

**SRDS Parents Guild Meeting -
Thursday October 10, 2024**

I. Welcome & Approval of September 2024 Minutes - The October 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.

II. Lower School News and New Language Arts Curriculum for Grades 1-4

- **Dana Stern, Head of Lower School**, provided the following updates:
 - Lower School coffees: 10/15 PreK – Kindergarten at 8:30am; 10/16 1st grade – 4th grade.
 - Field trips for PreK 3 & 3rd grades include going to a farm, the park and the aquarium. The 4th grade will participate in the Rebels with a Cause Pink Pop Up Shop.
 - Parent/Teacher Conferences – Friday, Oct.18.
 - 10/31- No aftercare; 11/1 No school.
- **Shelby McLaughlin (1st Grade Teacher) & Megan Thomas (3rd Grade Teacher)**- New Language Arts Curriculum
 - In Lower School, we formally review and evaluate the curriculum to meet the needs of the students and teachers.
 - With that in mind, we have a new project-based learning ELA and Literacy Program for grades 1-4 to help students gain increased confidence, promote stronger literacy and provide readiness for academic challenges. This new approach includes teaching industry research, feedback over the course of several years from students, parents and teachers and NJ state standards to elevate the learning experience for our students. Emphasis on blending the approach to reading and writing through the inclusion of phonics, cursive handwriting, and consistency across the four grades.

III. School News, Upcoming Events & Partnership with The Social Institute

- **Anastasia Kelly, Head of Middle School**
 - Parent/Teacher conferences – Friday, Oct. 18 (assigned by last name) and interim comments on the way.
 - Upcoming events: 8th grade – 10/23 Tarrytown, Jack O' Lantern, Great Blaze, 10/29 Taste of Upper School reception and dinner for students and parents; 5th – 7th grade social on 10/25 with school appropriate costumes.
 - Check the MS Happenings Doc for the up-to-the-minute information - changes are reflected during the week.
- **Steve Osvold, Middle School Dean (Grades 7th & 8th)**
 - New! We are starting the National STEM Honors Society for 7th & 8th graders, with the first meeting today.
 - The goal is to provide students with the opportunity to enrich their knowledge and experience in STEM. The course work includes 80 hours (including work at

school and outside of school). Students that successfully complete the course will receive a certificate at 8th grade graduation.

- **Amanda Bieglecki, Middle School Dean (Grades 5th & 6th)**
 - New! We are introducing the Social Institute Program, with the intention to help students to navigate social media and technology in healthy ways. Parents will be provided with information and website access.

IV. Upper School News and Upcoming Events

- **Shai Zacaraev, Head of Upper School**
 - Parent/Teacher conferences – Friday, Oct. 18.
 - Student elections underway.
 - Gateway Program – due to an unforeseen absence, more information to follow at the next PG meeting.
 - Check the Upper School Happenings Doc for all events.

V. Upper School Gateway Student Feature with Noah G, Proteens.org

- Noah successfully embraced the Entrepreneurship Gateway Diploma with the launch of Proteens.org. The website connects SRDS and local high school students who are looking for jobs with parents or families looking to hire.
 - Today the site has approximately 21 teams available to connect for local work.
 - Parents may access the site if they are interested in hiring these teens for various local jobs.

VI. SRDS Academics Update and Schoology

- **Deirdre Angrick, Academic Dean**
 - Parents will receive information for setting up Schoology from Advisors week of 10/14, including a video clip, unique code and instructions on how to register. Parents who have already set up their account last year – there are no changes.
 - Schoology provides parents with the ability to view their child's assignments/due dates and grades for individual assignments. Report Cards will continue to be accessed through the Portal.

VII. The SRDS Fund

- **Lynn McCormick, Director of Development**
 - Thank you to all families who have supported The SRDS Fund and all past gifts!
 - The SRDS Fund fuels an exceptional educational experience for both students and teachers.
 - The strong commitment to fuel an exceptional education and incorporate resources into all aspects of our school, the Fund has supported programs such as AI, math competitions, robotics, professional development for teachers, the fitness and science labs.
 - Giving can take place at any time of the year. This year the Fall Day of Giving is on 10/29.

- Any questions on giving, please call Lynn McCormick.

VIII. Community Engagement

- **Chris Lebovits, Director of Community Engagement and Assistant Director of LS Admissions**
 - **Community Events:** We have a robust calendar of events for a variety of interests including Yoga, our Rebel Readers Book club (10/10) and Crafty Rebels – next session is painting on glass.
 - **Admissions:** Chris Lebovits provided an Admissions update on behalf of Geoffrey Bowman: Great turnout on our Homecoming Day! The next two weeks will be busy with the Middle & Upper School student visit day on 10/14, as well as an open house scheduled for 10/24.
 - Eighth grade families who have not yet done so, should contact Geoffrey Bowman in the near future to schedule time to discuss Upper School student plans.

IX. Athletics Update

- **PJ Petrow - SRDS Director of Athletics**
 - SRDS is hosting a Prospective Student Clinic on (6th – 8th grade) on 10/27.
 - Fall sports are underway and students are very active; winter sports sign-up is coming up soon- stay tuned.
 - We are considering adding wrestling at a facility in Wyckoff.
 - Trying to increase frequency of MS practices and games similar to the US to prepare them for US.
 - The Fitness Room is opening and may add a strength & conditioning PE class at a future time.
 - Take healthy risks, get involved in sports!

X. PG Class Basket Donations, Volunteer Opportunities & LNO at the Tides Estate on November 13th. Our theme is Denim & Diamonds!

- **Heather Holder & Jacqueline Vasquez, Co-Presidents of the Parents Guild**
 - LNO is one of the primary Parents Guild fundraisers for the academic school year and supports funding for all Parents Guild Community Events.
 - Be sure to donate through your Class Basket Donation Link which is how we fund most of our budget.
 - In addition to volunteers to help with a variety of tasks, we welcome your efforts for donations (big and small!) for our tricky tray baskets (80-100 baskets) valued at \$100+ each. Any contributions are welcome, and we will combine smaller donations to meet our \$100 basket minimum. We look for items in categories like health & beauty, dining, technology, sports, etc. and are open to suggestions.
 - Consider sponsoring a teacher for the event by buying their ticket.
 - If you own a business, consider donating a service, gift card or items. We also have \$1,000 sponsorships that include a full-page ad in our events program, MC

recognition throughout the event and special signage during the event.
Questions? Contact Sara Aufgang and Claudia Sasso.

- When you sign up, consider the Ladies' Nashville Trip on April 4-6, 2025.

XI. Motion to Adjourn – Join us for the next meeting on November 7, 2024 in Alford Hall, PAC.