

**Swarthmore Rutledge School
Home and School Association Meeting
September 10, 2008**

ATTENDEES

Sharon Graham, David Smuts, Tony Liu, Kristin Ross, Stephenie Bailey, Andrea O'Malley, Carlin McCoy, Penny Jaye Deeney, Danielle Morris, Joyce LeFante, Amy Hick, Kathryn Mehan, Lauren McKinney, Paula DeRosa, Jennifer Fleming, Sally Fullam, Margaret Bergstrom, Laura Matheny, Jen Govannicci, Michelle Cusanno, Jiten Patel, Mary McCabe, Brooke Penders, Jonathan Penders, Sara Ranck, Mary Gay Scanlon, Beth DeBruyn, Samantha Mancini, Denise Disney, Sharon Mester, Lisa Starr, Tom Shaffer, Dr. Gary Davis, Linda Armour, Mary Murray

Prior to the meeting, an overview of the Home and School Association was provided by Presidents Linda Armour and Mary Murray

MINUTES:

- Minutes for May 7, 2008 were read and approved.
- The minutes will be posted on the web at www.srskids.org

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Dr. Gary Davis

- This will be a great school year. Know that 90%-95% of all children at SRS are proficient at reading and math. We are pushing to be even better this year and work with those 5% of the children who need assistance. People care and children are excited to learn. The staff and faculty really care about the kids. Parental support is terrific at SRS.
- We have a great special education program where children actually have tested out and been moved out of the program. Great news!
- We've handled some tough discussions like the removal of the multi-age program in an honest way; we are not afraid to make the tough decisions here.
- This year there is a new art teach, reading specialist, inclusion teacher.
- There is a strong district budget.
- The bully prevention program will continue this year. Perception of bullying by the kids is their reality so we have to deal with it. Faculty and staff are trained.
- Four cornerstones – kindness, courage, self-control and manners – will continue this year.
- Parents should feel comfortable coming to the all-school meetings that we hold regularly.
- There is a new writing curriculum that will be uniformly applied across the grade levels.
- SRS receives two or three grants per year. We hope to get the arts grant again this year.
- Leadership team at SRS meets with Dr. Davis weekly for feedback and exchange of ideas.
- The After School programming remains strong. Foreign language is coming back, as is Artworks!. Hands on Science is no longer in existence but we continue to explore other options. The district has given us \$7,000 in extra funds to reimburse teachers for any programming they would like to put in place; we've had homework clubs, running clubs, and many others in the past.
- We are moving to be in-sync with the district recycling program. There will be a poster contest.

- Science on the PSSA's was a trial with the 4th grade this past year; however, results are not back yet. Our science curriculum is in line with the state standards, so we believe our children get what they need. Additional elements will be incorporated; Michael Haines will come to speak to Home and School on the science program.
- Mark Linkins is on an extended leave at this time and Barbara Wellington is heading up curriculum for the district. The district has advertised for a second staff person on curriculum but it is not filled at this time
- The district has hired a technology director, Mr. Mark Finlayson.

TREASURER: Sharon Mester

- A brief overview of the treasurer position and line items was provided
- All teachers have received their \$75 start up money.
- The 5th grade has \$750 and pumpkin money. This is a self-funded account
- The coupon book has returned as a fund raiser this year. It will be available at Back to School Night. If you want it, take it. You can pay for it that night, or return it later, or keep it and return it with payment later. 50% of the sales go to HSA.
- New benches have been placed at the front of the school and also in the 2nd grade garden at the back of the school with HSA money.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SAC Committee: Carlin McCoy

- SAC is a group of committed parents and teachers who meet monthly to go over issues at the school.
- There was a discussion on the backpack mailings policy. Apparently, the superintendent's office needs to approve everything in the backpacks. SAC is pursuing a written procedure where there apparently is not one now. Timeliness of mailings is an issue. There may actually be such a policy, so SAC will pursue this more
- The moving up ceremony for the 5th grade last year was extremely crowded, so they will explore different ideas of improving on this for the next meeting.
- SAC discussed how to keep parents who teach and work at Swarthmore College engaged at SRS with their passions.
- We did apply for a Peaceful Playground grant and should know in late September if we received it. We do need new items on the playground.

Dimensions in Technology: Tony Liu

- Lots of good feedback on technology issues from the survey
- There is a fine line of what we can do as HSA and what the district does and maintains. We need to be in constant communication with the district, which needs to consider parity with all of the other schools in the district.
- We are exploring getting technology woven into lessons and how to use technology for a better learning experience for our children in the classroom
- We would love to document our school art projects digitally – one person suggests that this might be done already by Laura Maola. Tony will pursue.
- Can the 5th grade do their yearbook themselves?

- Tony is meeting tomorrow (Sept. 11) with the new district Director of Technology
- We want our website – www.srskids.org – to be a main vehicle for communicating with parents. Sign up for email notifications.

Dimensions in Math: *Beth DeBruyn*

- There will be a joint night with Dimensions in Technology in the spring.
- Exploring a TEAM day, career day (Dec. 4th), & after-school tournaments

Dimensions in Social Studies: *Sally Fullam*

- We will hold a mock-election on November 3. Children will be invited to create posters to promote voting.
- Perhaps Eck Gerner will come to speak
- 5th grade will have the Leni Lenape speaker again. This has been a great program for years
- Exploring author EB Lewis coming in February or March to speak
- Primary grades are focusing on China this year, so Dimensions is looking into getting a tai chi demonstration or learning calligraphy

Assemblies Coordinator

- If you have ideas for speakers, let Linda Martin know.
- We'll use parent feedback from the survey to drive some ideas.

Safety and Grounds:

- Sharon Mester and Stacey Clements do a great job maintaining. New benches have been purchased for the front and back gardens of the school
- Poison ivy is a problem along the Princeton Avenue side of the school. The district does remove it regularly and it grows back. A lot of it does start on the other side of the fence which is Swarthmore borough property. Dr. Davis could use some support in approaching the borough to get it cleaned up.
- There have been some instances of dogs on the school property. Dr. Davis does advertise that this is not allowed, but there is little we can do on the weekends or evenings when soccer and other activities happen on the field and residents use the playground. Dr. Davis will explore signage.

Fall Festival:

- Committee chairs are asking that you save up newspaper and old clothes to make scarecrows at the event. You do have to bring your own clothes to make a scarecrow – Goodwill store is an option

Silent Auction: *Beth DeBruyn*

- March 21, 2009. Goal is to raise \$10,000 that will go directly to the playground
- It will be held at the Borough Hall and library.
- Currently targeting businesses and museums for items.
- After the holidays we will move into the classrooms for items to auction

- Committee is coordinating with Bingo Night (first Friday in February) so as not to overlap on requesting donations.
- It's always a good idea to consider donating items for auction after the holidays if you would otherwise have returned or "re-gifted" an item.

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS: Linda Armour and Mary Murray

- The results were recently posted at www.srskids.org; please visit the website for full results.
- HSA will focus on targeting our fundraising this year to playground equipment and technology improvements at SRS. A wish list of things has been created. If you see an opportunity with anything mentioned on the survey, contact the presidents with your ideas.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 12 – deadline for directory ads.
- September 18 – Back to school picnic. Pizza and bake sale benefit 5th grade fund. Free lemonade and water will be provided by HSA.
- September 25 – Back to school night. Please do not bring children.
- September 19 – October 13 – Sally Foster gift wrap sales. Pick up of orders will be during conference week in November. You can continue to purchase gift wrap online through January to have it benefit SRS; however, you will pay shipping
- October 24 – Fall Festival

OLD BUSINESS:

- None

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion on the advertising revenue being down for the directory. It is a tough year all around. There was a discussion on selling Playbill-like one-line advertisements for parents to purchase. Also, perhaps a reduced rate to the high school to advertise for babysitting or lawn services. The directory will be \$8 this year, which is in-line with other school directories.
- Walking School Boundaries – Tom Shaffer
 - Map of current boundaries was distributed; Tom is pushing to expand the boundaries. He has spoken to the school board and the health and wellness committee of the school board
 - Benefits include: reducing air pollution, increasing wellness, addressing childhood obesity, reducing bussing costs.
 - Expanding boundaries would reduce buses by one at a cost saving of approximately \$4,100 annually. The district does have to be concerned about walking on state designated "dangerous roads" as well.
 - People did express concern about the safety of the tunnel under the Septa tracks on Princeton Avenue. There are also some places, as on Yale Ave., where there are no sidewalks.
 - We need a groundswell of SRS community support to get this moving; the School district has little interest right now due to other priorities. Could we incent kids to

walk somehow? Could a teacher take this up with the district \$7,000 money for teacher programs?

- If you are interested, contact Tom directly.
- Teacher Initiative Fund:
 - Request to purchase a Wii system for special education students.
 - Discussion on benefits and use by rest of SRS community

Motion: to approve the purchase of the Wii system with games only rated “E”.

- Several H&S committee heads and program coordinators will be moving on next year. If you are interested, please make a connection with the current person so that you can learn from that person this year so that the transition next year won't be so hard:
 - Sally Foster gift wrap – Kristen Ross, klross2@comcast.net
 - School Directory - Lisa Starr, lisa.starr.spa@gmail.com
 - Dimensions in Technology – Tony Liu, tw83liu@gmail.com
 - Electronic Communications - Doug Hasbrouck, d.hasbrouck@verizon.net
 - Hospitality - Sharon Crowley, scrowley247@aol.com and Robyn Holford, hineyhandbags@comcast.net

NEXT MEETING

- October 8th at the SRS Library

Meeting Adjourned 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sharon Graham