

DRAFT Minutes
Stuyvesant High School Parents' Association
General Meeting
Tuesday, March 18, 2003

CO-PRESIDENT DALE BERNSTEIN called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Co-Presidents' Report. Dale announced that:

- Teacher Anthony Valentin invites parents to meet with him in Room 337.
- Open School Week is March 24–28. Parents can visit classrooms Mon.–Wed., March 24–26. Parent-Teacher conferences are Thurs., March 27, from 6–8:30 and Fri., March 28, 1–3 p.m.
- Parents are encouraged to help with the teacher dinner on Thurs., March 27. Contact Felice Perlman (e-mail fiperlman@rcn.com). Parents can send desserts in on Thursday morning to Peggy Harvey, Room 211.
- SING! will rehearse during March and April, with rehearsals ending no later than 7:30 p.m.
- The redevelopment of Pier 40, on the Hudson River at Houston Street, will be discussed by Community Board 2 at 6:30 p.m., Thurs., March 20, at Parsons Auditorium, 66 5th Ave. The construction of full-sized athletic fields is an option for the pier.
- School activists will travel to Albany on March 25 for Lobby Day.
- Students can enter the PA's Scholarship Essay Contest by writing a 250–500 word essay on the following question: "Imagine that one day you unlock a secret door at Stuy and discover an entire, unused 11th floor in the building. Explain in detail what you would do with it and why." Five \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded. Deadline is May 1. [See the www.stuy.pa or the bulletin for more information.]
- Students must sign up for Advanced Placement exams by Fri., March 21. Forms are available on-line from the Stuy website and should be brought with a check to Room 209.
- Volunteers are needed for the PA Phonathon, May 12–14. Contact Harvey Blumm (e-mail Hblumm@aol.com).
- College Night is Thurs., May 1. Parents can meet representatives from over 100 colleges.
- The PA bylaws are being revised. Parents can review the revised draft, which will be posted on the PA website. Comments should be sent to Melanie Arwin, chair of the bylaws committee, or Dale Bernstein. The school's bylaws must meet guidelines set by the Chancellor's office.
- The stage band and orchestra are presenting a concert Wed., March 19. Parents are encouraged to attend.
- Parents who want to receive periodic e-mails about PA events should send their e-mail address to Corresponding Secretary Denis Meadows (e-mail dismeado@aol.com).

Treasurer's Report. Donovan Moore noted that the PA plans to carry over about \$40,000 to next year unless urgent needs present themselves this spring. He described this carryover as prudent, because the school and the PA received generous one-time grants in the past two years.

Nominating Committee. Donovan Moore reported that par-

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ents who want to nominate themselves or others to run for PA office should fill out the form in the PA bulletin and return it to Peggy Harvey, Room 211. Nominations can also be e-mailed to Donovan at donovanmoore@nyc.rr.com.

Minutes. The minutes of the Feb. 18 PA general meeting were approved as written.

Committee Reports

Phonathon. Harvey Blumm encouraged parents, especially those who speak languages other than English, to volunteer for the PA Phonathon, May 12–14. E-mail Harvey at hblumm@aol.com if you can help. Letters asking parents to contribute to the PA will be mailed by the end of March and parents who send in contributions early will not receive a phone call in May.

Faculty Reception. Felice Perlman, chairman of the Faculty Reception, encouraged parents to volunteer on Thurs., March 27.

School Leadership Team. Elizabeth Roistacher said the SLT's March. 11 meeting included further discussion of where students may congregate during their free periods. The School Tone Subcommittee of the SLT developed a proposal on this question, which is to be reviewed by the administration. She said Principal Stanley Teitel distributed a letter about emergency procedures for review by SLT members. The letter was to be sent home in backpacks so parents should ask children to see it. The school's Comprehensive Education Plan was discussed. Mr. Teitel said his three goals, intended to improve instruction, are to reduce the size of the school from the present 3,100 students to about 2,800; to provide staff development for the teaching of science, and to provide a freshman writing skills program for students who enter with weak skills. Lastly, five assistant principals have been or will be chosen this school year. The SLT discussed new regulations regarding the composition of the C-30, or selection, committees.

Program — College Information

Dale Bernstein introduced Karen Mooney, Chair of the College Committee, who described the committee's activities and previewed the evening's presentation. Members of the panel presenting college information included Eleanor Archie, assistant principal for pupil personnel services, and the following members of the college office: Pat Cleary, department head; Secondary School Report writers Jennie Chan, Milton Diaz and Patrick Niglio, and College Advisor Aileen Danaher. Karen invited parents to write down questions for the staff of the college office to answer.

Ms. Archie described the college process, which begins when a student is a freshman and is supported by both the Guidance Office and the College Office. In freshman year, she said, small groups of students meet twice with grade advisors who explain that every student has a college folder that will eventually contain standardized test scores,

teacher recommendations, and other information related to college applications. In sophomore year, students again meet with grade advisors to talk about the college folder, teacher recommendations and extracurricular activity reports. Students can also get information about the college process from guidance counselors, one of whom is assigned to each grade. At the end of a student's sophomore year, the Guidance Office hands all the sophomore college folders to the College Office, which then takes over the college process.

Pat Cleary, College Advisor, emphasized the need for students to ask teachers for recommendations, noting that each student should get recommendations from both a math or science teacher and an English or social sciences teacher. She said teacher recommendations help the Secondary School Report writers prepare individualized reports on each student. After students ask teachers to write a recommendation, the student should check back with the Guidance Office to see whether the recommendation has been put in their college folder. Teachers are not required to write recommendations and occasionally fail to do so when asked. She also said college office staff members visit English classes to remind students of deadlines and steps in the College process. Ms. Cleary then introduced three Stuyvesant teachers who write the SSRs.

The panel members noted that the SSR writers interview each student and read her/his file to find the unique characteristics of each that can be developed into an interesting profile. Some SSR writers ask students to bring in an autobiographical essay written for an English class. Teacher recommendations are quoted in the SSR. The writers said colleges look at volunteer and after-school activities, at whether the student took challenging courses and at whether students show interest in a particular area. The SSR writers said their work is especially important because Stuyvesant does not rank students by their grade point average. The reason for not ranking students was addressed by Pat Cleary. She said that students earn such high grades at Stuyvesant that in this year's junior class of 750 students, for example, a grade point average of over 92 would only barely put a student in the top half of the class.

Aileen Danaher described information available from the College Office. She said the walls outside Room 225 are covered with posters about upcoming visits by college representatives. She said the office also maintains a college bulletin available in homerooms and on-line (at www.stuy.edu), and provides folders in the school library with summer programs and other information.

Answers to questions from parents included the following:

- Parents should help a student who procrastinates by gently staying on top of the college process and trying to discover the reason for the procrastination. Parents can call the Guidance Office if they need help.
- Some schools accept up to half their students from Early Action or Early Decision applicants. Early Decisions are binding; Early Actions are not.

- Students can apply to only one school under Early Action or Early Decision because Stuyvesant needs to ensure that all 700 graduates have access to good schools. If multiple early applications were allowed, students with GPAs of 96 or 97 could lock up all available seats.

- Linda Lam, the first vice president of the PA, is working on a plan to organize bus trips next year to clusters of colleges on several long weekends.

Ms. Cleary invited all parents to attend College Night on Thurs., May 1, when over 100 college representatives will visit Stuyvesant to meet students and parents.

New Business

Dale Bernstein announced that a meeting will be held for Chinese parents from 7–9 p.m., Thurs., April 3, in the cafeteria. The meeting will be translated into Mandarin and Chinese.

David Newman presented a resolution on diversity, stating that the PA should establish a sister relationship with the PA of a disadvantaged intermediate school in New York to increase successful applications to Stuyvesant by students of the sister school. Parents supported increasing the diversity of the Stuyvesant student body and discussed factors in the high school placement process. The need for information about whether black and Hispanic students are accepted at Stuyvesant but choose not to attend was noted. Members of the School Leadership Team said the SLT has a committee on diversity. The resolution, which was moved, seconded and tabled, was:

Whereas Black and Hispanic students comprise less than 9% of the Stuyvesant High School student population while constituting 70% of the student body of the New York City public school system;

Whereas the Stuyvesant Big Sib program participates in high school fairs as part of an initiative to make Stuyvesant more accessible to disadvantaged students from throughout the city;

Whereas Stuyvesant High School has been blessed with an extensive and comprehensive program of extra-curricular activities, a major component of which is community service;

Whereas Stuyvesant Student Union President Janet Hsueh invited parents at the November 19 Parents' Association meeting to work more closely with the student government;

Whereas the Parents' Association of Stuyvesant High School, through the dedication, hard work and generosity of its members and alumni, has been fortunate to enjoy annual budgets of approximately \$400,000;

Whereas many public school Parent Associations, even with similar dedication, hard work and generosity of their members and alumni, must exist with annual budgets of less than one tenth of that of the Stuyvesant PA;

Therefore be it resolved that the Parents' Association of Stuyvesant High School:

1. Working with the Student Union, identify and establish a sister relationship with the Parents' Association of a disadvantaged intermediate public school in the city;
2. Work closely with its sister PA on joint projects of mutual educational benefit to the students of each school, through sharing of school resources, establishment of a tutoring and mentoring program, etc., with the specific goal of increasing successful applications to Stuyvesant by students of the sister school;
3. Contribute on an annual basis 5 percent of its budget to these efforts, with one half of the contribution going to fund whatever programs are jointly established by parents at both schools and one half of the contribution to be a donation to the sister PA;
4. Encourage parent associations at other specialized high schools to establish similar partnerships.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Ritter, Recording Secretary