

SRDS Parents Guild Meeting

Thursday, November 6, 2025

I. Welcome & Approval of October 2025 Minutes

- Alana Murphy and Heather Holder, Co-Presidents of the Parents Guild, welcomed attendees and started this month's Parents Guild meeting with the approval of the October 2025 meeting minutes.
- The opening of the Upper School Fall Musical of Pippin was announced which will be performed tonight, tomorrow, and Saturday at 7 PM. Tickets can be purchased online. The energy and liveliness of the show were praised.

II. Parents Guild Ladies' Night Out 2025 Announcements

- Claudia Sasso and Rosanna Young, Ladies' Night Out Co-Chairs, started their presentation with a game, asking the PG meeting attendees to look under their chair for a playing card. Three guests with cards won a prize. They proceeded by showing a video about next week's event, Ladies' Night Out on November 13, 2025, and mentioned the QR code for buying tickets.
- They described the excitement of the event and shared details about it including lucky draws and raffle prizes as well as a special raffle for a Christian Dior wallet and cash, and a mystery gift. They highlighted the event's features, including food, drinks, music, and the opportunity to meet new people.

III. Student Feature: Technology Department Los Angeles Student Trip Updates

- Serena G. and Nadir J. who went on the tech trip to Los Angeles, introduced themselves and shared their experiences, including visiting television sets and meeting industry professionals.
- They expressed how the trip confirmed their career aspirations and thanked the teachers and administrators for the opportunity and the behind-the-scenes insights.

IV. Parents Guild Holiday Market 2025

- Judy Han and Karen Ramirez, Holiday Market Co-Chairs, provided details about the event, including the date (December 12), the format, and the need for parent volunteers.
- The event will feature items priced at \$10 or less, with cash-only transactions. Parent volunteers are needed for setup and cleanup, decoration, and helping younger children shop.
- Middle School and Upper School students can submit a form and request to sell homemade products, and all the money from the sales will go back to the student.

V. Middle School News and Upcoming Events

- Ms. Anastasia Kelly, Head of Middle School, thanked parents for their support and mentioned the month of gratitude in advisory. Mini courses are coming up, with different themes for fifth through seventh graders and eighth through twelfth graders.
- She is planning a Schoology parents' workshop which will be announced soon.
- N Block signups for the winter season including winter sports will begin after Thanksgiving, with information available in the Happenings Document.
- The month includes various events, including a science and math fair, a language fair, and a humanities and electives fair. The National STEM Honor Society second meeting is this month, Parent-Teacher conferences are on November 6th and 7th, The Debate Tournament and Chess Tournament are also coming up.

VI. Rebels Make an Impact: Upper School Clubs and Volunteer Opportunities

- Mr. Cesar Rodriguez, Middle School Dean of Student Life, explained his role in working with the MS advisors on monthly themes as well as student issues in the classroom. He mentioned new N Blocks and encouraged students to pick what they are interested in from various choices. Also, encouraged students to try out something new for couple of weeks to experience it.
- NSTEM is up and running, monthly meetings during lunch period. Field trips associated with NSTEM will be coming up and counted towards the required hours.
- He thanked parents who volunteered to help with Middle School Socials and said they were well attended and students seemed to enjoy the events.
- As part of "Rebels For A Cause" students will be able to do their own fundraising and bring in the things that they are grateful for and they want to be a part of.
- He introduced the "Rebel of The Month" program where every month one student from each grade (5th-8th grade) will be nominated as the "Rebel of the Month." The faculty is looking for the students that display qualities such as being grateful, giving back, helping other students, being social and polite. All the teachers will be able to put in recommendations for students and vote for them.

VII. Upper School News and Upcoming Events

- Dr. Shai Zacaraev, Head of Upper School, mentioned Parent-Teacher conferences end of next week; Highlighted two state games coming up for Men's Varsity Soccer and Women's Varsity Soccer; also mentioned winter sports sign up is currently taking entries.
- There are a few trips coming up for US students including the Math Competition at Harvard, the first Robotic Competition, and the Debate Team's trip to NYC.
- Mini Courses presentations are taking place next week and US students have more than 15 options to choose from in a variety of interests.

VIII. Lower School News and Upcoming Events

- Presented by Ms. Heather Holder on behalf of Ms. Dana Stern, Head of Lower School.
- She reminded everyone that Ms. Stern's door is always open if parents need anything or have any ideas, questions or concerns.
- Lower School Trunk-or-Treat was a huge success. More than 30 cars participated and parents from all three divisions helped. Seniors also came dressed and helped throughout the event. She thanked Oscar Fuentes and Brittany Baker for their leadership in coordinating the event.
- Ms. Holder also recognized Mr. Adam Sasso, who put together the first REBEL Dads event for the year - 35 SRDS dads attended the luxury car event and enjoyed gourmet coffee, great pastries, and a racecar simulator experience.

IX. Update from SRDS Head of School

- Mr. Jalaj Desai, SRDS Head of School, provided updates about the new building construction. The school is ahead of schedule with construction and is working on furniture and design for future classrooms.
- Discussed the school's AI initiatives, including regulations on use of AI tools and the development of an in-house platform called srdshs.ai. The platform will help collect data on student learning patterns and behavior to improve curriculum and teaching.
- Mentioned the new schedule this school year: the schedule has been changed to a three day model offering more class time and fewer transition time between the classes, benefiting both students and teachers.
- He encouraged the community to get involved in school events and social activities.

X. Admissions and Financial Aid Update

- Mr. Geoffrey Bowman, Head of Admissions, provided an update on admissions events, including open houses, information sessions, and visit days.
- The Admissions Team is hosting various events to support current families and prospective students in the coming weeks. He mentioned "The Taste of 9th Grade" event earlier that week for the current students and families where 8th graders who got to meet some Upper School teachers and attend 9th grade classes. Students and parents were invited back in the evening to hear from a US Student Panel, courses offered, and US philosophy. Ms. Karen Ferretti, Director of College Admissions, talked about college advising and answered parent questions. The event concluded with a US Student Panel sharing their experiences and a catered dinner.
- Application deadlines: Early decision for new families applying for grades 4th-12th is December 1st,

Regular decision will be January 20th.

- The school is transitioning to a new financial aid program called Clarity, which offers a better user experience and increased security. The new program will be more mobile-friendly and allow for easier tax document uploads and has the option to connect directly with [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) accounts.

XI. Community Engagement at SRDS

- Ms. Chris Lebovits, Director of Community Engagement and Assistant Director of LS Admissions, thanked parents for their support with admissions events and mentioned upcoming community events.
- Reminded the audience about the December Book Club “The Usual Desire to Kill” by Camilla Barnes and mentioned the HealthBarn's pasta-making event is scheduled for December 3rd, and a Mahjong instructor has been found for a four-session course Thursday nights in January limited to 8 participants with a waiting list.

XII. Athletics Update

- Mr. PJ Petrow, SRDS Athletic Director, shared an update on the fall sports season, highlighting successes in cross country, tennis, volleyball and soccer.
- Winter sports registration is open, with a deadline of November 10th. He encouraged student athletes to get involved with winter and/or spring track during their off-season in order to stay fit.
- The school will host its first Fall Athletic Awards Dinner and Fundraiser on November 20th @7pm. Middle School and Upper School's Parents and athletes are invited to attend the event to celebrate the fall season.

XII. Parent Guild Update and Save the Dates

- Announced the upcoming Parents Guild Coffee on November 18th at Panera Bread. The event is a casual gathering for parents to socialize and catch up.
- Encouraged parents to attend the Ladies' Night Out event next Thursday with tickets available online. The event will feature various prizes and activities, and pre-printed name labels for raffle tickets will be available for convenience.
- The next PG Meeting will be on December 4th @ 8:30am in Alford Hall - PAC.
- Closed the meeting with Motion to Adjourn.