

Minutes for the SSIMS General PTSA Meeting

Attendees:

John Haas—SSIMS Acting Principal

Katie Ryan and Stephanie Helsing—Co-Presidents

Mae Jones—Secretary

Caroline Wilkins—6th grade VP

Maureen Gunnison—Staff Appreciation Coordinator

Parents

Location and date: Media Center at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, 11/09/10

I. General Update from Acting Principal John Haas

Mr. Haas began by stating that his goal as Acting Principal was to help make it possible for SSIMS students to get the best education possible. His update comprised grade-specific information and information about SSIMS-wide activities, including a characterization of JAG time.

Grade-Specific Information

6th—Outdoor Education will take place in two waves. Divided according to their science teacher (Ms. Gregal and Mr. Topelius), the students will attend Outdoor Education beginning either November 15th or November 17th. The first wave of students (who have Ms. Gregal as their science teacher) will return on the 17th at noon; the second wave of students (who have Mr. Topelius as their science teacher) will return on the 19th at noon. Mr. Haas will attend Outdoor Education on the first day of the first session; Mr. Mamana, the first day of the second.

Mr. Haas reported that, so that as many SSIMS students as possible would participate in Outdoor Education, he had been contacting the families who had not turned in Outdoor Education permission slips. He reported that, as a result of those calls, the percentage of

students attending increased from 70 percent to 81 percent—an all-time high percentage for SSIMS.

Parent comment: Several parents at the meeting reported that they found it frustrating that they had gotten minimal communication about Outdoor Education. Members of the PTSA Executive Board listed the communication provided—including handouts sent home during summer orientation, a permission slip and accompanying information sheet sent home early in the semester, and a special Outdoor Education session given in the media center in the fall. The parents said that they could not attend the session because it was held during the Jewish holiday and said that for a several-day, away-from-school event, the level of communication should be greater.

7th---Gale Danely is scheduled to present her poetry at an assembly.

8th—The 8th grade team's goal is to prepare as many SSIMS students as possible to successfully complete magnet and CAP application and testing.

On December 3rd, 8th grade social studies classes will go on a field trip to the Newseum.

SSIMS-Wide Activities

A group from the IB certification body recently visited SSIMS as part of the evaluation conducted every 5 years to renew accreditation. The body's final report regarding SSIMS accreditation will be issued in 6 months. Mr. Haas reported that representatives visiting SSIMS remarked that they were impressed with the community service activities SSIMS offered and with the Passion Project.

On November 11th between 1 and 8, SSIMS will hold parent teacher conferences in the gym.

Parent comment: Several parents at the meeting noted that information about the conferences was not available on the SSIMS website.

On November 18th, SSIMS 7th and 8th grade students can try out for the basketball team. A 2.0 minimum G.P.A. is required.

On December 2nd and December 3rd at Sligo Creek Elementary School, SSIMS 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students will perform Folktales for Fun under the direction of drama teacher Ms. Brobby. Mr. Haas reported that, although there had been scheduling conflicts that had made staging this play problematic, he had been able to work with the elementary school's principal to find a time that the school's all-purpose room would be available.

Mr. Haas reported that parent surveys about SSIMS's Autumn Showcase had been positive. Over 30 staff members worked on the showcase, and about 300 people attended. The goal is to make SSIMS a school that students choose to attend.

Parent comment: During Mr. Haas's update several parents asked general questions—e.g., about what their children had reported to be new lunch-time rules and about the nature of the PTSA. According to these parents, Mr. Collins the new Vice Principal restricted student access to several tables in the cafeteria at lunch without giving the students any explanation. Another parent asked why there were not any students at the PTSA meeting.

II. JAG Time

Mr. Haas began his description of JAG Time by listing what it was NOT...

- an opportunity for students to check e-mail
- a student-centered study hall
- an opportunity for students to run errands (e.g., to see the counselor)
- an opportunity for teachers to introduce new material

Then, he said that JAG Time could be an opportunity for

- staff to mentor students
- students to get a blitz in math or English
- students to review Edline pages
- staff and students to engage in enrichment activities to build on units previously taught
- students to get caught up after an absence
- teachers to reteach material
- counselors to introduce students to PBIS, a program that motivates students to manage their behavior

Mr. Haas said that JAG Time will vary by teacher but that the goal was to standardize what happens during this time. He explained that the genesis of JAG Time was a response to problems teachers experienced with the advisory period, which had been cumbersome because teachers felt that they had to come up with something to do during that time. JAG time, it was thought, could be used in part to help students who staff predicted might be at risk of performing poorly on the MSA.

III. Proposed Budget

PTSA Co-President, Stephanie Helsing distributed a copy of the proposed budget, and those in attendance voted unanimously to approve it.

IV. Status of Upcoming PTSA Events

PTSA Co-President, Katie Ryan, announced that she had found a coordinator for the staff appreciation dinner to be held during parent teacher conferences on November 11th. Katie reported that Donna Victoria, a 6th-grade parent, had volunteered to coordinate the dinner and needed more food donations. Donna's goal is to feed 70 staff members during their ½ hour break between conferences. People who can contribute food are to bring it to SSIMS the morning of the 11th.

PTSA Co-President, Stephanie Helsing announced that

- the leaf raking community service event scheduled for this weekend would be rescheduled due to a police-related event that would take place then in the school parking lot
- students would meet on November 20th to stuff back packs for the Shepherd's Table community service project and would distributed them at Shepherd's Table on December 24th
- the December book drive, probably an SSL opportunity, is pending the arrival of wish lists from each teacher
- the Wizards would not perform at SSIMS this year and that event might be replaced with a community service event (maybe a 5K coordinated with Sligo Creek Elementary School) in the spring

Mini-Grants Coordinator, Mae Jones, described the mini-grants awarded for the first semester of this academic year. The remainder of the budget funds for mini-grants will be available during the second semester, when the Executive Board reviews the next round of applications.