



Glen Rock Middle School/High School HSA

March 23, 2018 9:00AM Media Center

Attendees (30): Mona Milbrodt, Kara Stansel, Holly Goshin, Kathy Duggan, Heidi Ryan, Jennifer Scherer, Sandi Stern, Ann Feige | Nancy Bermack, Alison Bloomfield, Ann Boyle, John Butler, Jen Casey, Lynn Clark, Felicia Goldberg, Barbara Gomes, Susan Habler, Ed Hayward, Thomas Hinkle, Elaine Howe, Sharon Israel (Childs), Maureen Jefferies, Dan Kastelman, Laura Kastelman, Leslie (Kossar) Schraer, Staci Lichtenstein, Michele (Jensen) Lieberman, Joe Quvus, Michele Sapoff, Angela Vila
By Phone (8): Julie Maxwell Allen, Debbie Bobovnikova (Quvus), Liz Carr, Angela Crawford, Jim Leonard, Michelle Torpey and two unidentified callers

Welcome, Sign-in and Approval of Minutes — Motion by Michele Sapoff, seconded by Ann Boyle

1. New Business

Proposed changes to the HSA Bylaws – first reading, open to discussion by members.

[Note: Heidi Simmons Ryan, the HSA's Vice President of Communications, made the presentation and was spokesperson for the HSA Executive Board.]

The three (3) major amendments:

- Art. I, Sec 2: Additions that elaborate on mission/purpose of the HSA – for clarity
- Art. VII, Sec 5: Changes to expenditure limits and signing authority – for clarity and consistency
- Art. VI, Sec 3: Grad Ball provisions

Michele (Jensen) Lieberman: What does financial oversight of Grad Ball involve for the HSA? She identified herself as the Grad Ball 2016 treasurer and did not feel it was a problem to keep the HSA apprised of the finances.

HSA Board's response: The burden on the HSA is too extensive in keeping compliant with the by-laws. It is too much responsibility and work for the current HSA treasurer.

Dan Kastelman, the Grad Ball 2017 treasurer: Why can't we put the burden on the Grad Ball treasurer to give reports to the HSA on a regular basis? Make it the Grad Ball committee's responsibility to make the HSA comfortable with the finances.

HSA Board's response: We are at the mercy of a different Grad Ball committee each year. One year's committee can do everything that is required, while a different year's committee may not.

Dan Kastelman: The Legalized Game of Chance license is very expensive if not under the HSA and it (Town Fair and Beefsteak 50/50) is a big money-maker for Grad Ball.

HSA Board's response: There are other options, including partnering with other 501(c)(3) organizations in town.

Heidi emphasized that Grad Ball is basically autonomous; the HSA Board just wants to formalize that part.

Angela Vila: Stated that when she was the HSA President in 2010-11, the decision was made to make Grad Ball part of the HSA because it needed oversight. "At the time, the Grad Ball 2011 chairs were not happy. However, we decided to require the Grad Ball treasurer to use Quick Books and report finances to the HSA on a regular basis."

Dan Kastelman: 'Why don't you just require the Grad Ball to provide financials?'

Thomas Hinkle: Is there specific wording in the new (Directors and Officers) insurance policy (from the BOE, which covers all the Glen Rock public school HSA boards) that created this problem?

HSA Board's response: The wording in the policy states that we have to "faithfully execute our duties" to be compliant. Heidi clarified that this is not event insurance, it is liability insurance for the officers.

Angela Vila: "What really happened? We all know there was some sort of problem this year. Stop dancing around."

HSA Board's response: There wasn't a major problem, but to meet the [insurance] criteria, we realized that we were putting ourselves at risk by not monitoring Grad Ball as stipulated in our bylaws. And the amount of work required to do so is too much for the HSA board. Grad Ball has 3x the HSA's budget and it would require a disproportionate amount of time for the HSA treasurer to dedicate to just one grade.

Elaine Howe: Could the governing laws be changed to state that Grad Ball must use Quick Books?

HSA Board's response: We would still be liable if there was any wrong-doing.

Dan Kastelman: Has HSA approached the BOE to find out exactly what financial oversight is required?

John Butler: Suggested hiring an accountant in town for better oversight. He is against taking away the HSA umbrella, which "causes traditions to stop." Suggested that the HSA reflect on the reason for Grad Ball in the first place; to prevent kids from drinking and driving on graduation night. Feels we need to modernize the relationship, but the institutional knowledge is needed to keep it running. He recommended setting up new rules that the Grad Ball committee must follow.

Ann Boyle: If the HSA annually files with the IRS, then Grad Ball should be covered.

Dan Kastelman: Adjust the by-laws to cover certain things for Grad Ball. "This event has been going on for 60 years. It is irresponsible to give a couple weeks' notice for a vote to change it."

Leslie Kossar Schraer: In the future, if Grad Ball remains under the HSA umbrella, can a different HSA Board limit and change Grad Ball?

HSA Board's response: This is always the case. If it remains an HSA committee, Grad Ball will always be at the mercy of the HSA Board presiding at the time. The board has legal right to place any demands or restrictions. If the vote to amend the bylaws passes, Grad Ball will then be able to set up its own Board, 501(c)(3) and bank accounts. It will truly be autonomous and self-determining.

Angela Crawford (on the phone): Are other events (e.g. Central/Byrd Dance) under their HSA's umbrella? How do they operate?

Felicia Goldberg: Yes, Central Dance is now under the Central HSA. [Per Michelle Torpey, Byrd Dance is under the HSA, too. Dance has its own treasurer, but they turn over their profits to the HSA – usually in January – and keep a balance for operating expenses.]

Tom Hinkle: Are all the HSA Boards covered under the BOE’s D&O insurance?

Mona Milbrodt (HSA President) replied, Yes.

Jim Leonard (on the phone): Could Grad Ball be covered under the Booster Club’s 501(c)(3)? Maybe explore this option before any decision is made.

Dan Kastelman: Before we change the bylaws, we need to come up with a plan. Let’s know the path before we make this change.

Sandi Stern (HSA President Emeritus): Who would be responsible for this?

Heidi Ryan- Suggested creating an exploratory committee to come up with alternate solutions. Angela Vila, Dan Kastelman and Michele Lieberman all volunteered to be on the committee.

Tom Hinkle: Why not look into an insurance rider? This would alleviate concerns.

HSA Board’s response: We will take this up with the BOE.

Ed Hayward (BOE Trustee): I’ve been taking notes and will be happy to help in any way needed.

John Arlotta (GRHS Principal): Many other schools have graduation balls offsite. Having it onsite definitely impacts the running of the school. There is no gym class in the gym from Memorial Day on, and it also impacts storage space – always at a premium – in the school. Having the event offsite would be less money.

2. Principals’ Reports

High School

- Mr. Arlotta congratulated Una Kearns (Business teacher) and the [Federal Reserve Challenge](#) Team for their semi-final placement. They are one of 18 teams to get this distinction. Teams play the role of monetary policymakers by analyzing economic conditions and recommending a course for monetary policy. The GRHS team competed in the Liberty Street division and now qualifies for the next round.
- Spring Theater annual one-act play festival is under way, from March 22-March 24. Great production. Comedy and Calamity is six short plays featuring more than 50 students, including four student directors.
- Congratulated Iris Pierri on being named Teacher of the Year. She is a Special Ed teacher, but also supports the science classes. Well-deserved honor for her.

Middle School

- Dr. Wirt addressed recess for MS. Students go outside if the fields are dry and the temperature is not too cold. Also, sporting events that may be occurring after school can impact outside recess time.

- Spirit Week- Student Council is organizing many spirit activities.
- Mary Poppins- 90 MS students were involved in the production. It was a three-hour show and a wonderful job by all. [Note: Dr. Wirt Dr. Wirt suggested the Friday dress rehearsal performance to make up for the one that was cancelled due to snow, so everyone could see the show.]
- PARCC letters are going out in the next few weeks. Parents need to sign a form if they want their children to opt out.
- Rescheduled Maker's Day is taking place on April 12 in the library. Sixth graders will be able to explore creative processes during lunch and after school.
- Congratulations to Tara Leiberman for being named the MS Teacher of the Year. (She is a Social Studies teacher.)
- The new district website has the MS Twitter feed embedded in the home page.
- 8th Grade Pool Party – When it comes to future funding (starting in 2019) of the pool party, Dr. Wirt feels that the HSA acted in an arbitrary manner, leaving her out of the decision-making. "Leaving the 'School' out of the Home & School." Dr. Wirt mistakenly assumed that HSA volunteers would not be chaperoning the party and mentioned that teachers are uncomfortable chaperoning because of the pool attire worn by some of the students.

Mona's response: The way Dr. Wirt handled the \$1,600 shortfall [owed to the HSA] for the MS portion of the pool party funding for 2017 and 2018 made the HSA Executive Board reevaluate our partnership with the MS in this event and decide to better manage our risk going forward. The board voted -- starting with 2019 -- to pay only for the cost of the pool rental (\$500) and provide volunteers for both the pool party and any new fundraiser overseen by a MS staff member (to replace the MS School Store) to defray the party's cost.

- The trip to Philadelphia is cancelled this year. The placeholder dates put in last summer conflicted with how/where the scheduled dates for the Bronx Zoo trip and the PARCC fell on the calendar. Realignment of the curriculum map last summer changed the scope and sequence of the 6th grade curriculum. She said she will revisit this in the future, speculating that perhaps a trip in the fall would work better.
- One parent told Dr. Wirt that this trip cancellation was not communicated to anyone. The students and teachers still think they are going on the trip. Said that her son's teacher has been talking about it to her students. Dr. Wirt was surprised and noted this.
- 8th Grade Trip to Washington, DC – Another parent mentioned that the 8th grade parents have no idea when to make the next payment, saying there was absolutely no communication from the MS.
 - 7th Grade Trip to Camp Mason – In response to Heidi Ryan's question, Dr. Wirt explained that it is a one-day trip for team building focusing on outdoor education. Students will participate in boating, archery, ropes courses, geocaching, and pond ecology. There is a great staff that works with the students. Considering an overnight trip for next year if all goes well. Theresa Simpson (7th grade Writer's Workshop teacher) is organizing this year's trip.

Miscellaneous Discussion

Grad Ball follow-up – Laura Kastelman: GB is a community event (not just a school event as Mr. Arlotta suggested). "There will be a lot of community backlash if this tradition does not continue." She noted that "many people who do not even have children in the HS wait on line each year to see" the repurposed, redecorated gym transformation. "If Mr. Arlotta is concerned about space, we can look into renting a storage unit."

Sandi Stern: Each group looking at the Grad Ball situation/discussion has their own priorities that must be respected. We all must make every effort to understand the essence of each viewpoint. In doing so, we can find compromise.

Guidance Dept's lack of communication – Maureen Jefferies urged members to complain to the BOE, otherwise nothing changes. There were many comments about lack of notice or follow-up regarding scheduling. Suggestions to have informational sessions for each grade. Kara Stansel and Barbara Gomes stated that the current slides used at the 8th grade and HS sessions have not been updated in years. This is unacceptable and lazy. Ed Hayward said he will bring this back to the BOE.

Federated Digital Handbook – Barbara Gomes asked if someone could resend her the link to access the handbook. Mona said she would put her in touch with the correct people. Other members stated that they did not receive an emailed access link to the handbook either. Sharon Israel felt it was very confusing to manipulate the information. Michele Sapoff (HSA Membership) stated that you *can* sort the information. She said many people had the handbook link go to their Spam accounts.

3. Treasurer's Report – Ann Feige (for Gretchen Horwitz)

- The CD matured on 3/15/2018. Gretchen is looking to see if she can find a better interest rate going forward.
- Current account balance is \$23,000 and we are still waiting on the \$4,000 refund from Stone and Rail. Ann noted the \$2,000 donation from Bari Engel's company, Amgen.
- There is \$7,000 left in the Field Trip Fund – the latest is Mrs. Walter's May 24 walking tour in Harlem for her Honors and AP History students.
- Box Tops earned \$325.
- Sharon Israel mentioned that we still have GR Spiritwear "sweatshirt blankets" for sale. (She sold 4 at the meeting.)

4. BOE Report – Edmund Hayward

- Next BOE meeting is March 27 at 8pm.
- Summer repairs are planned for the schools. Hallway 1 is scheduled to have its floors repaired (the pipes underneath those floors are decayed as well)
- MS Boilers will be addressed
- Security in the MS/HS will be improved

Sharon Israel pointed out to Ed Hayward and the meeting attendees that the mobility situation in the school for children in wheelchairs is impossible. The handicapped parking spot gets flooded and frozen in inclement weather. Also, a child cannot get to class in the allotted 4 minutes. She said being able to participate in the classes via video attendance was denied. "This makes no sense." Ed Hayward agreed, and said he would look into it.

5. Glen Rock Arboretum's New Education Center - Guest Elaine Howe

- Opening Day is April 27, 2018 (Arbor Day)
- Opportunities for student volunteering and research
- Adult volunteers wanted – scientists, teachers, engineers – to mentor kids
- Andrea Vachon and Grace Cosgriff are heading the volunteer effort – go to the website for more information: <https://www.glenrockarboretum.org/volunteer.html>.

6. Wish List Updates/Approvals–Ann Feige

1. \$150 request – FULLY FUNDED – from Rochelle Forstot for a presentation by Jonathan Miller (a 2010 GRHS alum), now employed at American University's Academic Support and Access Center. Miller spoke with six Learning Strategies classes about support available in college and transitioning to college. Sharon Israel felt this would benefit all college-bound students.
2. \$4,250 request – PARTIALLY FUNDED (17.6%) – from Nicole Rusin and Troy Kroft on behalf of ALLIANCE (previously the Gay Straight Alliance) for a speaker from the Ackerman Institute's Gender & Family Project to conduct a full day of training and support, including workshops for teachers and students. Since this is a district-wide program, the HSA Executive Board felt that other groups (HSA and district) should chip in.
3. \$6,000 request – JOINTLY FUNDED – from Frank Manziano for a HS Finance Lab. The Jaycees are contributing \$3,000. They think it's a wonderful opportunity for students and are excited to be part of it. They requested a meeting with HSA board and Mr. Manziano to present the donation and learn more about the program. [GR Education Foundation is donating \$1,000.]

Adjournment – Motion by Kara Stansel, seconded by Sharon Israel. Meeting ended at 11:01 am.