

## MAUGHAM HSA MEETING

Thursday, January 17, 2019, 7:15 pm

### Minutes

1. **Welcome to Superintendent of Tenafly Public Schools, Shauna C. DeMarco and Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Evelyn Mamman** – by Co-President Sam Endick.

Supt. DeMarco: Communication and cooperation of the HSA presidents and Dr. Ferrara has been outstanding. This meeting is an opportunity for parents to ask about any specific questions or concerns they may have.

Parent Question: Are there any big curriculum changes on the horizon?

Supt. DeMarco: Tenafly schools did not have an Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. We do now with the addition of Dr. Mamman who joined the District on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Dr. Mamman: Currently, there are no major changes on the horizon. Will change only that which is needed to align with State standards as those standards have changed. An example of this is the TREPS curriculum which moved from 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This opened up other opportunities for teachers in 5<sup>th</sup> grade to do more.

Supt. DeMarco: Tenafly is working on QSAC (Quality Single Accountability Continuum) monitoring – State monitoring and evaluation system for public school districts. For the last 6 years Tenafly has shown that student achievement is above level compared to their peers. However, achievement can still hide students who are scoring lower, students in sub groups like ESL, special ed and lower income families. The foundations of learning are all here. We just need to make sure that for every type of learner we have strategies in place to meet every student's needs. TMS and THS completed the facilities portion of QSAC monitoring (i.e. walk-throughs) which went well. At elementary school level, on March 19<sup>th</sup> Mackay Elementary will complete facilities portion of QSAC monitoring.

Parent Question: After evaluating our District, what do you see missing?

Supt. DeMarco: After an initial review of the data and analytics of Tenafly District, some preliminary questions came to mind (eg. Why do some Tenafly families leave District early? Why are there not more accolades and awards? Why are we not seeking more recognition? Why was there a shift in rankings for THS?) However, upon coming to Tenafly now, it is not about what is missing but rather more about full development and full implementation of what we already have. We need to reenergize the shared goals. Instead of stating that we have three year goals, we

need to ask what do we really want to see achieved and how will we get there. From there, we will develop strategic plans. We need to retrieve information from parents and students and communicate with them. For example, hold workshops for parents to get ideas from the community and understand what the community is looking for.

Parent Question: In addition to what was mentioned, are there other things like social injustice that will be included in our curriculum?

Dr. Mamman: We will have cross-curriculum rich units. Instead of focusing on breadth in curriculum we will focus on going in-depth. We will develop problem solving skills rather than just completing tasks so that students can transfer their learning to the real world. We need to look at the social, emotional well-being of the student and ask how are we building grit in our students. It requires a diversity of ideas (not just race, gender). There is more to come!

Parent Question: This community is rich in opportunities as community members come from wide background and resources.

Supt. DeMarco: Yes, there is so much in this community and we hope to take advantage of that.

Parent Question: Is standardized testing going to change?

Supt. DeMarco: (Supt. DeMarco is a member of the State legislative committee as a representative of education). No Child Left Behind federal law was replaced by ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) federal law. Federal law trumps State law. Under State law, there is a comprehensive 11<sup>th</sup> grade test to graduate. Under federal law, PARRC is not supposed to replace the graduation requirement. NJ did not keep up with the federal change. NJ does not want to take a top down approach and travels all over for feedback. PARRC is going nowhere immediately until they replace it.

Parent Question: Some people say these days that if you are in public school that you won't get into the college that you want to go to. Have college standards changed? Has the competition changed?

Supt. DeMarco: I do not have a direct answer to that. Colleges are a form of business and they have certain criteria that need to be satisfied. There is a sense of wanting to attract different types of students including international students. There could be five Tenafly High School students all qualified but the college picks only one of them. The college admissions system has changed. Colleges get higher rankings by the number of students they reject. They will try to get the most number of applications but still accept only the same number of students that they usually do. Colleges are going for rankings. THS Principal Morrison is really aware of this data.

## 2. Principal's Report

a. Pomptonian Update: As mentioned in the last HSA meeting, we completed surveys and received great feedback. Pomptonian has been very responsive. One issue raised was temperature of food – food is warm but could be hotter. Pomptonian is purchasing an electric warmer for us. Another issue raised was that the cost of one slice of pizza for \$5 is too much. HSA charged \$2.50 in past. We are working with Pizza Nova and the District to lower the cost and will update you on this. Other feedback included: varying the menu, different options of portion sizes as some older kids are still hungry. Once changes are made, we will give a new survey for more feedback.

Parent Question: I have not tried the lunch program; are there healthy options?

Dr. Ferrara: The current menu meets State lunch guidelines. Kids have multiple options to choose from. The chicken tenders are not fried and they are a good size.

b. 5th Grade Invention Convention: New this year in 5<sup>th</sup> grade is the Invention Convention which hits all experiential problem-solving skills. Before the break, we had the 1<sup>st</sup> session and tomorrow we will have the 2<sup>nd</sup> session. First, students must identify a problem they see in the world. Then they must try to solve it through inventing a prototype. It will be challenging. Students can work individually or in pairs (which promotes team-building). Dr. Ferrara is hoping to provide a weekly recap and share the instructional videos that the kids watch each week. In the videos, Professor Prototype introduces one new step (out of the 8 steps) for the inventing process. Dr. Ferrara played video for us which showed kids sharing actual inventions they created to solve various problems. This will be a really fun and great project for the students.

c. Tenafly's 125th Birthday Contest: Tenafly's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday is on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Mayor challenged all the elementary schools to write a letter stating why the Town's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday party should be held in their classroom. K - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade collectively wrote a letter together and 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade wrote individual letters. There were great letters sent in. Result should be announced soon as date is approaching.

d. Teacher's Professional Day – On Monday, we had a group of teachers reading the book, Grit. Brought up the idea of having us as a community select a community read to help our kids face certain issues. Perhaps next year, we could do a community

read of Grit and have break out sessions with teachers and parents. This year may be too late; need to send a survey to see what numbers are interested in attending.

e. CAP Presentation: A flyer went out to parents about the Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Project. There will be a parent program on this topic on January 30<sup>th</sup> at 8pm at Mackay Elementary School. This will be followed by separate classroom presentations for students. Similar to two years ago, two ladies will come to K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms and do presentation and age appropriate role playing to help children understand how to protect themselves from assault.

f. Spirit Week: During spirit week, students wrote letters to veterans. As you walk in our hallways you will also see some great MLK tributes on the walls.

Parent Question: When is the invention project due?

Dr. Ferrara: March 26<sup>th</sup>. The Invention Convention will be setup similar to the immigrant project and held during the day. Every classroom will come in during the day to see the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Schedule will be given out by mid-February.

**3. Faculty Representatives**: Mrs. Brown & Mrs. Winfield – Thankful to the HSA for all they do. All the teachers were very appreciative of the delicious food at conference time. Teachers are also appreciative of the author visit.

**4. Budget**: HSA Treasurer Sheenam Khosla gave highlights of budget. HSA expenses are \$63,000 (covers expenses including buses for field trips, cultural events, teachers funds for classroom projects and funds for classrooms, school beautification). The primary sources of funding are fundraising. The lunch program fundraiser is gone. We have the book fairs, spring event, the Scrip gift card and reward program, and the upcoming Maugham Night Out. HSA spent \$21,000. Net income is \$15,000. HSA has enough funds in the bank and there is a buffer to cover unexpected expenses.

## **5. HSA Committee Reports**

a. Maugham Night Out: Co-President Dara Wasserlauf - Flyers went out. It will be an adult only night at The Rockleigh on May 2nd. There are many ways to help. We are looking for auction items. Teachers received a separate flyer that is seeking raffle ideas that teachers may contribute. Dr. Ferrara will contribute to the raffle. This event will serve as a fundraiser as well as a community building event. Sponsorships are available. Please reach out to us if you are interested.

b. Juma Fit Fundraiser: Juma Fit instructor Deb Cohen (Maugham parent) came to us with the idea of this fundraiser which is next Thursday, January 24th. Juma Fit is a treadmill based class. No prior experience is needed. We filled all 20 sign up spots. This is a quick and easy way to raise money. If this is a success, Deb will do another one.

c. Rewards Program: Thank you to those who supported the Scrip Gift Card program. 30 families participated resulting in \$600 profit.

d. Valentine's Day: 1<sup>st</sup> grade will start the post office for Valentines mail. This is for the whole school. This year we are also having 5<sup>th</sup> graders write valentines to children through children's services of Hackensack (we do the Giving Tree program with them).

e. 5th Grade Skate Party: This will take place on March 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30-8:30pm. This is an opportunity for all the 5<sup>th</sup> graders to get together. Parents (or other supervisor) must stay with child; not drop off.

f. International Day and Festival of Tables: On Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> we will have assembly and lunch buffet for our featured country, Philippines. On Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, we will have our festival of tables. Volunteers can still sign up online.

g. Community Service: We raised over \$1,000 from our last coin a day challenge and will use the money to support the Center for Food Action (CFA) Weekend Snack Pack program. We need \$2,000 to do the project so we will have another coin a day challenge in February (one week long) to reach our goal.

h. Search for New Committee Chairs and Executive Council Positions: HSA is looking for volunteers to fill spots. Next week we will send out a list of openings. If you or someone you know is interested, please reach out to the HSA.

**5. Next HSA Meeting will be held on March 14, 2019 at 2:00 pm.**

**6. Questions/Comments/Concerns – none.**