

**SRDS Parents Guild Meeting -
Thursday September 9, 2024**

- I. Welcome & Approval of May 2024 minutes** - The September 2024 Parents Guild meeting commenced with a welcome to all parents / guardians from Heather Holder and Jacqueline Vasquez and the approval of the past meeting's minutes.
 - Today's session officially starts of the 2024/25 school year for the Parents Guild!

- II. Welcome from the SRDS Board of Trustees - Wes Powell, President of the SRDS Board of Trustees**
 - An inspirational address to the PG, Wes Powell gave us his insight of the progress SRDS has made under the leadership of Jalaj Desai, the dedicated teachers and the staff that finds the "impossible in the possible", "thinks differently", understands we "learn best as individuals" by perfecting the "craft of leadership". We are the SRDS Rebels!
 - Mr. Powell expressed his gratitude to the SRDS Board, staff, parents and Jalaj Desai as we embark on a new academic school year.

- III. Welcome and Updates from the Head of School – Jalaj Desai, Head of School**
 - Jalaj Desai began his update by thanking the Board for their support and allowing us to implement the SRDS vision.
 - As SRDS continues to be innovative, we are focusing, developing and encouraging:
 - Technology & AI – will create new jobs and diverse projects globally
 - Adaptability will be required to prepare students for change with knowledge
 - Integrated tech created by project-based learning for students
 - Soft skills to create flexible environments and diverse work staff
 - We will maintain an environment inclusive to all, focused on education and mutual respect.
 - Updates include:
 - New SRDS AI Platform – will be ready in the upcoming weeks
 - Fitness Center is officially open!
 - Lower School science hall is ready!
 - Campus expansion – In the back gym, there are now 3 classrooms, in addition to other useful space
 - We are continuing our updates to the PAC and the big gym
 - Our next milestone project, the new building is on track for 2026, and we have confirmed the support from Saddle River Town.
 - Jalaj Desai provided an update on behalf of Geoffrey Bowman, Director of Admissions
 - SRDS has record admissions and low attrition, starting the academic year with 541 students, including 66 new students.
 - We will send out a parent survey over the next few weeks.

IV. Division News and Upcoming Events at SRDS

Dana Stern, Head of Lower School, thanked and welcomed the new/returning parents to the SRDS community. Updates include:

- Great start to the school year!
- Teachers are the 1st point of contact, however, reach out to me when needed.
- Flyers are going out for Spirit Week, back to school meetings, field trips, and Picture Day which is 10/1 (LS students pictures will be taken in the morning)
- Student showcase will return in the upcoming PG meetings.

Anastasia Kelly, Head of Middle School, thanked and welcomed the new /returning parents to the SRDS community.

- The MS team and Stasia Kelly are excited for the 2024/25 school year. Our love of learning, energized by taking academic risks will provide students with a memorable MS year.
- Our schedules are set to include N-Block, sports have started, and new electives are available.
- The orientation trips will take place on 9/12 – please make sure permission and waiver information have been completed.
- Check the MS Happenings doc for the up to the minute information - changes are reflected during the week.
- MS has 2 Deans – Ms. Amanda Bieglecki – grades 5th & 6th and Mr. Steve Osvoid – grades 7th & 8th.

Shai Zacaraev, Head of Upper School, thanked Mr. Desai, Mr. Powell, Ms. Angrick and the PG and welcomed the new /returning parents to the SRDS community.

- Beginning the US journey, we have many exciting upcoming events and updates:
 - Peer mentors for 9th grade students by the seniors
 - Trips: 9th grade – team building; 10th grade – Kalahari resort; 11th grade – Gravity Vault; 12th grade – boat trip
 - The 11th and 12th grade will go on a college tour and help students setup for success
- To all students, this is your home, your space and treat each other with respect
- Spend time with advisors as they can help navigate through the challenges of Upper School.
- Check the Upper School Happenings for all events.

V. Roles of Grade Deans at SRDS

- Amanda Bieglecki – grades 5th & 6th. The 5th and 6th grade Advisory will focus on social and emotional learning.
- Steve Osvoid – grades 7th & 8th. The 7th and 8th grade focus will continue with navigating the social and emotional issues and include the importance of virtual presence.
 - For the 8th grade students, we will help them prepare for Upper School and support them in this journey.

- Stem Honors Society – For students with an interest in science projects, we will look at real world problems through project learning.
 - Jennifer Maylath – grades 9th & 12th is also the Head of the English Department and will lead 8th grade Capstone, in addition to the SRDS parent book club. Deans in the Upper School follow the 4-year journey with students with the goal of providing educational and social support for students.
 - Robert Kettlewell – grades 10th & 11th, History Dept Chair and US History teacher. The Deans are the biggest advocates for students, helping them with the approach for the situations they will encounter at SRDS and outside SRDS.
- VI. Community Engagement at SRDS with Ms. Chris Lebovitz, Director of Community Engagement and Assistant Director of LS Admissions**
- Thank you to the parents and PG for the tremendous support and help to make our SRDS community events successful!
 - Some of the key events include Rebel Readers (10/10) – open to all parents; restorative and regular yoga (10/16) both relaxing and invigorating; Crafty Rebels (10/23) – fun for all!
 - Check out our new QR codes to sign up and watch for the upcoming event news.
- VII. Role of the School Counselor at SRDS, Alicia Pooley**
- As school counselor, the goal is to support all students and there for them and families when needed.
- VIII. SRDS AI Initiatives – Kevin Merges, Chief Global Impact Officer**
- Important updates include
 - Making the educational experience better - all faculty will be able to use/access the AI platform
 - We continue to build our SRDS brand
- IX. Athletics Update with PJ Petrow - SRDS Director of Athletics**
- Great start with a record enrollment of Middle and Upper school participation in sports!
 - Take healthy risks, get involved in sports!
 - Big thanks to Gretchen Kuhlman for the social (sports) media pages!
 - Turf field – project is getting started, stay tuned for updates.
 - Upgrades coming to the big gym and hall of fame display.
- X. Technology Update – Laura Hollis, Director of Technology**
- Ms. Hollis, in her 13th year at SRDS continues to see innovation and excitement from students and staff with paid internships at the school, upcoming teacher conferences.
 - We have dedicated resources to help students with tech across teaching and integration.
- XI. Parents Guild Volunteer Opportunities with Jacqueline Vasquez & Heather Holder, Co-Presidents of the Parents Guild**

- **Save the Date for Ladies' Night Out (LNO)** – Wednesday, November 13th at The Tides Estate, North Haledon, NJ. Our theme is **Denim & Diamonds** and volunteers are welcomed and needed!
- **Upcoming** – be on the lookout for
 - **Homecoming on campus** - Saturday, 9/28 - All Welcome
 - **1st time event – Rebel Dads** on 10/8 at Pinstripes
 - **10/31 – Trunk or Treat** for Lower School
 - **LNO** – 11/13
 - **Holiday Market** – December (date to be determined)
- A special thanks to Chrissie Signore, Director of Alumni & Special Events, Chef Mark, Division Representatives and Class Parents who provide tremendous support for our events!

XII. Motion to Adjourn – Next meeting on October 10, 2024, 8:45am Alford Hall, PAC