

Alexander Hamilton School HSA

November General Meeting

November 15, 2011, 9:00 a.m., Media Room

Holly Goshin, Presiding

HSA Attendance: H Brown, C Finegold (KPM), E Gifford (1C, 4M), H Goshin, D Heller (3K), E Howe, J Fisher, E Leonard (3K), K Paradise, N Petraitis (4B), N Redmond (1M), M Sapoff, J Silva (2R), K Speizer (5RC), E Spitzberg, S Stern (4B), K Verkem, A Vila (3M), M Walsh, J Weber (4M&2S)

Approval of Minutes, Goshin

Walsh made a motion to approve the October minutes; Silva seconded that motion, followed by a unanimous vote to approve them.

Treasurer's Report, Stern on behalf of Kapiloff

The raffle account balance, from last year, needs to be spent right away (per the state law on raffles for educational purposes). It will be spent on our next purchase(s). We finally hit our number for Boiling Springs, so we are expecting to see money come in from that. Our checking account balance is about \$65K, but that includes money to be paid out over the course of the year for pizza, bagels, etc. It also includes our \$15K reserve fund. Our net available funds are about \$11K. This does not reflect the profits from KidsStuff or spirit wear.

Principal's Report, Irene Pierides

Visitation Day – Thanks for coming, we had quite a crowd, and it went well. Hard to visualize the teachers and classes in action until you are in there. Used to be all day, but that is distracting to teachers and students, so it is only offered in the morning. Stern noted that this makes it very challenging, especially when you have children at different schools, and you have a special interest in a certain class. She added that more time to visit allows greater flexibility for parents that work in the morning and are unable to get someone to cover for them. Various reasons for full-day visitation were discussed.

Report Cards – now on Genesis and a hard copy will no longer be sent home unless a parent specifically requests it. Log on and you can review the card. Please make sure you have your registered with the school Genesis system and have an account set up prior to Wednesday. If you haven't registered yet you should. Report cards can be viewed beginning at 12:15 p.m. We are not sure yet on how to get parent approval signatures, for this round it might be the envelope that goes home to be signed but it should be resolved shortly.

Harvest Fest – Environmental and Nutrition committees came out, great to see your kids learning and doing fun things. Local farmer from Hesperides Organica donated her time to be with us, check out the CSA website at <http://hesperidesorganica.com>. Recipes are on our website. Whole Foods donated so much! E Howe added thanks to all the individual volunteers for doing so much to support the event, it was truly amazing and we are lucky to have such involved parents, Whole Foods support, and Lisa VanDenBerg's (the farmer from Hesperides) participation.

Tasting - Baby spinach is the next tasting. Thanks to Whole Foods for donating! Incredibly generous to us.

Husky Café - November 18, they did a great job; the kids had a wonderful event. Thanks to all those volunteers.

Staffing – Ciabattone is coming back right after Thanksgiving. Britton is out right before the holiday break and she is out until the end of May, but the sub will stay with that class rather than trying to transition teachers at that time. Interviewing right now. There will be transition time in the classroom as the substitute comes in and Britton goes out.

Parent workshops – Please see the on HSA or school website for details. Writing workshop, 7 p.m., December 1st, Central School. HIB parent presentation 7 p.m., Dec 6th, HS Auditorium.

Winter performances – Dec 9, time TBD, for grades K-2. Dec 13, 7 p.m., for grades 3-5. Sing-a-Long on the last day before Winter Recess.

Fridays – Last period of the day are open for special activities such as Family, Character Education assemblies or activities, and Book Buddies. Book Buddies is a new program where a younger and older student will share literacy – books or writing, etc. On our next one, the children will interview their partners about things such as: What is your favorite book? Why?

Picture Make-Up Day - Nov 22, 9 a.m. – Stern asked about details; Pierides said an email will go with all details.

Safety Drills – Two a month will happen, including off-site, on-site, and locked down. Common sense and being ready for anything is key in this situation. Walkie Talkies are helping, and the police are all involved. Vila asked if there is more training for teachers about what to do in a crisis? Pierides noted that we all learn more by doing. Managing a situation when it happens, the more variety of situations that they experience, the more they will better anticipate what to do in any situation. We really do learn from every practice.

Rona McNabola noted that the Safety Procedure team gave a workshop to teachers. A flip book that goes out with an “order” for the classes to follow. It seemed that it would be a waste of time, but you realize, after seeing movies and videos, etc., that the procedure is important to practice. There is a PowerPoint for staff, and that is a powerful one – footage from Columbine or a similar school situation, etc. Pierides added that we consider things such as PE – can they hear the announcement if they are outside? And can any teacher call a lock down? What to do if a kid is on the way to the nurse? What about kids in the bathrooms? We have told the kids that to jump on a toilet and stay put if a lockdown is announced. If you see a kid in the hall, teachers are instructed take them into a locked room, and just call the office and say that you have them so that we can account for everyone. Accounting for each child is the priority.

Character Education: Dana Pavese noted that they try to instill the character education traits through different mediums – books, boards, activities, etc. This month is being grateful, noticing things around you above and beyond being thankful for your parents, siblings, etc. Pierides noted that kids have asked about Gratitude Journals, and you can do that at home – with three things each day that you might be grateful for. Really emphasizing that this is a community and everyone working together makes it a great town. So, each class is getting someone to write a thank you note to. Could be anyone – the librarian, police, fire, etc. but great ideas have come from the kids for locations and places like Rock Burger, Starbucks etc. Pavese noted that she is thankful for Mrs. Pierides!

Dr Galasso might come again, but Pavese would like to know what specifically they would be interested in. ADHD from a siblings perspective, depression and anxiety and all forms of it, from mild to moderate to severe, etc. Bullying is a topic that we focus on but time for something new. Walsh noted she heard feedback from friends that the most recent Galasso presentation

with all parents wasn't so good, but she loved the Hamilton presentation with Galasso, and Pierides noted that he was so good for us because it was so intimate, and many felt free to talk about specific issues. Pierides is going to blog so that we can open up conversation to hear what topics you want to talk about in regard to character education or anything else. Gifford noted a woman that is wonderful at counseling families, her name is Aviva Schwab.

Petratis noted that she would like something that is broader such as anxiety rather than ADHD, etc. Stern noted that coping skills are so important and that can be applied to so many situations. Pavese noted that it could be how parents can support the kids. Speizer noted that kids need independence, and that is hard to come by in Glen Rock. And, how the parents can help kids become more independent. It was noted that perhaps that is a good idea for presentation. Paves said to please let her know what you are interested in hearing about. Several people commented that we appreciate having such a valuable resource – Miss Pavese -- at our school, and that in this day and age it is an important part of helping our children grow.

BOE Report, Rona McNabola, rona.mcnabola@gmail.com

I thought it would be great to have a board member to directly connect to each school, to improve communication. Now each HSA has a BOE member, and you guys are the best in the sense that you DO contact me and I can work closely with you. And, please do contact me. You may not like my answer, but I will answer you.

Heller asked when will the 2012/13 calendar be finalized, and how are vacation times determined? Parents are concerned is that it is has been tied to Easter break for several years now. McNabola noted that vacation times are backed into the start and end dates of the school year. February break is one of the last to get put in. We do take advantage of the fact that kids would have Good Friday off anyway, so it works out that we just add four days to that. The secretary just puts in the usual dates, for standard holidays. It depends how many snow days we anticipate and how all the holidays fall. [There was discussion of when and how but the net seems that it takes a few BOE meetings sometimes to finalize it. The first draft calendar is presented to the BOE in January.]

Stern asked about Visitation Day, and noted that limiting this time is very difficult for parents to get to the specific classes or with work hours. Stern went on to say that she votes for the schools because she loves them, and seeing them in action is critical to appreciating the schools.

McNabola said that the BOE didn't know anything about Visitation Day that was an administrative decision. That said, feedback is important, so that we know what people are thinking and we can give an opinion.

McNabola noted that the BOE meetings are on TV now, and can you please give comments and feedback to her, knowing that we have limited technical ability. Walsh said she is very grateful for the patience and perseverance that is required on behalf of the BOE for these meetings and their work.

McNabola noted that years ago she was a Coleman school president and talked about her first she BOE meeting. Currently, there are people on the board with no kids in the school, and board members don't have the kind of contact that they used to have. My plug is please seriously consider running for the board. It is rewarding.

Communications Report, Brown

Anytime we get a date change it is reflected on the calendar for the school, please check it if you have any questions about anything. There are many cross checks in place.

A few emails coming out about how you can help Hamilton make money through Script, (class gifts), Box Top Market place, Amazon, and getting a Target Red credit card (5% goes back to Hamilton). Last day for Box Tops is this coming Friday, \$317 earned so far, more than usual, and with one last class!

Event Reports, Goshin

Boiling Springs, Walsh - If you open an account, we get a percentage of earning based on your balance. This does not affect your interest in any way. On Saturday, December 3rd, in the morning, there will be a Hamilton Super Saturday that will provide some treats for the kids. You can show up with your documents and open an account. It does not need to be a Hamilton family to have the account linked to Hamilton, it could be anyone –your parents, neighbors, friends, anyone with accounts can benefit us.

Spirit Wear, Stern and Sapoff - The deadline is this morning, and we have 112 orders at this time. Many teachers participated, which is wonderful. Pierides noted that Spirit Day is on the calendar. They discussed doing this sale every year. Fisher gave some perspective when she noted that Byrd does it twice a year. Most likely, we will now do this sale yearly.

Box Tops, Brown – Deadline is Friday, \$317 earned so far this year. Please consider using the Box Tops online portal when shopping, we get credit. See HSA site for more details.

Harvest Fest, Howe – Thanks to all volunteers, Whole Foods and Lisa VanDenBerg at Hesperides Organica for supporting this event.

Francesca's Pizza Night, Goshin - Made about \$70 net, \$116 total this year, we have suggested a few things to make it more fun, but that is not finalized.

Kids Stuff, Silva – 136 books ordered, \$750 profit!

Upcoming Events

Food Drive community service project ends Friday.

- 11/18 2nd Grade Husky Cafe
- 11/21 Francesca's Pizza Night
- 11/22 Pizza Day
- 11/23 Early Dismissal
- 11/23 Report Cards
- 11/24-11/25 School Closed Thanksgiving Recess
- 12/1 Subway Day
- 12/5 Early Dismissal
- 12/5 Toy Drive Begins
- 12/5 Movie Day (Proposed, not confirmed)
- 12/5 – 9 is the toy drive
- 12/6 Pizza Day
- 12/9 K-2 Winter Concert
- 12/9 Toy Drive Ends
- 12/13 Bagel Day
- 12/13 Winter Concert- 7PM

- 12/19 Francesca's Pizza Night
- 12/20 Pizza Day
- 12/23 Sing Along and Early Dismissal
- 12/26-1/2 Winter Recess- No School

Discussion Items, Goshin

Jan 30th is a proposed date for Movie Day. All agreed that 1:30 start is good.

Adjournment, Goshin

Vila made a motion to adjourn, and that was seconded by Heller. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elaine Howe