laws changes, but the timing is not known. Those are expected to include changes regarding candidate campaign literature and its dissemination, and management of cash because there are no longer night drop-boxes in banks.

Fundraising

Ms. Higgins gave a report on behalf of the Fundraising Committee, including a generous gift by Ms. Susan Brockman to fund Latin competitions.

Spring Feast

Susan Fennessey reported that the Spring Feast was a huge success. It was well attended by many politicians, more than 900 parents, students and teachers, and appears to have resulted in approximately 10% more in net revenues over last year's Spring Feast. She noted that the online auction is continuing and the success of the "Fund a Need/Giving Tree" campaign, which also is ongoing until May 23.

PA and SLT Elections Nomination Committee

Ms. Cruse reported that Spring elections will be held on May 22 and called for nominations for each open position. She asked for nominations both at the meeting or by completed form dropped off in the PA office. She asked that meeting attendees consider running and encourage other people to run for positions. In response to an inquiry, Judeth Dickson reported that only two nominations have been received to date. Joy DeVries Heinze noted that many volunteers are needed and explained some of the time commitments. Ms. Cruse noted that the list of the positions and descriptions of duties is available on a flyer at the meeting. Ms. Higgins noted the quality of the experience for students if parents are involved and the opportunity to meet other parents, which can be difficult in high school.

College Night

Silvia Ramos noted that 170 college reps are coming to Stuyvesant to meet with junior parents and students. Volunteers are needed (freshman, sophomore and senior parents), and there is a benefit to parents of lower classmen to know how the evening works before they are junior parents.

Annual Appeal

Ms. Higgins reminded attendees that Annual Appeal is still ongoing and donations are needed to fund requests for funding school needs.

Spirit Wear

Ms. Higgins encouraged attendees to purchase Spirit Wear and noted the variety of items available.

SLT Report

Nancy Ho reported that the SLT had discussed English electives curriculum and the possible opportunity to offer more humanities classes in addition to STEM focused electives. It will be a longer-term discussion during future SLT meetings. Also discussed was the State's four-year math requirement. Many Stuyvesant students have already taken algebra prior to coming to Stuyvesant; there was discussion about counting that as part of the requirement so that students have time to take other electives during their senior year. There was a similar discussion regarding the four-year science requirement; students who have taken living environment could be given the opportunity to take AP environmental science and qualify for AP biology without other current requirements (which already started Spring 2018). David Abramowitz clarified that the SLT makes recommendation that the administration must then review and may agree to adopt. Barry Robertson further explained that the SLT is an advisory body that makes recommendations to the principal.

Ms. Higgins announced tonight's meeting is her last, that she has been co-president for two years and she thanked the PA.

Richard Bernstein thanked Ms. Higgins for her service on behalf of the PA.

Featured Speaker: Jake Neuberg, Revolution Prep

Mr. Bernstein noted that, at the May 22 meeting while votes are being counted, Mike Zimansky, head of computer science at Hunter College, will be speaking.

He introduced Jake Neuberg, co-founder and CEO of Revolution Prep, one of three largest test prep companies in country. Mr. Neuberg made a presentation regarding the Growth Mindset concept.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.