

W+H Parents' Association

Meeting Minutes

Date / time September 20, 2021 7pm | *Meeting called to order by* Roshanna Bracy

In Attendance

Over 80 participants between family and W+H staff

Updates from W+H Administration Team

Gerard Gonnella (Director of Admission) shared that W+H had a wonderful enrollment season. The call to action among current parents to spread the word led to a successful admission season welcoming many new families.

Andy Webster (Head of School) thanked all family and administration for a successful year last year and acknowledged that everyone left last year exhausted. The administration team welcomes two new division heads in Lower School and Middle School. The entire team is focused on looking at where W+H wants to be three years from now and identifying the plan to get there.

In regard to the pandemic, the school is closely monitoring test results. The number one job is to keep people safe and they have consulted with doctors and epidemiologists to make sure the policies and procedures implemented will do just that. There are ebbs and flows expected throughout the year. He remains hopeful that the vaccine for children ages 5-11 will be available by Halloween which would be a big step forward for our school. He shared that we live in an area of high vaccine rates among adults which is good news. Pediatric hospitals statewide admitting 0-5 cases per day.

Hurricane Ida resulted in some serious flooding in the school which had not happened with previous storms. The A Deck (lower level of the school) including the boiler room, pool and fitness center were under water. Two new water heaters have been replaced. The HVAC system in the LS is not functioning as a result of the storm. The team has found creative ways to move the kids to cooler areas of the school, extra water breaks and popsicles. In addition, they are currently bringing in the night cool air starting at 3 a.m. each morning to bring temperatures down. This is allowing classrooms to stay between 68-72. The system will not be able to be replaced quickly as it will likely require moving it all together. In addition, there is an industrial strength dehumidification process on campus this week. If the last two years has taught us anything, it is that kids need to be in school and we strive to continue to provide excellent learning conditions with minimal disruptions.

Dr. Corinna Crafton (Associate Head of school for Curriculum and Instruction) is excited to see our Rutgers Mason Gross partner programs with the Performing Arts back on campus this year. In her new role, she is looking at existing curriculum and program to identify what we can do better. In the Lower School, they are looking at the social studies program and focusing on the core value of sustainability and the opportunity to do more incorporating equity, inclusivity and just linkages. Sustainability is being looked at from PK through Grade 12 across all disciplines.

Corinna is also working on faculty development and professional growth. The instructional coaching program is in year three and continuing to flourish. Teachers partner to help coach each other based on where they have expertise. Department chairs are focused on providing timely and effective feedback to teachers in their departments. She is also working with Bill Jenkins to identify grants that are teachers can access to further their accomplishments and development.

Jennifer Rose (Middle School Division Head) was excited that all middle school grades were able to go on field trips and participate in an elective tasting program last week. She is excited to partner with parents throughout the year. Andrea Barnett (Science Department Co-Chair) is looking at sustainability and how to incorporate new things into the curriculum across the department. Ms. Rose also shared that the advisory programs for the 6th and 8th grade were being revamped this year.

JohnEric Advento (Lower School Division Head) started by asking all parents who have questions to please go directly to the source such as teachers and administrators. He also shared the focus on identifying service-learning opportunities in the Lower School. The Lower School and by extension the parents are looking at getting to personal best times for pick up and drop off times safely to help eliminate car line congestion across campus. Lower School Back to School Night will be held virtually on September 23 starting at 7 p.m. The first half hour will be general Lower School information with the second half hour dedicated to time with teachers. Upcoming events include Picture Day on Sept. 28, Spirit Week the first week of October, LS Coffee and Conversation and the Halloween Parade. He also shared that the first Lower School assembly was held in the PAC. Throughout September and October, the division will be focused on Community.

Bob Bowman (Upper School Division Head) is excited to have all students back together physically on campus this year as the US had about 50% of their students choose the remote option last year. The students are currently working on the play *The Shining Lives* based on the Radium Girls. It is a dramatic piece. The student council is incredibly active working on Spirit Week plans. Upper School Back to School Night will be held virtually on October 5. Clubs will be starting up soon. In addition, he shared that service-learning opportunities are back and sports are in full gear.

Bill Jenkins (Assistant Head for Institutional Advancement) started by applauding all divisions for getting everything going to start the school year successfully even through some struggles. He also recognized parents for offering help after Ida and the heroic efforts of our maintenance staff. Fall Fair will be held on Saturday October 9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on campus. All families are welcome to join in the festivities. There will be games, arts and crafts, food music and more.

Karl Miran (Athletics Director) said that all sports programs are moving back towards normal. Students and parents are getting back to games and some games are being live streamed. Community spirit is beginning to build back up. The MS Soccer program has 45 players and tennis has 30 players. Karl thanked the 4th grade parents for the recommendation of swim and tennis clinics for the Lower School. Ryan Oliveira is one of our onsite trainers in addition to being the school's pandemic coordinator. Courtney McClain is our new Assistant Athletic Director as well as trainer.

Treasury Report

Mona Vijay has applied for the WHPA bi-annual raffle license renewal. She gave a current update on banking funds of \$42k. The budget fundraising goal for Fall Fair is \$15k. All licenses for the 50/50 and basket raffles has been submitted and expected to be received in time for the event.

Communications Update

Kevin Kornecki shared that parents will receive updates of the upcoming events and activities from the WHPA through email, the weekly WHEN newsletter from the school and social media. He encouraged everyone to attend Fall Fair and bring their family and friends.

Additional events being planned for the year:

- **Basket Raffle** – Nov. 17, 2021
- **Holiday Boutique/Craft Fair** – Dec. 3, 2021

- **Book Fair** – Feb. 2-4, 2022
- **International Family Fun Night (IFFN)** – February 4, 2022
- **LS Valentines Dance** – February 14, 2022
- **Spring Gala** – April 23 or April 30, 2022

The Ram Shop has been impacted by the flood so it needs to be inventoried and relocated. The WHPA Board is working on doing that. Please bring in your donations and leave at reception. The team is looking at an online option for shopping. More to come.

Please leave a positive review on social media sites such as NICHE and Great Schools.

Next Meeting

WHPA Zoom – October 14 at 7 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. with first motion made by Vandana Puri and seconded by Shannon Sari.