

Draft Minutes
Stuyvesant High School Parents' Association General Meeting
Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2003

CO-PRESIDENT JUDY MOORE called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Co-Presidents' Report. Judy announced that:

- Open School Week is March 24–28. Parents can visit classrooms Mon.–Wed., March 24–26. Parent-Teacher conferences are Thursday evening, March 27, and Friday afternoon, March 28. Parents are encouraged to contribute desserts to the teacher dinner on Thursday evening and volunteer to set up, serve or clean up the dinner.
- College Night is Thurs., May 1. Parents can meet representatives from about 100 colleges.
- Spring Vacation is Thurs., April 17–Fri., April 25.
- Students can download applications for Advanced Placement exams on-line. Completed forms and checks must be brought to Room 209 by March 21.
- Students should consider applying for the Ronald S. Lauder Student Exchange Program. Information is available from Assistant Principal Eleanor Archie in Room 103.
- The bylaws committee has copies of the revised PA bylaws available. Parents can also view the bylaws on the PA website (www.stuyupa.org). Comments should be sent to Melanie Arwin (e-mail: mgarwin@aol.com), chair of the Bylaws Committee, by Fri., March 7.
- SING! will rehearse during March and April, with the longest rehearsals ending no later than 7:30 p.m. in the weeks leading up to the show.

CO-PRESIDENT DALE BERNSTEIN announced the formation of a nominating committee to publicize and run the May elections for PA officers and School Leadership Team representatives. Candidates must be a parent of a Stuyvesant student and cannot be a school employee. The Nominating committee will present nominations at the April PA meeting and take additional names from the floor. The Executive Board, at its February meeting, chose three nominating committee members: Donovan Moore, Russell Pinsley and Sheldon Stachel. The PA affirmed these choices by a show of hands. Dale asked for four additional volunteers from the general membership. Those who volunteered from the floor or who had previously expressed interest were Roger Kim, Carey Meltzer, Susan Ross-Osattin and David Strauss. The PA affirmed these nominations by a show of hands.

Minutes. The minutes of the Jan. 21 PA general meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report. Judy Moore reported that the PA's income is almost \$500,000 this year. She said the Executive Board approved carrying over \$40,000 to next year unless urgent needs present themselves before the end of the school year. The board decided to carry money over because Stuyvesant received several one-time grants this year, including FEMA money, reimbursement for lost instructional time and money from the Carnegie Corporation.

School Leadership Team. Elizabeth Roistacher said the SLT's Feb. 12 meeting was dominated by discussion of Principal Stanley Teitel's proposal to reduce hallway noise and litter by limiting where students can congregate and sit in the halls. PA co-president Judy Moore stated that the SLT should be consulted on such policy changes and that students should be told the consequences of breaking rules. After extensive discussion, it was decided that the SLT's subcommittee on school tone would explore the issue further. The SLT also discussed how to increase minority enrollment at Stuyvesant and how to make the environment within the school more hospitable to minorities. Elizabeth encouraged parents to talk with their SLT representatives about these and other school issues. SLT representatives in attendance at the general meeting introduced themselves. (More details about the SLT meeting appear on p.4 of this issue.)

PROGRAM — Town Hall Meeting with Principal Teitel

Dale Bernstein introduced the evening's program, a "town hall meeting" with Principal Teitel. She asked parents to write questions for the principal on cards, saying questions not answered immediately would be addressed in the PA bulletin.

Mr. Teitel discussed several issues before taking questions from the audience, including:

- A NEW CURTAIN FOR THE AUDITORIUM. The curtain was replaced after some parents expressed concern that the old curtain might contain asbestos particles.
- RECEIPT OF ONE-TIME GRANTS, including \$100,000 from the Carnegie Corporation, \$213,000 from FEMA, funds from the 9/11 Fund and proceeds from a Time-Warner book. He said these grants expire on June 30. He used some of the money to hire an additional college advisor, but that position will end at the end of this school year.
- SCHEDULING OF FINAL EXAMS, noting that administrators try to avoid scheduling students for two finals on one day. He said report cards must be distributed on the last day of school and that two instructional days will be used in June for finals.
- ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS to the six specialized high schools. Mr. Teitel said the Department of Education asked each specialized high school principal how many incoming freshmen their school should have and that the numbers totaled 3,200. Based on this, the DoE offered seats at the six specialized high schools to the 3,200 top-scorers on the specialized high school test—those with the best scores getting their first choice. In the past, Mr. Teitel said, Stuyvesant offered seats to 15 percent more students than the target for the freshman class, because some students choose another public or private school. This year, students who listed Stuyvesant first and qualify can choose Stuyvesant only—they cannot go to one of the other specialized high schools instead.

• **CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR AN EMERGENCY.** Mr. Teitel said that in the event of an emergency, school principals will decide whether to keep children in school or evacuate; only an evacuation order from the NYC Police would overrule a principal's decision. If evacuation is required, students will walk to Chelsea Piers, at 23rd Street and the Hudson River. Keeping students in the building may be chosen because the building is fireproof, has a generator and stocks an overnight supply of water and food. In the event of an emergency, students will go to their homerooms so teachers can take attendance and then will listen for announcements from the administration. Mr. Teitel urged parents to make sure children know at least two routes home and that they carry a card listing a complete set of phone numbers for parents or nearby friends and relatives. He said students will be allowed to use cell phones if an emergency occurs, but that few phones worked immediately after the Sept. 11, 2001, World Trade Center attack.

• **THE PROPOSED POLICY** designed to improve school tone. Mr. Teitel said that during lunch and free periods, students can congregate on the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th floors away from classrooms. These floors were picked because the 1st and 2nd floors have few classrooms and the 5th and 6th floors have hallway traffic anyway from the cafeteria and library. Students can also leave the building during lunch. Other rules ban the use of cell phones during school hours, ban smoking in the building and ban the use of exit doors other than those with security guards.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Teitel answered questions from parents.

Q: How does Stuyvesant hire teachers? How can a School-Based Option hiring policy be instituted?

A: At present, Stuyvesant must hire teachers based on seniority. If Stuyvesant adopted an SBO hiring policy, applicants would be screened by a committee that would not be required to hire the most senior applicant. The SBO approach has been proposed by the administration but must be voted in by the teachers' union. The teachers' union chapter leader has not allowed a vote on the issue.

Q: What are the graduation requirements? What is being considered regarding computer technology requirements?

A: Changes made next year will affect only incoming freshmen, not upperclassmen. Four years of lab science will be required, meaning psychology will no longer count toward the science requirement. The technology requirement is being discussed and will be reduced. Freshmen will take computer science one semester and health the other semester.

Q: What can be done about inconsistencies between content taught in different sections of the same course? How does this affect the final exam?

A: Course content is described in the curriculum guide given to students and in the course outlines for teachers.

Uniform final exams are written by departments, so students in any given course should be taught the same material. Mr. Teitel reviews computer printouts of final exam grades sorted by teacher to see whether exam scores indicate that teachers are presenting the necessary material to students.

Q: Can children leave school midday with a note from a parent?

A: Students can bring a note signed by a parent to Room 203 to get permission to leave school. If administrators doubt a note's authenticity, they call parents to check. The note from the parent should include the parent's phone number. Students, including speech team members, should not come to school if they intend to leave midday for activities not officially approved by the faculty sponsor.

Q: Are there problems with theft, drug use and vandalism?

A: The deans are working on continuing problems with thefts of coats, calculators, Walkmen, etc. Announcements have been made over the public address system telling students not to leave bookbags in hallways. Incidents of drug possession and use are dealt with harshly. Some vandalism in hallways on upper floors occurred recently. It is unclear whether it happened while Stuyvesant students were in the building or after 6:30 p.m. when Battery Park City uses the building as a community center.

Q: Can students meet more often with guidance counselors?

A: Students often skip guidance appointments because they don't like to miss class. They also seem uninterested in appointments before or after school. Full-time guidance counselors follow up with students who fail classes.

Q: Will the recently announced reorganization of the school system affect Stuyvesant?

A: Stuyvesant will be part of Region 9 under Shelley Harwayne, currently superintendent of Community School District 2. It will also be part of a special district with the other five specialized high schools and LaGuardia. Stuyvesant is among the 208 high-performing NYC schools and will, therefore, maintain control over its curriculum. The math curriculum will be changed so that all students take a new "Math A" exam by the end of freshman year, "Math B" as sophomores, then pre-calculus as juniors and calculus as seniors.

Questions about the college process were deferred to the March 18 PA meeting focusing on college issues. Questions about alcohol and drug issues will be addressed at the April PA meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Ritter, Recording Secretary