



NEW YORK STATE CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS, INC.
-Branch of the National
H.B. Thompson Middle School
President and Co-President: Tara Ginsburg & Melissa Capie
January 11, 2024

Good Morning everyone.

The meeting will come to order, at 10:05 am with a quorum present (14 members - Section 4 of Article 11). Attendance will be taken by sign in sheet and there are also budget sheets on the tables. Please make sure you sign the sheet on the tables.

I. Approve minutes from the November 2023 meeting:

We had distributed the minutes via email from our last PTA meeting in November for review via email. Does anyone have comments, changes, or questions? **None.** If not, minutes stand as approved. Thank you.

II. Treasurer's PTA Funds Report: Danielle Kurtzer: As of 12/22/2023:

Opening Balance, 10/21/2023	\$ 54,506.86
Income/Deposits	11,274.84
<u>Expense/Cash Disbursements</u>	<u>6,096.11</u>
Checking Balance	\$ 59,685.59
<u>Saving Balance as of 12/22/2023</u>	<u>\$ 6,249.53</u>
TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 12/22/2023	\$ 65,935.12

All balances were reconciled to the bank statements. The books were reviewed and found to be in order by Nina Grieco. Thank you, Nina.

III. President's Report- Tara Ginsburg / Melissa Capie

Welcome back everyone! We can't believe we are in 2024 already! We want to personally wish everyone a very happy and healthy New Year!

December was a very busy and successful month for the PTSA. Starting with our Holiday Boutique. Thank you Jordana Altman and Shira Zatcoff! Next we had our Gift Card fundraiser which we love because we are able to save our PTSA members the fees we would normally have to pay. Who doesn't like no fees!? Thank you April Sontag!

We are always so thankful for our HBT administration for all that they do for us. The HBT PTSA arranged our annual luncheon to give thanks for a wonderful 2023. Big shout out to sandwich express in Plainview for their beautiful spread of sandwiches, salads, and dessert. They made everything so easy, effortless and worked within our budget.

Nominations! It's that time of year again. We are looking to all our amazing parents to fill our board for next year. The email went out last week and Beatrice Yung, the nominations committee chair, will go over more during her committee report. Please see Beatrice or us with any questions you may have regarding open positions and what these positions entail if you are not familiar. Also, please review our Bylaws and Procedures which are located on our website for all details regarding these positions as well.

This year we are so excited to be more involved in the Multicultural week at HBT. Between organizing our arts in education event and also participating in the multicultural exposition with hospitality for our hard working parents and families *who are really the stars of the show*. Xu Zhang, our multicultural expo chair, will go into more details on our involvement and how you can get involved if you are interested.

Reminder to our 8th grade parents – please watch your emails to start preparing for your 8th grader's transition to High School. An email already went out this week. This information will include valuable resources to facilitate the course selection process, along with information concerning on-line opportunities to preview course offerings and have a clear understanding of programming choices for your rising 9th grader.

Also, yearbooks are available for ordering now. Please go to the HBT Website for instructions on how to order your 8th grader a yearbook. As a reminder the yearbooks are handled by the HBT administration and not the PTSA.

As a final reminder, we are still working on our HBT awards committee so once again, if you are interested, please reach out to us for details.

With that, we will hand it off to Mr. Bonanno's team for their report.

IV. Principal's Report:

Mr. Harrigan – We will start with Ms. Waters since she has several meetings today.

Ms. Waters – Good morning everyone. We are busy with articulation meetings with the H.S. We are meeting with representatives from the HS and our guidance department as well as our special education department to discuss transitions from 8th to 9th grade for specific students. We are also working with our 5th grade students on their transition to 6th grade, so a lot of meetings. I can assure you for both transitions, we discuss every single student. Right now, guidance counselors just started visiting our 8th grade classes and discussing the H.S. curriculum and transition and the children have received the HS course planning worksheet. There will be two evening presentations, on January 23rd (6:30-8pm) and the 25th (5-6:30). Please use one of the workshops available and sign up. We also utilize Dr. Durante's e-book and recommend everyone to review it.

There is an important change to the curriculum – all 9th graders will have a shared experience – CEAL – Cultural Engagement Through Advisory Leadership – focuses on global citizenry and what it means to be

a citizen of the world – working with anti-defamation league and equality – makes sure our 9th graders are learning about others from different communities, etc. → expands on the advisory concept.

Parent question – Does this replace advisory? **Answer** – There is no advisory in HS, but this expands on the advisory concept of what it means to be a part of Syosset, a good citizen, etc.

Parent question – Is it automatically included in a student's schedule? **Answer** – Yes.

Lastly, we are entering our Annual review process for Special Education and we will be seeing quite a few parents over the next few months. We look forward to discussing your children's progress with you.

Dr. Curry – Because this CEAL offering is new, we want everyone to see it from all perspectives and understand what may or may not work. There is a concern about the availability of electives for our 9th graders. The Guidance team is working with middle schoolers to look at options to ensure there are offerings for electives, etc. There may be a subtle switch if they cannot take this course in the 9th grade year, but every child will take this course, even if it needs to get pushed to 10th grade. Additionally, the Wellness Course has been taken as a part of the PE course. However, it is disruptive to PE (20 classes get allocated to Wellness and child gets removed from PE). Additionally, although our PE teachers are wonderful, they may not be the best to teach the items in Wellness. We will now be providing Wellness every other day and it will be structured. The course is written by Syosset teachers and staff – not simply buying a curriculum. Teachers are already gathering resources and will be taught by teachers trained in these topics.

Parent question – Is this (CEAL) being offered to other grades, like Middle School & Elementary?

Dr. Curry Answer – Middle School was a model for advisory and what it should be. Thus, it is already taking place. We have age-appropriate programs at each level and at the end of this year, all 10 schools will be certified as a no place for hate – we have been working hard to get every school certified. We are also looking to enhance the 10th grade peer leaders program because it is now 9th grade peer leadership for every student. We want to ensure this peer leadership program is open to all students.

Ms. Waters - It is always a challenge when we offer something new, but this is a very positive add-on.

Dr. Curry – In the scheduling process, there often is a “singleton” – this new course is offered in one place, one period, and the child loses out because it doesn't fit within their schedule, conflicts or eliminates lunch as an option. District does not want this, so the H.S. is working on how many periods this can be offered so that every child can take it.

Parent question - Who is teaching?

Dr. Curry - We are having trained certified health teachers and sending teachers for additional training to work with social workers, school psychologists, etc.

Ms. Waters – Feel free to reach out with any questions.

Mr. Harrigan – Thank you to those from the faculty who are joining us this morning – especially Ms. Verre and Ms. Fokianos.

Multicultural week – Every morning we will have world language students make announcements in the language they study, have cultural music throughout the day

- 1/22 – cultural harmony club – have a multicultural no place for hate advisory activity
- Children will attend festivities during world language classes

- We are going to have a number of faculty present/host events across multiple cultures. Russian, Japanese, Asian writing and calligraphy, Israeli dancing, Hinduism, Moroccan culture, Korean martial arts, sign language, Greek dancing, Chinese zodiac, Drum circles and Irish and Nordic fiddling, just to name a few.
- On Friday, 1/26 – lunch / countries with food hosted by many parents
- Curriculum enrichment from around the world
 - o One Change – The multicultural exposition will be held later in the day – used to be periods 1-3, now taking place during periods 4,5,&6. This will give parents more time to prepare, setup, etc.
 - o Students make incredible displays and performances – golden dragon dance, Chinese, Korean fan dance, Tai Chi, etc.

Addressing Anti-Semitism and other hate:

- On 1/29, The Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center of Nassau County will present their workshop on the Introduction to the Holocaust for our 6th graders. 2 days later, we will have the Four Perfect Pebbles author (Marion Blumenthal Lazan), who is a Holocaust survivor, will present to the 6th graders.
- Linked - by Gordon Korman – Book is about a school's response to the appearance of swastika vandalism – Late January through March – kids will read the book and have a curriculum surrounding it. He will also come and speak to the children on 3/12.
- 7th grade ELA teachers – Anti-semitism and schedule workshop – deconstructing symbols of hate from the Holocaust museum – will be in the spring (April)
- 8th graders – Went to DC and visited the Holocaust memorial and WWII is an important part of the 8th grade curriculum, as well as the Japanese internment and Anti-Asian hate.
- From the Fires: Voices of the Holocaust – The presentation of “From the Fires” will be on 4/2

Mr. Naraine – It's hard for me to begin, since I am still thinking about all the food that is going to be at the multicultural expo.... I can't wait!

8th grade – Will be transitioning to computer-based testing for the end of the year and are preparing all the children. All children will be taking state exams on chrome books. English teachers are helping by having their children take practice exams.

Next Wednesday, 1/17 – As a simulation and practice, the children will go through a 10 question exam – all 8th graders will sign-on and see if they get in during period 2. They will take the tests in 8th grade ELA, Science and Math. Built-in to these exams are the systems to assist children on an as-needed basis. For example, if a child normally has questions read to them, they can highlight the passage and it is read to them over their headphones.

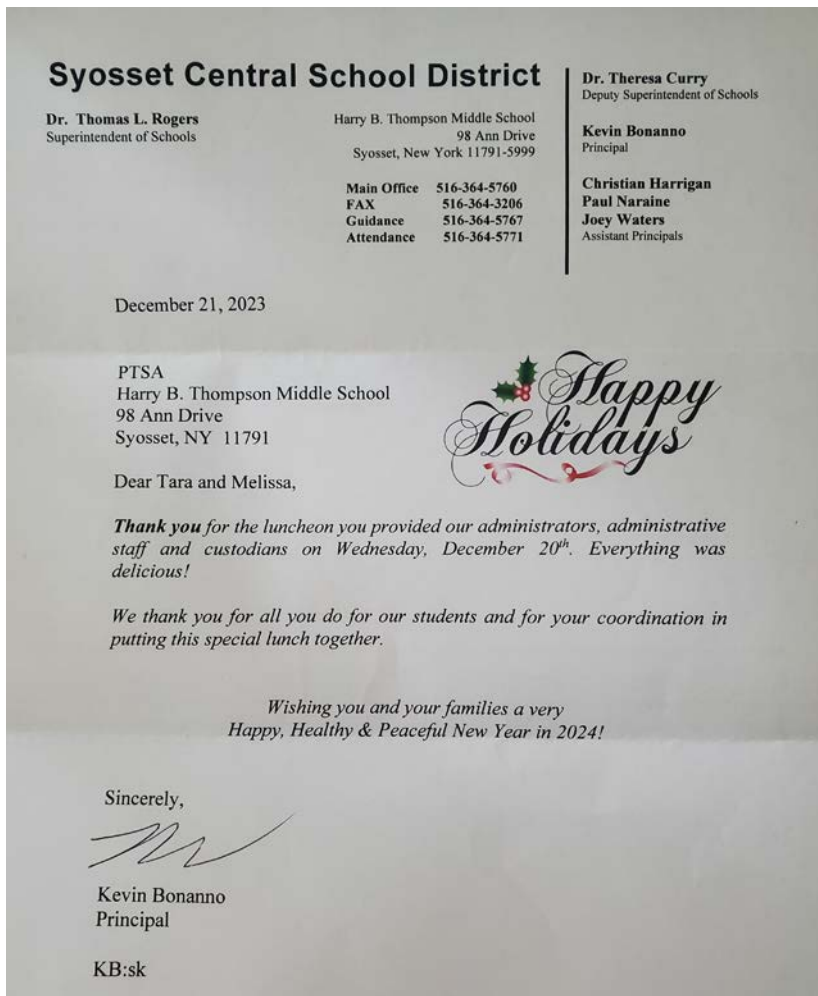
- Our hope is to do 6th and 7th grade next year

Parent question – For the 8th graders who went to the Holocaust Museum, was there any additional follow-up or work needed to be done around that?

Answer (Mr. Harrigan) – Teachers walked through the memorial with them and following the visit, they discussed it in Social Studies. Will get in more depth during the World War II unit and

their DC trip will be revisited and emphasized what they learned there.

V. Correspondence: April Sontag (Read by Melissa Capie): Letter from Mr. Bonanno:



VI. Committee Reports

A. 8th Grade Committee – Karen Ostrick & Nina Grieco

The 8th Grade Committee chairs will be meeting to go over ideas that we have for our 8th graders and how to celebrate them this spring. Feel free to reach out to the Committee Chairs, Nina & Karen, for more information.

B. BOE Report -Inna Choi

Superintendent's Report

- CTE (Career and Technical Education) Program Presentation – David Steinberg, SHS Assistant Principal

2024-25 Pathway to Success – Syo+. Implementing heuristic skills

Syosset creating 3 pathways:

1. Accounting and Finance
2. Business, Management, and Administration
3. Pre- Engineering

Upon Pathway Completion:

1. NYSED Technical Endorsement (a seal affixed to diploma upon completion of each pathway) and
 2. Mico-credentials (skills attained, needed for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, and advancement; informed by Syosset Business Advisory Board and local industry leaders). E.g., a badge for Excel on resume instead of merely stating, “proficient in Excel,” that every resume states
- New Graduation Requirements from NYSED – Dr. Raymond Loverso

Commission recommendation to Board of Regents:

Currently 3 diploma types a student can earn. I.e.: Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation, Regents Diploma, and Local Diploma Consolidated into one diploma type with an emphasis on different pathways. I.e.: “Required 4” - English, Math, Science, Social Studies + 1 (New Pathways: STEM, Humanities, Arts, LOTE, CTE, COOS, Civic Readiness.

No Audience to the Public

Mr. Naraine – Dr. Curry and I are going through the college application process with our kids. This seal goes beyond the academic processes – If you get the seal, you can get it added to the college application. It is definitely helpful to distinguish your application.

Parent question - Is this attainable for special education students? It is not a BOCES program, but is it available?

Dr. Curry – There have always been pathways for those who are in Special Education to pursue a credential-based certificate – this idea came from that and will be offered to all students. For example, we are one of the only districts that offers a real estate course, so that a student can take the exam and become a licensed real estate agent. Another example is if you wanted to become google certified, it is a 60-hour plus investment and now we are infusing it into the classroom, so it is easier to get the certification. Opportunities are there for all students.

C. Curriculum Enrichment – Karen Ostrick

On January 25th, Lou Del Bianco is coming to perform a program called “Around the World”. This is an exciting and culturally responsive program combining storytelling, theater and music from cultures around the world. This program is for the whole school and there will be 3 programs presented that day, one for each grade.

D. Nominating Committee – Beatrice Yung

Our Nominating Committee is working to help identify and propose our slate of officers for next year. There will be several vacant positions. Our needs will be Co-president, VPs, Secretary, treasurer and council delegates. If you would like to get more involved and help make our children's middle school years more memorable, please let the Nominating Committee know! We sent out the Nominating Form this week. In the meantime, if you have any questions as to the duties, time involved, etc., please feel free to ask Beatrice Yung (our Nominations Chair) or us at nominations@hbtpsa.org.

For anyone interested in a position or getting more involved with us, please reach out to us (it's never too early or too late to get involved)!!

E. Membership – Nina Grieco

Thank you to those of you who have already signed up for membership. Please remember that being a PTSA member brings benefits – your vote counts, you get access to our directory spot, you can run a committee, you get our weekly email blasts and reminders, and you get to be involved making a difference for our children.

The link to become a member is always in the weekly emails and social media pages (Facebook and Instagram). If you do not have the link, please feel free to email us. Please check our Facebook page (HBT PTSA) and Instagram pages (also HBT PTSA) to stay updated on the latest happenings at HBT. Make sure to follow those pages, as we post flyers and any reminders as well.

Another valuable resource of membership is the ability to hold a position on our Executive Committee – more on that when we discuss the Nominating Committee later on in the meeting.

Thank you to all of you who became members. It's never too late to join! Please let your friends and family know and become a member! Membership is one of our largest fundraisers and brings substantial benefits like voting, getting our email blasts, becoming a board member, etc.

F. Holiday Boutique - Jordana Altman and Shira Zatcoff

We had a successful holiday boutique and made \$1265.14 in profit. The kids thoroughly enjoyed shopping, especially now that we take credit cards. We had several best sellers including dog toys and wind up mice (where races were being conducted in the hallways – a lot of fun!). Thank you to all the volunteers for helping.

G. Reflections Committee – Xu Zhang

HBT students did an excellent job of flexing their creativity with their interpretations of the theme “I Am Hopeful Because....”. As a result, 18 entries were submitted for anonymous review by teachers from another school. Here is a summary of the submissions from HBT students: 4

entries in Literature, 4 entries in Photography, 7 entries in Visual Arts, and 3 entries in Special Arts. All three entries in Special Arts along with two entries in each of the Literature, Photography, and Visual Arts categories have been selected to advance to the Nassau County competition (see below for details).

Visual Arts: Pai Liu & Elaine Xia

Photography: Amalie Steinberger & Marieke Van Berkel

Literature: Spencer Zhang & John Gad

Special Arts Literature: Kristofer Castillo

Special Arts Visual Arts: Michael Biondo & Rex Fung

H. SEPTA - Jennifer Poitrimol

SEPTA is a district wide PTA whose primary role is to promote acceptance and inclusion of all by providing resources and support to parents, teachers and children who receive special education services through an IEP, 504 Plan or related support services. Membership is our primary fundraiser, which provides scholarships for graduating Syosset High School seniors and helps us bring in informative programming including parent/sibling support groups and guest speakers. SEPTA focuses on providing information about various issues that can aid ALL parents in helping their children achieve their personal best.

We need your help!! We are currently at 85% of our goal and need approximately 60 more members - please ask your friends and relatives - it's the best \$12 you will spend all year. There are membership forms on the tables (if you'd like to pay by check or cash) as well as the QR codes that will bring you directly to our online store to join.

Our next Meeting is Tuesday 1/30/2023 at 7:45pm at Baylis Elementary School. The presentation topic will be Supporting Neurodiverse Students both in school and in the home and will be an extension of the presentation from last year.

Take the night off from cooking and help support SEPTA at our Taco Tuesday fundraiser at Chipotle on Tuesday, January 23rd from 5-9pm. Orders can be in person (just mention the SEPTA fundraiser) or online or in the app for pickup using Code HCPZPVW. 33% of all sales will be donated to SEPTA - thanks for your support!

The Nominating Committee of SEPTA is preparing for the annual election for their executive officers and council delegates for the 2024-25 school year. Anyone who wants to be considered for office by the Nominating Committee must return the form no later than February 9, 2024. Additionally, you may recommend someone you think would be a good candidate for consideration. While no one may hold more than one office at a time, the committee would appreciate being advised of all the positions for which you would like to be considered. Members who currently hold an office and would like to continue for a second term must also respond.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosemarie Hardina at rmhardina@gmail.com
Nominating Committee Chair.

VII. Council Committee Updates:

A. Communications Conference – Pam Bahiri

The communications conference committee met with the district administration on November 29th. Here is the link for the answers to the topics which were discussed- <https://www.syossetschools.org/Page/376>. It is also available on the district website. If anyone would like more information about any of these topics or has any questions for the district administration for our spring meeting, please contact Pam Bahiri at pambahiri@gmail.com.

B. Cultural Unity – Xu Zhang

The Cultural Unity Committee will be holding our now annual Celebration of Culture again this spring! We invite your students to help us celebrate the many cultures in our community and start thinking about:

- What culture means to you?
- How culture is celebrated in your home?
- What culture has taught you?
-Or anything that defines culture for you!!

Submissions will begin in March and will end with our Celebration of Culture ceremony on May 30, 2024. Please be on the lookout for the flyer at the end of February.

C. Parent Resource Group – Krista Harris

The next presentation will be on January 29, and the topic will be Navigating the District Website. If you are curious about what information is available on the website or where to find certain topics, this presentation is for you! If you have specific questions, please submit them to your unit's Council PRG rep, Krista Harris, by January 17th.

D. Scholarship Mailing – Shira Zatcoff

The Scholarship Committee had a successful fundraiser at Taim on December 7. We are planning another fundraiser at Chipotle on January 16. Order in store or online (directly through Chipotle) from 4pm-8pm.

We are having another fundraiser at Fly Me to the Moon Cafe in Syosset. 10% of orders in the entire month of January will go back to the Scholarship Fund. Please remember to mention Syosset Scholarship Fund when ordering at both places and thank you for your support!

VIII. New Business: None

IX. Dates to Remember – Melissa Capie

Keep an eye on our dates to remember in our weekly updates for additional dates between now and our next meeting.

- **January 15 - School Closed**
- **January 17 - 7th Grade Winter Concert**
- **January 24 - 6th Grade Winter Concert**
- **January 26 -Multicultural Expo**
- **January 30 - SEPTA at Baylis 7:45pm**
- **February 8 - PTSA Meeting 7:45pm HBT Cafeteria**
- **February 12 -BOE Meeting at 8pm**

Ms. Verre - On 2/9, we will be celebrating P.S. I Love You Day. We will be having an extended advisory on the 8th because since it is a heavy topic, we didn't want to have an extended advisory on this topic on Friday. We wanted to be sure to be available on Friday after the extended advisory on Thursday before breaking for the weekend. This day was organized by 2 students in West Islip HS, whose father committed suicide while the kids were at school. We focus our discussions on mental health, the available support staff at HBT who the students should reach out to, when to reach out and having open communication with students on how to reach out and get help when needed.


If there is no further business (**None**), the meeting will stand adjourned.

Meeting is adjourned at 10:53 am

Recorded by Jennifer Poitrimol, Recording Secretary

Attendees:

Tara Ginsburg	Dana Holzer	Sherri Smith
Melissa Capie	Nina Grieco	Xu Zhang
Mr. Harrigan	Brian Grieco	Sarah Lin
Mr. Naraine	Dana Kralstein	Krista Harris
Ms. Waters	Jen Biondo	Kelly Fokianos
Ms. Verre	Inna Choi	Dr. Theresa Curry
Jennifer Poitrimol	Min An	Karen Ostrick



Jennifer Poitrimol

Recording Secretary