Minutes of Parents’ Association Meeting

Attendees
Christina Enrich, Bridget Lett, Elizabeth Coburn, Liza Franz, Pam Ortolani, Amy Shuman, Julie Gicewicz, Susan Basil, Chanin Sucher, Donna Thrasher, Shelley Chandhook, Nadejda Nigrin, Brenda Ricotta, Leslie Garcia, Cherie Chase, Vikki Hamill, Christine Bonaguide, Jodi Osinski

Sheila Kowalski, President:

• Opened the meeting and welcomed all

• Requested Approval of Minutes - Christine Enrich, Julie Gicewicz

Grade Rep Reports:
The sixth grade did some volunteering in the community this winter and spring. Our first volunteer day was spent at The Teachers Desk in early March. Seven sixth graders were on hand to help group pens together. "The Teachers Desk mission is to distribute free school supplies to students in need, to encourage teachers and provide purpose through volunteerism". It was a productive morning with a great organization. The Teachers Desk is always looking for volunteers during the school year.

Our second volunteer day was towards the end of April. Again, seven sixth graders volunteered their morning at 5 Loaves Farm in the city. They cleaned up beds, hauled trash and spread compost. 5 Loaves Farm mission “redeeming vacant lots by creating sustainable market gardens that produce healthy foods along with spiritual, educational and economic resources for our neighbors.”

The sixth grade has an end of year party planned for June 8th at the McPherson’s home.

The Freshman class Spring Breakfast was held on April 7, 2016 upon the return from Spring recess. It was held in the Rand Dining Hall at 7:30 am-8:30 am. The children were very eager to enjoy breakfast, such a change from the fall as they have become more confident. This time we offered pancakes with the help of Sage dining. It was a very simple process and the dining service was very helpful. The only drawback were the freshman food critics, who I should have listened to as they mentioned the
pancakes are usually not a big hit in the dining hall. What they really miss are the FRENCH TOAST STICKS. Next year!

Thank you to all of the parents who donated their time and their generous donations. The Signup Genius is a great addition to the donation process.

A parent coffee was held on May 2nd, 2016 at Spot Coffee on Hertel Avenue. Turnout was low; however, it was nice to meet a new parent in the Nichols community.

Overall, Freshman year seemed to be a success. I would recommend that the incoming parent representatives initiate an end of the school year treat a little earlier in the planning stages. Due to timing, which we ran out of we were unable to offer a treat.

On March 17th we hosted a St Patrick's Day breakfast for the 10th graders. All breakfast items were generously donated by parents. As always, the students were very appreciative. This past Wednesday, May 25th, both the sophomore and junior classes were treated to ice cream from Mr. Soffee’s ice cream truck. This was our last event of the year. Many thanks to all the parents who so graciously donated food items and/or their time throughout the year.

**Guest Speaker: Sarah Jensen - Entrepreneurial Studies**

Sarah introduced the Entrepreneurial Studies elective as a new course that builds on the Nichols core values and is a part of the new Strategic Plan. She gave a short presentation on the format (problem based/experiential learning) with skill development, not content acquisition as the primary goal. 21st century skills - 4 C and a F (Creativity, Critical thinking, Communication Collaboration and embracing Failure) are used in this course. She spoke about collaborations with local BFLO startups and tremendous support of alums and parents who actively engaged the students.

Random envelopes were handed out to several parents and Sarah asked parents to stand and read aloud several reflections written by the ESE students, because being out of comfort zone and operating with little direction is what the student had to do daily. Also because students' thoughts on what they learned communicated the essence of the class with more impact than she could have communicated.

Sarah spoke further about the class and also offered that the class size doubles for next year. She thanked everyone for their support and answered a few questions.

**State of the School Message: Bill Clough - Head of School**

- Message included many successes of the school year
- Looking to address several concerns
- 125th year beginning in September
• Process for our 10-year accreditation to continue our membership in NYSAIS

Book Fair
• Great success
• Many books purchased, including summer reading books

Derby Day Auction
• Had one of its best years yet; it was a great party!

Faculty and Staff Appreciation Event
• Chaired by Kim Cromwell
• Provided all day “grazing” food for faculty and staff, as well as some great raffle prizes

Nichols Fund
• We have a way to go to get our parent participation up.

President’s Year-end Report – 2015-2016
Here’s a quick over-view of our year:

Our Parents’ Association meetings offered programs from College Counseling, Wellness, Library, Robotics, FCD Prevention, and entrepreneurial studies, as well as school updates by Administrators.

New Family Welcome Barbecue – in early September, well-attended and some of our Parent Mentors attended to meet the families they mentored. It was a fun, casual event.

The Nichols Fund Parent Division – this year led by Kristan Andersen & Robin Bronstein, and Kristin and Scott Saperston, with many parent volunteers who signed letters, wrote notes and are currently calling parents to encourage participation. Our Parents Council has 90% participation so far. We still have some work to do before the end of the school year for a better participation percentage from our current parents.

Gently-Used Hockey & Skating Equipment Sale – Led by Cyndi Leonard and Siobhan Millar, we raised almost $1,000 for Athletics, and donated all that was remaining to Hasek’s Heroes.

Big Green and Homecoming – With Big Green as a “new” event under the tent on Homecoming weekend, it was a huge success! A sold-out crowd had a great evening – smaller silent auction, raffles, a live band, food and drink! If you missed this fundraiser for Athletics, be sure to reserve early for the one this fall!
International Dinner – held in February to celebrate our multi-culturalism, it was attended by about 130 people. The program in the FPAC prior to the dinner was a wonderful representation of our diversity and cultures. This is always a great family event.

Holimont Ski Day – discounted lift tickets and a lunch for Nichols families and friends was organized by Meg Hunter. About 40 attended the lunch.

Upper School Lost & Found Closet – keeping this closet sorted and organized was Liza Franz and Vikki Hamill.

Parent Mentor and Parent Ambassador Network (PAN) – almost 3 dozen parent volunteers help each year with being an ambassador for Admissions and/or mentoring new families to Nichols. We value their efforts to promote our school.

Box Tops 4 Education – Brenda Ricotta. We earned $408.60 this year. Keep clipping!

All-School Book Fair – held in late April, parent volunteers were organized by Elizabeth Robinson.

39th Derby Day Auction – Chaired by John and Marsha Koelmel, this event was a fabulous party supporting our school. Live music, delicious food stations and a party atmosphere, it was highly raved about. Numerous volunteers helped with gift donations, advertising, and set-up for this event. Thanks to everyone who participated and attended this major fundraiser.

Faculty/Staff Appreciation Event – Thanks to organizer Kim Cromwell and generous parents, we provided “Sweet & Savory” treats for faculty and staff to graze on throughout the day. About 30 raffle prize winners were treated to some great gifts!

In addition, our Grade Reps spent hours organizing and facilitating the following:

- 10 morning coffees off-site for parents
- 1 parent cocktail party
- 7 student breakfasts in the Dining Room
- Help with the 5th grade Medieval Banquet
- 4 holiday treats plus an exam cookie party
- 3 Middle School welcome parties in the Fall
- 4 Halloween events
- Get-Air Trampoline event
- Food truck and ice cream truck
- Senior t-shirts
- Lasertron
- 4 year-end Middle School parties
Tuesday, May 31, 2016

Thank you to all the parents who share their time, treasure and talent with us! Thank you for supporting our events. Our community could not be as special as it is without all of your support, so thank you everyone!

Sheila turned the association over to new President Jodi Osinski for the 2016-2017 school year.