



Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 11, 2017

A general meeting of the Demarest Home & School Associate was held in the Demarest Elementary School cafeteria on Monday, September 11, 2017 with 60 members and visitors in attendance.

- I. Call to Order: RaQia Randall-Bouchard called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.
- II. Officer Attendance: All officers were present.
- III. HSA Co-Presidents' Report: RaQia Randall-Bouchard and Tracy Pitynger
 - a. The website was redesigned and updated over the summer. If members would like to be notified of updates, they can sign up for the mailing list. Going forward, the website and FaceBook page will align with each other.
 - b. The Officers introduced themselves to the meeting attendees.
 - c. Chairs were asked to contact a co-president if they didn't receive emails regarding the meeting.
 - d. A number of committees need additional chairs. Each committee should have two chairs.
 - i. School Spirit: Currently Tylene Longyhore is a chair. One more chair is required.
 - ii. Book Fair: Currently Tricia Rowold is a chair. One more chair is required.
 - iii. Fall Social: Currently Tylene Longyhore is a chair. One more chair is required.
 - iv. Plant Sale: Currently Nicole Dyer Foncello is a chair. One more chair is required.
 - v. Wellness Committee: Currently there are no chairs.
 - e. Committee Chairs were reminded that attendance at the June general meeting and the annual budget meeting is mandatory.
 - f. The calendar distributed at the beginning of the meeting was discussed. Dates in blue were tentative. All others were confirmed as of the meeting. A member of the Forrest Glen HSA asked about coordinating schedules to avoid fundraising conflicts. RaQia requested to continue the discussion after the meeting.
 - g. The HSA bylaws are in the final stages of revision and will be published on the website for members to review.
 - h. The district HSA presidents' meeting is coming up. If members have concerns or questions, please talk to a co-president.
 - i. New HSA fact sheets will be distributed at back-to-school night. It will be useful for promoting HSA membership and participation.
- IV. Treasurer's Report: Laura Clifford
 - a. Primary Checking Account Balance: \$71,478.72
 - b. Savings Account Balance: \$21,952.77
 - c. LGCCC Account: \$4,000
 - d. Raised for next year: \$507.81
 - e. Forms for reimbursement, fundraisers, etc. are available in the office and are to be submitted to Laura.
 - f. Tax exempt forms are available for HSA related purchases.
 - g. Laura has white and color paper for printing/copying HSA documents.



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- h. The HSA has a PayPal account and would like to make use of it more often. A credit card reader associated the account is also available. Committee chairs who would like to use it for an event can request it from Laura.
 - i. Wish list items have been purchased.
 - j. The basketball backboards for the gym have been installed.
 - k. The basketball backboards for the playground have been purchased but not yet installed. Installation is scheduled in October 2017.
- V. Secretary's Report: Eileen Lucier
- a. A thank you card from Mrs. Peggy McCarter, former Demarest school nurse, was received, thanking the HSA for the Nurse Day gifts.
 - b. A thank you card from Megan Rumph, recipient of a Demarest scholarship, was received, thanking the HSA for the scholarship.
- VI. Board of Education Representative's Report: Jill Fischman
- a. Introduction
 - b. Parents were urged to keep emergency contact information current. Earlier in the day a student at another Bloomfield school was injured and transported to the hospital. The parents could not be reached due to out-of-date contact information.
 - c. Ms. Fischman noted the high attendance at the meeting and encouraged members to keep attending and participating throughout the year to support the school and children.
 - d. The Bloomfield Board of Education (BOE) has frequent meetings and parent attendance is strongly encouraged. PARCC scores would be discussed later that week, and a technology initiative would be discussed at another meeting later in the month.
 - e. Ms. Fischman expressed appreciation to the custodial staff for their hard work not only in the day-to-day maintenance of the school but also for larger projects such as refinishing floors.
 - f. The BOE website is being updated and revised. The migration to the new site/host should be completed by next year.
 - g. Parents were encouraged to vote in the November BOE elections. Three seats will be open and parents have the opportunity to affect their children's education by voting.
- VII. Principal's Report: Mary Todaro
- a. Introduction. This is Mrs. Todaro's 10th year as Demarest's principal.
 - b. Demarest has 515 students, with 3 more likely to enroll shortly.
 - c. There are a number of new staff members, including a number of maternity substitutes for 1st and 2nd grade; a World Language teacher for 4th-6th grades; a music teacher; a strings teacher; a school nurse; and a custodian, just to name a few.
 - d. The school day schedule has been modified to allow children to have gym 3 times in a two week period. Demarest is borrowing a gym teacher from Brookdale school once a week to accommodate the new schedule.
 - e. New parents should sign up for the parent portal on PowerSchool.



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- f. The virtual backpack will be updated every Thursday. Demarest is working to go paperless and whenever possible will provide documents digitally. Calendars and forms will still be distributed as hard copies.
 - g. Parents were encouraged to update contact information.
 - h. A number of upgrades and improvements were made to school during the summer including new safety locks on the doors; additional new seats in the gym; new flooring and carpeting in a number of rooms. In addition, every classroom now has a smartboard and the school received new Chromebook.
 - i. The lunch schedule has been modified. The lunch period extends from 11:25 am-1:05 pm, with staggered times for each group of students. This reduces the number of students on the playground and allows for additional staff for supervision. A parent asked if this meant recess is longer now. Mrs. Todaro explained that 1st-6th grade students still get 20 minutes to eat and 40 minutes for recess, but that the start and end times were staggered based on their grade. Kindergarteners also get an hour and are permitted to take as much time as necessary to eat.
 - j. The PARCC scores should be published later in the week. Demarest performed better than the district, state, and country.
 - k. A parent asked about gifted and talented (GT) letters. Mrs. Todaro explained that the GT Coordinator had resigned, but that letters should be going out soon.
 - l. A parent asked for clarification on the gym schedule. Mrs. Todaro further clarified the schedule. Parents indicated that it was not clearly explained previously.
 - m. Oakeside Community Center will have a pediatric cancer walkathon/fundraiser on September 24, 2017. Mrs. Todaro intends to participate and encouraged the Demarest community to participate as well.
- VIII. Teachers' Report: Rosemary Vetrano
- a. The teachers were very grateful for the wish list items and expressed their thanks.
 - b. By the end of the 2016-2017 school year, Demarest achieved 100% parent enrollment in PowerSchool. Currently only new parents are not enrolled. Parents were encouraged to enroll at their earliest convenience. Parents were also informed that they can update contact information through PowerSchool.
 - c. Teachers have new teacher websites through GoogleSites. Teacher websites can be found by going to the Demarest Elementary School website → Click "About us" → Click "Staff Directory" from the dropdown. A parent asked about substitute teacher websites. Mrs. Todaro indicated she would look into whether they would be added to the directory.
 - d. The Virtual Backpack will be distributed on Thursdays and can be accessed from the Demarest website by hovering over the "Parents" option.
 - e. Demarest received 75 new laptops from the middle school and a lot of other new technology.
- IX. Committee Chairperson's Reports
- a. Book Fair: Tricia Rowold
 - i. The Book Fair is in March but planning must begin now. It's a weeklong event and currently there aren't enough volunteers signed up. Volunteers aren't required to commit to full days and can sign up for times that are



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convenient to them. While it doesn't net a lot of funds, the Book Fair is important as it helps purchase books for the next year and every child who attends receives a book.

- b. Class Parent Coordinators: Dena Miller and Luann Mugnone
 - i. Three class coordinators are still needed.
 - ii. Signup.com will be used again to coordinate coordinators and parties.
 - iii. A Class Parent Meeting will be held at 6:30 on October 2nd, 2017.
- c. Fundraising: Laura Clifford and Tricia
 - i. During the summer, Laura and Tricia developed a fundraising schedule. There are a lot of fundraising events and members are not expected to participate in everything. The provided calendar is up-to-date. Pre-planning will be done for major events and tasks broken into smaller responsibilities to encourage participation.
 - ii. Major Events
 - 1. The Fun Run is a new event and will require volunteers. The chairs explored using a company specializing in fun run fundraisers but found them to be too expensive.
 - 2. The clothing drive will be October 14, 2017. Donated clothing will be distributed locally rather than used for rags or sent overseas.
 - iii. Mini Fundraising: Tricia Rowold
 - 1. Mini Fundraisers are shop- or dine-to-donate events. Four are scheduled between now and the end of the calendar year.
 - 2. The date for the Rita's event is not yet confirmed.
 - 3. The Barnes and Noble event coincides with the Read-a-thon.
- d. Hospitality: Lovlee Tang and Aislinn Cholet
 - i. Aislinn introduced the committee and explained its responsibilities.
 - ii. Volunteers, cookies, and bottled water are needed for back-to-school night.
- e. Membership: Aislinn Cholet
 - i. Membership forms should be available by the end of the week. Membership forms and fees are due by the end of September.
- f. Special Committees
 - i. Fall Social: Tylene Longyhore
 - 1. Tylene has a co-chair.
 - 2. Lots of volunteers are needed for the Fall Social. The social offers a safe and fun Halloween party for the Demarest Community. Participation and attendance are encouraged.
 - ii. Read-a-thon: Sarah Johnson
 - 1. The Read-a-thon is scheduled for November 6-13.
 - 2. The grades participating has not yet been determined.
 - iii. Pumpkin Patch: Dena Miller
 - 1. Dena chaired the Pumpkin Patch the previous year and it went well, despite rain forcing the Patch inside.
 - 2. Volunteers are needed.



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3. The Pumpkin Patch is a free event. Children select their own pumpkin from the patch to take home.
- g. Sixth Grade Committees: Gina Roman
 - i. Gina explained the purpose of the committees and their upcoming efforts, including ice pop sales on September 8 and 15, and a bake sale in November.
- h. Basketball: Laura Clifford for Kevin Clifford
 - i. Kevin Clifford is now chairing the committee.
 - ii. Registration forms will be distributed in October. Games will begin in November.
 - iii. Volunteers are still needed to coach 4th and 5th grade.
- X. Old Business
 - a. Mrs. Todaro explained that Demarest is an open school. Parents are welcome to speak to teachers whenever they have concerns but she asked that they be courteous and reasonable about timing. She encouraged parents to schedule appointments with teachers or contacting them via email. Teacher emails can be found on the Demarest website of using the following convention: [first letter of first name][last name]@bloomfield.k12.nj.us. Teachers are expected to respond within 24 hours.
- XI. New Business
 - a. A survey will be posted on the Demarest HSA website to collect member thoughts on the HSA. Results will be shared at the next meeting.
 - b. Tom Heany introduced himself and stated that he is running for the BOE. He encouraged people to stay involved and to vote in the November BOE election.
- XII. Announcements
 - a. Back to School Night: September 28, 2017 at 7:00 pm
 - b. Next HSA Meeting: October 2, 2017 at 7:00 pm
- XIII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm