

PTSA Parent Meeting  
*Title 1-Parent Engagement*

**MINUTES**

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Hillside Library

6:30 PM

1. PTSA Announcement

- Used Book Fair, April 27-29. Please drop off donations in the Hillside lobby beginning on March 13. Also, volunteers are needed to sort books (by age, type, genre) beginning on March 17 in Room 155 on Tuesdays/Fridays beginning at 9:45 am.
- Next PTSA meeting is on April 25, 6:30 PM. Jamie Nedwick will present on digital citizenship, social media, and issues that arise as kids get phones and access to other digital devices.

2. SEPTA Announcements

- Annual Review – If you'd like to speak to anyone either before or after your child's meeting. Contact information for SEPTA officers is available at <http://www.hohschools.org/Page/138>.
- Parent Member Training for IEP Meeting by Laura Sullivan, Trish Johnson, and Ahava Steinbauer on Monday, March 6, 2017 9:00-11:00 am (HHS Blue Lecture Room) or Tuesday, March 7, 2017 6:30pm – 8:30pm (Middle/High School Library). To become a parent member you must be a school district resident or resident of a neighboring district; not employed by the school district; trained by the school district; parents of student with disability or a student who was declassified or graduated within 5 years. Also, you must be willing to maintain confidentiality.

3. FLES Presentation by Nanesha Nuñez and Eleonora Bertacchi

- The presenters described how FLES fits into the school's overall curriculum and Ms. Nunez described a typical day in Spanish class at Hillside. The presentation can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1zuWppiop\\_2ijp1xO-cOiIUXQLk2UUD08mhw\\_H0LwsjE/edit#slide=id.g1a4bb9a4c1\\_1\\_5](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1zuWppiop_2ijp1xO-cOiIUXQLk2UUD08mhw_H0LwsjE/edit#slide=id.g1a4bb9a4c1_1_5).

- FLES meets twice every 6-day cycle for 30 minutes. When the students go to fifth grade, they spend half a year in Spanish and half a year in French and then choose which language to pursue through middle school. In high school, students can either switch to Latin or add Latin.
- The rationale for the FLES program is trying to capitalize on the early window of opportunity because young children are linguistic sponges. Starting at an early age lets them develop an ear for sound and pronunciation. Children who learn early are more able to sound like native speakers. Studies have shown that learning another language early also fosters global awareness and a longer sequence of study leads to more proficiency.
- Ms. Nunez also suggested that parents visit her website [www.nunez-fles.weebly.com](http://www.nunez-fles.weebly.com).
- A parent asked how Ms. Nunez handles students who come in fluent. She responded that they usually are conversational but don't read or write with fluency so she focuses on those skills.
- A parent thanked Senorita Nunez for his child's faster progress on vocabulary acquisition this year than the past.
- A parent asked what supports are in place for children who acquire language differently. Ms. Nunez responded that she uses interactive techniques and a small group setting to foster learning and make it less scary. The classroom is a safe environment for everyone. There are word banks, picture clues, and directions numbered in simple language.
- A parent asked whether Senorita Nunez brought immersion to the school but Mr. Johnson responded that Senora Smith also used the immersion technique but not as strictly.
- A parent made a comment that some children are feeling anxious with the amount of Spanish being spoken this year during FLES as opposed to in years past when they felt more at ease during FLES time. Mr. Johnson

responded that Ms. Smith conducted class in Spanish around 90% of the time while Ms. Nunez is conducting class in Spanish at a higher rate.

- A parent asked about additional time for the students at FLES. Ms. Cazes responded that we can't have additional FLES without an additional teacher and an additional teacher is not in the budget for next year because next year's focus is on adding additional sections, a STEM/Maker Space teacher and a .2 school counselor.
- Ms. Nunez urged parents to reach out if their children are experiencing frustration because FLES is supposed to be a positive and fun experience.

#### 4. Curriculum Update [Ms. Cazes and Mr. Johnson]

- Ms. Cazes announced that an ELA needs assessment is being conducted at Hillside by Dr. Gravity Goldberg (<http://www.drgravitygoldberg.com>), who is coming to school to meet with teachers and learn about where we are with ELA development. Dr. Goldberg will evaluate areas of strength and where growth is needed. We are hoping to achieve horizontal alignment where students in the same grade get the same general instruction. (i.e., everyone does a nonfiction assignment or a personal narrative, but teachers can still personalize how they achieve instructional goals). Also, the school is working on vertical alignment, meaning building skills as students progress through grades. The goal is to have students feel successful as readers and writers.
- Ms. Cazes stated that the school will have parent workshops next year.
- Ms. Cazes explained that teachers used ELA modules for a couple of years after Common Core was introduced, but now there is a mix pulled from balanced literacy and module materials. She stated that the school needs to have a vision with a clear goal and to use the same language year to year. Hillside will either buy and adapt or create curriculum with Gravity and her team. It doesn't matter what we choose because we'll personalize it, but we do need a jumping off point to achieve vertical alignment.

- Ms. Cazes also announced that an assembly took place today by Soul Steps who taught students how to step. It was a wonderful presentation and the school is creating a cultural arts committee to focus on bringing other assemblies to the school. Ms. Cazes asked parents who are interested in joining the committee to contact the PTSA VPs.

5. **Social Emotional Learning Program Update [Ms. Cazes and Mr. Johnson]**

- Ms. Cazes announced that the school is choosing between two potential social emotional learning curriculums: Second Step and Open Circle. Ms. Cazes, Mr. Johnson and Jeremy Luft are evaluating the choices and will make a decision and introduce one of the curriculums next year.
- FMS will use PBIS (which stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and parts of Second Step, and is also moving into R.U.L.E.R. (which stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions), a program that didn't meet Hillside's diverse needs.
- Ms. Cazes also announced that she is asking for an additional .2 school counselor to help roll out program.
- Ms. Cazes announced that the H.E.A.R.T. program was a great success and feedback from the survey was very positive. She added that parents who are interested in facilitating an additional section should let the PTSA VPs know so we can make a determination about going forward. She is looking to give opportunity to 4th graders next and would first survey the 4th grade to ascertain the level of interest.

6. **Before-School Procedures** – Ms. Cazes reminded parents that there is no supervision at Hillside before 7:50 am. For safety reasons, students should not be dropped off before 7:50 am.

7. **PTSA Sponsored African American Inventors Exhibit**

- Jacqueline Weitzman, co-president of the PTSA, announced that the PTSA is thrilled to be sponsoring an exhibit on African American Inventors

and Achievers, in the HHS lobby. The exhibit has been created and curated by Mrs. Shirley Harris, a now-retired teacher from White Plains. We expect to have the exhibit for 3-4 weeks.

- The exhibit highlights inventions (including improvements to inventions) created by African Americans, such as the traffic light, fountain pen, golf tee (which prevents divots), mop, ironing board, lawn mower, saddle, medical devices, rail car coupling devices, fire ladders, and so much more. Mrs. Harris points out how these inventions for the most part were not created with the idea of sales and profits; rather, they were to make the working lives of African Americans easier, which is why so many items relate to work in and around the home. Needless to say, the exhibit provides endless opportunities for discussion and activities. Already, high school art students borrowed pieces to draw and TV studio students began video interviews of the set up process.

Minutes from prior meetings are posted on the Hillside webpage:

<http://www.hohschools.org/domain/193>

**Next PTSA meeting: April 25, 6:30 PM.**