

**Minutes from School Without Walls Senior High School  
Home-School Association General Meeting  
May 22, 2013**

1. **Jean Boland** welcomed everyone to the end-of-year HSA meeting, described the agenda and noted that the meeting would include elections for the HSA Board and the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) parent representatives.
  
2. **Progress Report**
  - a. **Fundraising** – Jean reported that a total of \$80,217 had been raised from high school parents and another \$5,000 from alumni, teachers, and others. Jean acknowledged the fundraising plan developed by Diana Rojas raised a record breaking amount, due to the efforts of many volunteers in dues week, the end-of-year solicitation, and the final fundraising push in the Phone-A-Thon chaired by Leslie Allen and Susan Bandler. Contributions came from approximately 60% of high school families and included contributions at all levels. The money raised was used to fund sports, arts, teacher training, AP teacher certification and more.
  
  - b. **Francis-Stevens Partnership (now called School Without Walls @ Francis Stevens)**

Jean provided a recap of the chronology of the Francis-Stevens/School Without Walls merger. She reported that the HSA, in conjunction with the LSAT, has been working to understand the implications of the DCPS decision. Members of the HSA and LSAT have engaged in discussions with DCPS Chief of Schools John Davis and Instructional Superintendent Thomas Anderson to communicate parent concerns and to see if there is a process that parents can participate in to discuss the future.

As a result of these meetings with DCPS, there is an agreement that no high school students will take classes at Francis-Stevens next school year, the high school will have full-time leadership in place (an associate principal), and high school enrollment would be maintained at the current level next year. As a result of those discussions, Mr. Davis issued a letter to the School Without Walls community that addresses the merger, confirms the agreements and also describes the creation of a special working group to be chaired by Dr. Jennifer Smith, Senior Director at the Flamboyant Foundation and former Principal of the Capitol Hill Cluster. This working group will explore logistical issues including size, facility needs, and transportation. The link to the letter is <http://www.swwhs.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/130522SWWFSMerger.pdf>.

It was clear from the discussion that there is continued concern about the merger and its failure to provide benefits to the high school. While parents are pleased at the decision to keep all SWW high school students at the high school for the coming year, they realize this is a temporary decision. Parents urged that the HSA continue to be vocal in opposition to the merger, but they also recognize the value of participating in discussions with DCPS to influence the decisions that have an impact on our high school.

Jean Boland asked parents to review the letter and share their thoughts with her. Jean also noted the belief of the HSA Board and LSAT members who have been working on this issue over the last few months that there is value in participating in a process where we can help influence DCPS's thinking on what comes next for School Without Walls High School. Jean urged the group to read the emails that will be coming and that will provide critical updates on this and other SWW issues, come to LSAT and HSA meetings, and share their thoughts with the HSA and LSAT.

### **3. Elections**

Elections for the HSA Board and the LSAT were held. John Mitchell, outgoing co-chairman of the LSAT and co-chair of the nomination committee, described the nominations process and announced the candidates for the HSA Board for the 2013-14 school year:

Jean Boland, President  
Melanie Gisler, Vice President  
Annette Nielsen, Treasurer  
Jennifer Boulanger, Secretary  
Wes Hallman, At-Large Officer  
Greg King, At-Large Officer  
Susan Shults, At-Large Officer

The nominees were approved by unanimous voice vote.

John announced the following candidates for the LSAT:

Ed Lazere, Co-Chair  
Joan Kirchner, Parent Representative  
Karen McSweeney, Parent Representative  
Anthony Moore, Parent Representative  
Melody Webb, Parent Representative

Because there were more candidates for parent representatives than openings, paper ballots were distributed and counted by John, Tomi Landis and Diana Rojas. John announced that there was a tie and proposed that all nominees be approved and that next year there would not be a freshman parent on the LSAT. He noted that the LSAT meetings are open to the high school community and so interested freshman parents would be able to attend the meetings. The nominees were then approved by unanimous voice vote.

Jean thanked Diana Rojas, Karen Beiley, Felicia Meier, Ann Morgan, Claudia Morris, John Mitchell, Melissa Mehning and Becky Vaughn for their service to the HSA and LSAT this school year.

### **4. New School Dance Policy**

A new policy guiding procedures for school dances was presented. Under the new policy, adopted in April, dance sponsors must ensure there are security guards and sufficient chaperones. No tickets will be sold at the door of dances. Students must comply with behavioral guidelines. In the event there is a suspicion of drug or alcohol use, security personnel will be notified and a

breathalyzer or field sobriety test may be administered. The policy can be found at: <http://www.swwhs.org/safety/>

**5. Grade Increase for College Courses**

Last August the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) issued a new policy that gave the DC school systems (DCPS and Charters) the option of providing a grade point bump for college classes completed by high school students. DCPS adopted the change early in the school year and mandated that high schools comply. The decision, which has impact on classes of SWW students who participate in the GW Early College Program-AA, was first communicated to the Walls community at the April LSAT meeting.

LSAT Co-Chair Elect Ed Lazere reported on the decision, the lack of opportunity for the SWW community to comment, and the failure to notify parents and students of the decision in a timely manner. He said that a DCPS representative has agreed to attend the next LSAT meeting in June (date to be determined) to address the policy change and answer questions.

**6. Summer News**

- a. **Summer Bridge** – Jean announced that summer bridge would be a one week session this summer rather than a two week session.
- b. **Summer Assignments** – Mr. Trogisch announced that there will be one book to read for each discipline over the summer. AP teachers may still assign additional work. Details are still under discussion and will be announced later.

**7. Enrollment**

Enrollment for each grade is between 140 and 145 students with approximately 15-20 international students.

**8. International Travel**

Jean announced that the following trips are being considered for next school year:

India, October 8-21

Rome, November 21-30

Japan, April 12-19

Brazil, April 14-21

Mr. Trogisch also noted that a trip to Germany was also under consideration. Jean reported that there have been discussions of holding all school trips in the spring. Mr. Trogisch noted that the advantage of fall trips is that they don't conflict with DC CAS.

**9. Sports Banquet**

Wes Hallman announced that the Spring Sports Banquet would be Sunday, June 9 from 5:30 – 8:30 at Eastern Market. He encouraged families to purchase tickets in advance.

**10. Jean closed the meeting** by thanking all the parents who volunteered this past year for the high school.