

DRAFT Minutes
Stuyvesant High School Parents' Association
General Meeting
Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2002

Co-President Judy Moore called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Co-Presidents' Report. Judy announced that:

- Discussions with school administrators about an extra 20 minutes being added to the school day indicate there is no flexibility in how the extra time is used. She said the additional 100 minutes per week is part of the new teachers' contract and that all high schools are required to add 20 minutes to each school day. Only schools that have a "School-Based Option" program can use the additional time as they wish. Stuyvesant is not a School-Based Option school.

- Students and parents will receive a second copy of a letter allowing them to block the release of a student's name and address to colleges, universities and military recruiters. Recruiters were given access to students' names as part of the federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation.

- Several parents should be thanked for their work on various projects, including:

- Denis Meadows, who arranged the PA's ListServ. The ListServ allows PA officers to e-mail parents about important events and issues. Parents can sign up on the PA website (www.stuyupa.org).

- Joy Lall, who compiled the parent directory, and Angela Fremont-Appel, who solicited student artwork for the covers.

- Carey Meltzer, who is planning PA programs. Three planned for December are on college admissions (Thurs., Dec. 12), independent research (Tues., Dec. 17 at the PA meeting) and college financial aid (Wed., Dec. 18).

- The girls' basketball team beat A. Philip Randolph 65-64, with Stuyvesant's center [Ula Kudelski] scoring 55 points, and the volleyball team reached the city finals for the first time.

- Consent forms for the mental health survey can still be turned in.

- Parents, especially those who are bilingual in Chinese and English or Korean and English, are encouraged to volunteer for the February Open House.

- Potluck dinners will be scheduled in the various boroughs this winter. Parents who can help should contact Judy.

- C-30 committees are being formed to nominate candidates for three assistant principal positions. Plans for the committees were announced in the November bulletin and on the PA website. Enough parents have volunteered to fill the committees. Parents who want to be alternates should contact Judy or Dale Bernstein.

- A food drive to benefit the New York Rescue Mission is being held in conjunction with the Student Union.

Minutes. The minutes of the October PA general meeting were presented and accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report (Donovan Moore). Donovan reported that recent contributions have pushed PA income over \$435,000 and that the Appropriations Committee has increased the budget allocation for several "Wish List" items. Also discussed by the Appropriations Committee was allocating \$15,000 to a college counseling program to provide individual counseling sessions for

parents and students. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made, seconded and approved.

School Leadership Team (Elizabeth Roistacher). Elizabeth said the School Leadership Team (SLT) met on Nov. 10 for its second meeting of the school year. The SLT has 25 members, representing administrators, teachers, students and parents. She said the SLT's purpose is to develop Stuyvesant's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), align the CEP with the school's budget and measure the school's success in meeting CEP goals. [A detailed report of the SLT meeting is on p. 3 of this bulletin.]

Elizabeth reported that Principal Stanley Teitel briefed the SLT about the school budget. Although budget cuts are expected, it is hoped that instruction will not be affected. Also discussed were the lower than expected scores on the physics regents exams, which were thought to result from the reformatting of the test. A third topic discussed was the future of the SLT's subcommittee on ethics and school tone, which has explored the issue of cheating.

Co-President Dale Bernstein took over as chair of the meeting. She explained that the Health and Safety Committee would report next, with a presentation by Chairman David Ross and a minority report from Dave Newman. She said a resolution would be presented, discussed and voted on. Following this business, the meeting would turn to a presentation on student life and a demonstration by the fencing team.

Health and Safety (David Ross). David reported that at the October general PA meeting, the PA had not yet received a response from the Department of Education (DoE) about outstanding issues related to the cleanup of Stuyvesant. He said the response had since been received and was discussed by the Health and Safety Committee on Oct. 29 and by the PA Executive Board on Nov. 12. He said the DoE agreed to remove additional carpeting and the auditorium curtain, but had declined to remove the auditorium seats, saying there is no evidence of airborne asbestos.

Nevertheless, David said, the Health and Safety Committee and the PA's consultants continued to prefer that the seats be removed.

During the summer, he explained, the DoE had tested for asbestos in the auditorium seats using a "beat-the-seats" aggressive air sampling procedure developed in consultation with the teachers' union. These tests were not observed by the PA's consultants.

David said recent conversations with the DoE lead to the following proposal: that the DoE would test more seats using the beat-the-seats method under the supervision of the PA consultants, with the understanding that the seats would be replaced if readings were high, but if results fall below the AHERA standard (70 structures/mm²), the PA could consider the results conclusive and stop asking for more. The Health and Safety Committee approved this proposal 4-2. The Executive Board approved a similar resolution 15-11. A two-page resolution distributed to the membership reflected the motions approved by the Health and Safety Committee and the Executive Board.

David noted that the Health and Safety Committee would meet again on Wed., Nov. 20, at 6:30 p.m.

Dave Newman read a minority report signed by himself and fellow committee member Dorothy Schuster. [The report was posted on the PA website before the meeting.] He said aggressive testing is not adequate and that additional tests should be used to gather all available information.

Dale Bernstein invited audience members to ask questions to clarify the resolution. In response to a question about the phrase, "...the PA *may* express their satisfaction..." she said that she and Co-President Judy Moore felt that this resolution reflected an offer from the DoE that the PA cannot pass up and that the PA officers would take a positive vote on the resolution to mean that the PA would consider the cleanup complete if test results are satisfactory. Dave Ross said it was the intent of the agreement that if the DOE allowed the testing, and if the results were negative, that the PA would refrain from additional requests related to the summer cleanup.

David Ross presented the motion, which was seconded. The motion stated that:

"The PA consultants, Howard Bader and Tom Fusillo are instructed to

1. Develop, in conjunction with the DoE, a protocol for testing the auditorium seats.
2. Observe the testing in a manner that they (consultants) deem appropriate.
3. Evaluate the results of the testing.

If the testing demonstrates an asbestos risk, the PA will expect the DoE to ensure removal and replacement of the seats according to asbestos abatement protocols. If the testing demonstrates that asbestos levels of all samples are lower than the AHERA standard of 70 asbestos structures/mm², the PA may consider the Summer 2002 lead and asbestos cleanup of Stuyvesant High School completed."

David said that the goal of the resolution is to reach an accord with the DoE for additional testing and that this offer by the DoE is a way to come to closure on the cleanup of the school. He said the procedure would include the selection by the PA's consultants of 15 seats in three locations to be tested. Sections to be tested would be enclosed in a tent and negative air pressure would be used to prevent any contaminants from escaping. The seats would be beaten and vacuumed, in an attempt to loosen even more particles than would be disturbed during day-to-day use. Then the air within the enclosure would be sampled for asbestos. The DoE has agreed to replace the seats if any sample exceeds the AHERA standard. He noted that air samples taken between November 2001 and June 2002 showed no asbestos in the auditorium air.

In response to a question about the cost of replacing the seats, Dale said she didn't know the cost but noted it would include the cost of doing the job using asbestos abatement procedures.

In response to a question about the PA's response if the EPA changes its asbestos standards, Dale said that the EPA had concurred in the DoE's assessment that the school was safe, but that if the EPA removed its signoff the situation would be changed.

In response to a question about whether the DoE had agreed in writing to this proposal, David Ross said that if the PA supports the resolution, a written agreement would be made with the DoE. He said the PA's consultants would work with DoE officials to develop the protocol for the tests.

Dale asked parents who wanted to speak to the resolution to line up on either side of the auditorium and to limit comments to a minute each, with speakers alternating in support or opposition to the resolution. She said that only parents of current Stuyvesant students would be allowed to speak.

After remarks by 10 parents, Dale read a friendly amendment, which said: "Recognizing that only one out of three possible acceptable sampling methods is being used to test for asbestos, the liability of any health hazards identified in the future in this context remains that of the Department of Education." David Ross accepted the amendment.

Dale Bernstein asked for debate to close and for a vote. Paul Edwards objected. The question was called. The motion to end debate passed, receiving approval from two-thirds of those present.

A vote on the motion passed by simple majority.

At 8:30 p.m., Judy introduced Matt Polazzo, a Stuyvesant teacher and coordinator of student affairs. Mr. Polazzo said his role is to be an advocate for students, and said the school environment should emphasize the importance of both learning and relaxing. Noting that the measure of a school is the partnerships among the staff, parents and students, he introduced three student leaders: Janet Hsueh, Student Union president; Mike Litwack, SU vice president, and Alex Pearlman, SU budget chair. The students described the SU's program to keep the school clean now that students are allowed to leave and return during lunch. They also described other SU programs including a review book exchange and the development of student internships.

Judy then introduced Larissa Gonzales, the Stuyvesant fencing coach. Coach Gonzales introduced fencing team members Hu Huang (captain), David Ferguson, Ethan Frisch and Gabriella Grisotti. Coach Gonzales explained the history and sport of fencing and presented Principal Stanley Teitel with the team's plaque for second place in the city finals. Team members and Coach Gonzales demonstrated fencing techniques. [Special thanks to parent Abby Laufer for her help in coordinating the fencing team demonstration.]

There being no further business, a motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Ritter, Recording Secretary

NOTE: SPECIAL THANKS to Peggy Harvey and Kerneth Levigion for their help with the many preparations for the Nov. 19 PA General meeting. Our appreciation also to the energetic freshman and sophomore parents who helped with the evening's programs: Paula Alexander, Nancy Diederich, Sue Schneider, Nancy Spencer, and Barbara Zahler-Gringer.