

SRDS Parents Guild Meeting
Thursday, March 6, 2025

- I. **Welcome & Approval of February 2025 Minutes** – the March 2025 Parents Guild meeting commenced with a welcome to all parents / guardians from the PG’s Co-Presidents, Heather Holder and Jacqueline Vasquez and the approval of the past meeting's minutes.
- II. **Welcome and Update from the Head of School**
 - **Wes Powell provided the following updates on behalf of Jalaj Desai, Head of School:**
 - New Building Update:
 - February 28th was an exciting day as we held our ground-breaking ceremony! Our target for completion is May 2026.
 - The new turf field is planned to open in June 2025.
 - We will have a new parking lot to accommodate our families.
 - We will be moving the tennis courts, and the playground is under review for the location.
- III. **Community Engagement at SRDS**
 - **Chris Lebovits, Director of Community Engagement and Assistant Director of LS Admissions**
 - SRDS Career Day- We are looking for businesses and organizations to host 15-20 seniors on April 10th as part of our Career Day 2025 program.
 - The Rebel Readers Book Club- April Book Club will meet on April 15th and book is ***Same As It Ever Was***. The May Book Club will meet on May 29th and the book is ***Write for Your Life***.
 - Pickleball will be held on April 2nd and April 9th in the gym from 7:45pm-9:15pm.
 - Crafty Rebels Floral arranging will be held on April 16th – the information is forthcoming, so please stay tuned!
 - Lastly, a great big thank you to each person who has helped with admissions events!!!
- IV. **Upper School News and Upcoming Events**
 - **Shai Zacaraev, Head of Upper School**
 - Upper School Assembly featured Tommy Head, Found & CEO of the Childhood Cancer Society discussing, “What it means to be a Social Entrepreneur”. It was an incredible presentation, and we are looking forward to having our students volunteer with this organization!
 - The return of the annual **SRDS Rebel Lounge**, the open mic night was a huge success and all the performances by the students and faculty were inspiring.
 - A tremendous thank you to Chef Mark who led our Black History Month presentations for students, partnering with students and faculty across the grades.
 - **Upper School events** - a busy start to the year with the following events, including:
 - Science Olympiad, Guggenheim Museum, Model UN NYC Trip, Student volunteered for the Special Olympics of NJ winter games, Monmouth University High School Hackathon, MS/US Recital, DC Trip for AP Gov students, MathCon Competition, SRDS Hosted the Debate tournament.

- Earlier in the month our Videography students went to LA to learn about film, editing, and production and they will help distribute the items we have collected to support the LA community over the last few weeks
- **Upcoming Upper School happenings include:**
 - US Musical, Mamma Mia! On March 6-8, DECA Trip March 4-8, and the FBLA Trip March 10-12, RoboRebels go on the road on March 16th.
 - Course selection for the 2025/26 academic school year begins this week and into next week with a zoom session on Monday, March 10th. The objective is to provide an overview of curriculum options with parents: **5:30 pm – current 8th Grade families | 6:30 pm - current 9th Grade families | 7:30 pm - current 11th Grade families.**
 - **Current 10 grade (rising 11 grade) families** are invited to an in-person presentation with comprehensive preview as it includes the college counselors and focuses on the second half of high school. This will be ahead of the Parent-Led conferences.
 - After Spring Break, Career Day and Perform Against Cancer showcase are planned.

V. Upper School Student / Club Highlight

- **Shailen S. – Robotics Team**
- The Robotics Team is a great opportunity to learn design, build and compete.
- Participants include grades 7-12 and the comradery among the students is strong as they compete in a 2-v-2 format.
- Students build self-confidence, learn leadership skills, mentor each other, and this skill set can be valuable in future scholarships.

VI. Videography and Technology Update

- **Laura Hollis, Director of Technology**
- We had our LA Trip, Season 2, in February and the students experienced important facets of the videography field.
- Laura Hollis reported that the students also created a stylish t-shirt for sale to the SRDS community showing support for LA. They are limited edition and available at <https://www.saddleriverday.org/fs/form-manager/view/f9141748-a0b5-4c71-a313-b45372587ea2>
- They have created a montage of their trip for you to enjoy.

VII. Videography and Technology Student Spotlight

- **Mia K. & Nadir J. - Los Angeles Production Trip, Rebels with a Cause, Nintendo Social**
- Students traveled to Los Angeles to learn Videography and other product techniques.
- At the beginning of their trip, they visited Pasadena to hand out essentials and positive note cards prepared by our SRDS community.
- They previewed their 3-minute video montage – well done to the students for their hard work, dedication and passion to this field.

VIII. Lower School Update and Upcoming Events

- **Chris Lebovits, Director of Community Engagement and Assistant Director of LS Admissions provided the update for Dana Stern.**
- Be sure to review the LS PG Events document, which is shared with families for the latest news and information. For March:
- March 12th (Wednesday) LS Code Ala Mode 5:30 PM-6:30 PM
- March 13th (Thursday) LS Author Visit- Suzanne Morris
- March 14th (Friday) No School – Conference Day
- March 17th-28th (Mon.-Fri.) No School – Spring Break

IX. Middle School Update and Upcoming Events

- **Anastasia Kelly, Head of Middle School**
- February was a busy month with the MS Concert and events for Black History Month.
- In March, although a short month with Spring Break from March 17 through March 28, 2025, students are preparing for their student-led conferences on March 14th.
- Spring N-Block choices will be sent over the week for you to discuss with your children.
- The debate team welcomed their newest and youngest members from the 5th grade. The team must research many important topics for their debates. One of our students also won a top award - congratulations to all students!
- Math competitions: In the first competition of the season, we had 4 MS students that took top honors and 1 student that scored in the top 5% nationally. MS students participated in MathCon and scores are expected to be ready on March 10th.
- MS Musical will be Aladdin this Spring. We are already planning and have a record number of students participating with 38 for the play itself and 12 for the crew team.
- The STEM Science Honors Society has 38 students participating and those who are successful will be inducted in a ceremony scheduled for June 2nd. The group recently visited the Liberty Science Center, and we are planning a trip to the Columbia Engineering Lab in April.
- The MS Social was planned by the 8th graders and it's going to be exciting with student entrepreneurs, pizza and games for all!
- The 7th grade Boston trip permission slips will be sent over spring break.
- Check out the MS Happenings document for all news and key dates.

X. Admissions Update

- **Geoffrey Bowman, Director of Admissions**
- Thank you to Parents Guild and our wonderful parents for chatting with our new families at last Thursday's reception. We had great feedback about the reception - good energy and enthusiasm for SRDS!
- It continues to be a very busy admissions year - applications and inquiries continue to track at our record highs.
- We are post-regular decision return date of March 3 - though we still have some upper school students waiting to hear from boarding schools and others before making a final decision in the next 2 weeks.

- We are in rolling admissions now until grades are full - many grades are full or very close to full at this time.
- Tours and visits for middle school will pick up this time of year, and we are already starting to schedule tours for families looking for 9th grade for Fall 2026!
- Thank you to everyone who continues to support us in Admissions!

XI. Athletics Update

- **PJ Petrow, Athletic Director**, provided the following updates:
- **Winter Sports Recap** - Our Winter Sports had a great season with Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, and Fencing in Middle School. In Upper School Winter Sports, Fencing included both MS and US, and we are meeting in April with Arena Fencing for year-round training. Additional sports included, Winter Track, Bowling - Chef Mark Carter was coach of the Year in the division, Wrestling - counties and districts, Boys Basketball (Varsity, JV), Girls Basketball (Varsity) states continue today and won their 9th county title in a row!
- We have multiple players from boys and girls BB that received all county recognition.
- **Spring Sports (Start Dates & Offerings) - registration is still open!**
- Today the MS has a meeting during advisory to review with Coach Gallo what is being offered.
- Spring Sports Start Dates: Upper School: Monday March 10 and Middle School: Monday March 31
- **Upper School Spring Sports:** Baseball – despite our best effort we do not have enough participants for this sport. We have plans to launch softball. We will have Boys Tennis, Boys Lacrosse, Girls Lacrosse, Golf - we will have a full girl's golf team this spring, Track & Field over 20 athletes are signed up, and Crew/Rowing.
- **Middle School Spring Sports:** Tennis - boys only in the spring, Track & Field, Lacrosse for boy and girls, Golf for boys and girls, and lastly Crew and Rowing through Bergen County Rowing Academy.
- Please encourage your children's participation and emphasize the benefits of multi-sport participation for skill development, teamwork, and fitness. Please stay engaged, attend and support our team games.
- Reminder to complete all necessary athletic forms and registrations before the season begins.
- As always, we value your feedback, let us know if you would like to include anything else, such as summer opportunities or a message about overall athletic philosophy.

XII. Performing Arts Preview of Upper School Musical *Mamma Mia*

- A video was shown with a preview of the US school musical.

XIII. Parents Guild Annual SRDS Gala and Upcoming Events

- **Heather Holder and Jacqueline Vasquez, Co-Presidents of the Parents Guild**
- **SRDS Gala 2025** will be held on April 26, 2025, and our theme this year is "Off to the Races"
- Last Call for the Gala donations and experiences as we wrap up our always fabulous offering menu for this year.

- Our event site is now open for ticket sales, 50/50 raffles, ad journal purchases, and sponsorship opportunities.

XIV. Motion to Adjourn – Join us for the next meeting on April 3, 2025, in Alford Hall, PAC.