



QUESTIONS

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THE HSA BYLAWS AMENDMENT RELATING TO GRAD BALL **ANSWERS TO YOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

What is the issue?

The Grad Ball (GB) is currently a standing committee of the HSA. The HSA Executive Board would like to delete the provisions regarding Grad Ball from our Bylaws because we are concerned about our ability to adequately oversee the actions of the Grad Ball committee, primarily with respect to its financial activities.

Can you reschedule the vote on Bylaws to an evening meeting to accommodate working parents?

- YES. We've heard your concerns, and in addition to creating this FAQ, we have decided to reschedule the vote. We've designated our March 23 (Fri.) morning meeting as a time to present and discuss a "first reading" of the proposed amendments.
- The HSA's May 9 (Wed.) evening meeting at 7:30 pm will present the amendments to our membership for final vote. This gives members six weeks to "digest" all the information presented.

What is the call-in number for HSA meetings?

Please check our [website](#) later this week for the number and access code.

Why is the HSA making this change?

We are concerned about our ability to oversee the financial activities of the Grad Ball for several reasons:

- Grad Ball's budget (an average \$60,000 - \$80,000) is two to three times the size of the HSA budget, with many cash transactions, creating a vulnerable situation that is difficult to oversee.
- Our HSA treasurer is already dealing with regular HSA business on behalf of grades 6-12. Current Bylaws require a disproportionate amount of time dedicated to Grade 12.
- If we fail to adequately oversee our Grad Ball committee it could limit our right to be indemnified.

Why is the HSA doing this now?

- As of September 2017, all the HSA boards in the district are covered under the Board of Education's D&O (Directors and Officers) Insurance. The HSA boards never had any coverage before this. We realized that our right to be indemnified as well as our 501(c)(3) status could be jeopardized if we don't comply with Bylaws provisions.
- At the beginning of the current school year, the HSA Executive Board reviewed the Bylaws and found provisions regarding Grad Ball financial oversight that weren't being complied with. The decision to change the Bylaws was also due to intermittent but recurring issues over the years with Grad Ball processes and the recording, verifying and communicating of financial information.

- There was no “rushing” it through: we gave two (2) weeks’ notice and a full explanation for the changes to our members prior to a regularly scheduled meeting that was on the calendar since September.
- In addition, we wanted any changes completed prior to GB ’19’s organizational meeting as a courtesy to them. Since the vote has been moved and will not occur until our May 9 evening meeting, the HSA board will vote on a resolution that immediately offers Grad Ball 2019 501(c)(3) coverage under the HSA umbrella for its fundraising and banking activities, as needed, through June 2019.

What does this mean for GB? Will it be cancelled?

- Grad Ball will NOT be cancelled by any HSA decree and it will continue to be up to the committed, creative and caring Senior Class parents who step up (as it currently is) to organize and produce it. It is a misguided perception that assumes removing the Grad Ball provisions from our Bylaws would somehow cause the end of Grad Ball. Keeping GB in the hands of Senior Class parents who step up to run it is the best way to ensure parents can continue to dictate the terms of their event.
- The HSA isn’t involved in GB other than providing seed money and letting it use our 501(c)(3) for certain fundraising activities (an added obligation for our HSA treasurer). We don’t set the theme, the budget, determine how it is carried out or otherwise do anything to facilitate the event.
- If future Grad Balls do not or cannot organize to obtain a 501(c)(3) status, the HSA or the Glen Rock School District or another local nonprofit organization could act as a fiscal sponsor for certain fundraising activities. There are options to explore.
- As an independent organization (not a standing committee of the HSA), GB would have to make a new arrangement for event liability coverage. The Glen Rock Board of Education could agree to add Grad Ball to the rider of its insurance policy, or the BOE could require Grad Ball to obtain its own coverage. This is a decision for the Board of Education’s Business Administrator and its insurance agent.

Why can’t the HSA board just set up some specific steps to ensure better oversight, or get someone to specifically oversee Grad Ball, or hire someone?

- **Specific steps** – Neither financial oversight nor committee oversight has yet been the focus of the HSA. This is because Grad Ball has run as an autonomous event designed and dictated by the senior parents who continually completed their 15-month undertaking and put on their annual event independent of the HSA. Steps to ensure fiscal responsibility will require the Executive Board of the HSA to have a say in the event each year.
- **Get someone to specifically oversee** – It is not realistic to expect to find a volunteer overseer/auditor specifically for Grad Ball. It has been increasingly difficult to get volunteers for existing HSA fundraising and programming, and the role of Grad Ball financial and committee overseer would be even more difficult to fill, as it requires specific expertise, dedication and at least a 15-month time commitment.

Secondly, assigning the overseer/auditor role to an existing Executive Board position is not tenable. The current time demand on the HSA board to oversee programs and budgets for Grades 6-12 would be unmanageable if we had to comply with the added financial oversight and manpower provisions for Grad Ball.

- **Hire someone** – This would be an added expense and not the best use of the HSA’s fundraised dollars. The mission of the HSA and purpose of our fundraised dollars is to “support, fund and promote teacher- and administrator-requested programs and activities that help enhance students’ Middle School and High School experiences throughout the year.”

What if the amendment doesn’t pass?

If the Grad Ball remains a standing committee of the HSA, the HSA could impose certain limits or parameters on the size and scope of the event to ensure we can manage it and fully comply with the financial oversight provisions in the Bylaws.

What about Grad Ball 2019?

Due to the time it requires to apply for and receive 501(c)(3) status, the HSA board will vote on a resolution that immediately offers Grad Ball 2019 501(c)(3) coverage under the HSA umbrella for its fundraising and banking activities, as needed, through June 2019.

What is Grad Ball? ([read a recent article about the event](#))

- Grad Ball is a graduation party for seniors that has been a tradition in Glen Rock since 1959, originally conceived to provide a safe, alcohol-free event for graduating seniors. Other towns do similar events, such as Project Graduation in Ridgewood.
- The Grad Ball takes place soon after the graduation ceremony and lasts for approximately five hours.
- Funded entirely by that year’s graduating class – through the games of chance at the town fair in June, a fall beefsteak dinner and other activities – the current budget for this party is typically between \$60,000-\$80,000.
- The parents of the next graduating class gather in the spring preceding their child’s senior year and form the Grad Ball committee, which develops the [theme](#) (kept secret until the day of graduation) and builds out the concept over the course of the school year, with installation in the HS gym starting around Memorial Day.
- Grad Ball usually entails a breakfast for the seniors the morning after the party and an appreciation party for the parents.
- If the GB committee has surplus money remaining, it is donated back as a specific gift (not cash), specified by the high school.
- Traditionally, the townspeople are invited to view the transformed gymnasium a few hours before the graduation.

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