

HSA General Board Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Friday, September 27, 2024, 9am

Location: Central School All Purpose Room

Welcome

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Charleston

Dr. Charleston shared the following updates and answered questions:

- **Quality assessment/accreditation:**
 - The district is currently undergoing NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC), the Department of Education's monitoring and district self-evaluation system for public school districts. Find out more at <https://www.nj.gov/education/qsac/>.
 - We undergo this process every 3 years.
 - Areas being reviewed are instruction and programming, fiscal management, governance, operations, and personnel.
 - The Glen Rock district has historically achieved at least 80/100 on the process, making us a "high achieving school," and Dr. Charleston anticipates we will do the same again this year.
- **Staffing:**
 - Central is fully staffed.
 - We are still short of lunch aides district wide, and at Central we have to rely on teachers to fill in - refer anyone interested in being a lunch aide to Mrs. LaCroix.
 - We are also short a couple paraprofessionals district-wide.
- **Change in world language program:**
 - As parents were informed recently via email, students will start taking Mandarin in a couple weeks
 - Students will take Mandarin for the first half of the year, then Spanish for the second half of the year
 - When the Spanish teacher covering Coleman and Hamilton resigned, we advertised for multiple languages to expand the pool of applicants, and were able to hire a very highly qualified Mandarin teacher.
 - A parent of a 5-grader asked about the possibility of students continuing Mandarin after elementary school. Dr. Charleston responded that due to staffing issues and small class sizes in the past, we are currently only offering Mandarin in grades 7-12; currently 6th graders cannot take it. However, if there is more interest going forward, he and his team will reassess whether to offer it in 6th grade again.
- **Security:**
 - A full-time security guard is now based in each elementary school.
 - The guards are currently rotating schools each week; after a few weeks, district administrators will evaluate whether to assign one guard continuously to each school, or continue rotating.
 - In the next few months, we will implement a new software system which will scan IDs for all visitors.
- **Capital projects:**
 - The budget process for next year starts next week.
 - Last year's projects were all done under budget. This included the turf replacement, lights, and culinary room in the Middle School/High School (MS/HS), and the new pre-K classrooms in the MS/HS. (The lights will be installed after the fall sports season is complete.)
 - The projects that were not completed were the Coleman roof replacement over the 5th grade wing, and the steps replacement at the High School - for both of these, the bids came in far over budget, so they will be sent out to bid again next year.

Principal's Report - Mrs. LaCroix

- **Thanks:** Mrs. LaCroix thanked the HSA Executive Board for getting this year up and running, and all the parents for their participation and the great attendance at the recent kindergarten ice cream social, parent coffee hour, and spirit wear sales.
- **Composting project:** The 5th grade is doing something new, proposed by HSA Fundraising VP Lindsay Forman - they are working with a local farm in Morris County to compost all pizza boxes from Pizza Day. The owner of the farm came in last week to talk to the 5th graders about why composting helps and why cardboard is good for composting. The 5th graders will all get a turn, in small groups of 4-6, to break down boxes for pickup.
- **New Jersey Student Learning Assessments/NJSLA (state testing)** results are being mailed home today for last year's 3-5th graders. If you don't receive them by the end of next week, let Mrs. LaCroix know.
- **Scheduling/curriculum (WIN):**
 - We have implemented the new WIN scheduling (What I Need) for all students - targeted instruction in small, variable groups of students who need additional support in a skill/topic covered that week in class.
 - As part of this, teachers have an additional prep period each week, and all students now have two extra specials, for a total of 7/week (last year they had one extra, for a total of 6); these will rotate per trimester. This trimester's additional specials are:
 - K-5: Additional music period with Mr. Malone
 - K: Additional library session with Mrs. Stellenwerf
 - 1-5: Technology enrichment and STEM/STEAM projects with Mrs. Stellenwerf
- **Staffing:**
 - Our new staff are settling in well
 - Mrs. Bresnan and Mrs. Peters are due back from leave in December
 - Mrs. Baldeon is due back from leave in January
- **New sensory room:** As part of a Girl Scout project, high school student Isabella Santa Cruz organized the creation of a sensory room in the guidance area for students to use.
- **Typing skills:** A parent asked whether students are given the opportunity to practice typing skills; Mrs. LaCroix responded that this is available during the "literacy flex period" once a week. Starting in November, there will also be a program through Schoology that students can use at home.
- **IXL math program:** A parent asked if the IXL program was still being used at Central. Mrs. LaCroix responded that it is not - it was adopted during Covid, then discontinued for grades K-4 last year, and for grade 5 this year. This was due to the software no longer being available for free and in fact being significantly more costly than other similar programs we use like Everyday Math; and because the program was no longer being used diagnostically, but was only being assigned as additional math skills practice and no feedback was given to the student.
- **Entering and exiting the school:** Mrs. LaCroix asked that when volunteering at Central, that all parents/adults enter and exit through the front doors only. This is to avoid security risks from open doors, and to make sure the students don't see adults coming and going through the side doors.

Co-Presidents Central School HSA – Jenny Gartshteyn & Stephanie Chan

- **Board introductions:** Jenny and Stephanie introduced our new executive board members for this year. Please reach out to any of the HSA board members with any questions or requests you may have!
- **Survey:** Thank you to everyone who completed the Parent Survey! The HSA board is reviewing responses and working on actioning the suggestions we received.
- **Little Free Library:** Central is getting a Little Free Library! Find out more about this nonprofit organization which is building community, inspiring readers, and expanding book access through a global network of volunteer-led book-exchange boxes at <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>. Ours will be installed by the kindergarten doors and will be restocked regularly. Encourage your kids to take a book, share a book!

Treasurer – Judy Choi

- **2024-2025 Proposed Budget:**
 - Budgets were distributed and reviewed, and questions taken from the group.
 - A majority of the parents present at the meeting voted to approve the budget.
 - The most significant changes to the budget were a line item added for a new event (International Night), and increased budget for the TIC TOC arts program to enable parent volunteers to access all the materials they need.
- **Food Days sales:** Judy gave an update on Food Days, which has already exceeded the sales we made last year, despite a smaller number of students at Central this year.
- **International Night:** A parent asked for more information about International Night. This is a new event (not replacing any other events) made possibly by parent suggestion and leadership. It will be held outdoors (weather permitting) on May 16.
- **Shade structure:** Many parents requested a shade structure on the playground; the HSA is actively pursuing this and will take measurements and reach out to vendors this year.
- **Requests for reimbursement:** Judy requested that all requests for reimbursement from parent volunteers be submitted within 60 days of the event, to allow the HSA to effectively manage the budget.

VP Communication – Kathy Yeung

Kathy requested that all class parents distribute this information to the families in your class:

- Please sign up for an HSA account! (On the HSA website www.centralschoolhsa.com under More Info > How to register)
- Those who already have an account: please update your child's grade and teacher information if you haven't already done so.
- Parents who have signed up and updated their info should be getting the email blast every Sunday at 7pm - if you aren't, let Kathy know or go to [HSA website](http://www.centralschoolhsa.com) > Help menu > Contact Tech Support.

VP Enrichment – Jen Reinhold

- **Enrichment survey:** A survey (due 9/30) was sent to teachers to gauge Enrichment interest and start planning grade-level programs. Parents should also feel free to reach out with ideas!
- **TIC TOC:**
 - Check this Sunday's HSA email blast for info and signups.
 - Volunteers can sign up for a monthly slot, and then work out the specific date and time with the teacher. This is a great opportunity to volunteer in the classroom!
 - This year the committee will make it easier to volunteer by giving more guidance to parents. Projects will be chosen by the chairs, and Jenny and Stephanie will manage the distribution of materials.

VP Fundraising – Lindsay Forman

Lindsay gave a summary of ongoing and upcoming fundraisers, including:

- **Mabel's Labels (ongoing):** This fundraiser began in August; Central receives a portion of all sales. [Shop here](#) and search for Central Elementary Glen Rock.
- **Picture Day orders and retakes:** Central will receive a portion of proceeds from school picture orders. Photo retakes are on Monday, October 28 at 8:45am - please email Maria at mjaume7072@gmail.com with your child's name and teacher if you need to be added to the photo retake list.
- **Food Days recap:** Bagel, Ice Cream, and Pizza Days all launched! Flash sales will take place the day after the first day of a food day for those who didn't get a chance to register or decide to participate.
- **Spirit Wear:** The current spirit wear designs will close on October 6, with a new set of designs coming out in late October. So if you like these designs, [buy now!](#) We will also be incorporating Central Dance attire into Central spirit wear - coming up.
- **Dine-to-Donate nights starting October 1:** Dine-to-Donate nights will be starting Tuesday, 10/1 at Francesca's, then continuing throughout the year with events at John's Boy, Rock N Grill, Glen Rock Inn, Stone and Rail, Giannella's and more. Check the next HSA email blast for more information! A portion of all proceeds goes to Central.
- **Handsdwn Cookies on sale starting October 27:** This bake-at-home holiday project will be on sale from 10/27-11/10, with pickup on 11/22, just in time for Thanksgiving. Handsdwn Cookies makes premium, pre-portioned cookie dough in Hawthorne in a nut free facility!
- **Fall Family Photo Fundraiser, November 2:** Our family photo fundraiser will offer 15 minute sessions at the Arboretum. Photos will be ready in time for the holidays. Signups will be in the 10/7 HSA email blast.
- **Art to Remember, November 11:** Students have already started their drawings for Art to Remember! Information about ordering will be in the HSA email blast once available.

VP Social/Hospitality – Danielle Fotopoulos

- **Recent Events:**
 - Kindergarten Ice Cream Social
 - Welcome Back Coffee
 - Welcome Back Staff Lunch
 - Family Movie Night
 - All these events were well attended - thank you to everyone who volunteered and participated!
 - The HSA is focusing on supporting local partners and businesses, as well as on being more sustainable by creating less waste and recycling/composting when possible.
- **Upcoming events:**
 - **Walk To School Day, October 2:** We still need some volunteers - this is a fun event with low time commitment required! Contact Danielle or sign up via the email blast if you're interested.
 - **Autumn Fun Day, October 5, 9am-12pm (clean up dates Oct 25-26):** We still have some slots available to participate - this was one of our most highly-rated event in our recent survey! We also still need volunteers for setup, running, and cleanup.
 - **Fall Social (Parents), November 16, 8-11pm** – An adults-only event to be held at the Stone and Rail. Tickets will be on sale in the HSA email blast this Sunday (September 29). The night will include music, trivia, games, and entertainment, along with appetizers and beer and wine.
- **Bring any ideas** for other social events for kids or parents to Danielle!

Central Dance Committee update

- Central School Dance had a great first week!
- The teachers are very excited about the new stage.

Other business

- **The Central School Musical** will be the Lion King! Registration will open 10/1 at 9pm - slots often go fast. Rehearsals will be held on Fridays at Central starting 11/22 and running through March.
- **Transparency/descriptions of events:** A parent suggested that it would help new families to have more description of events in advance - what it is, who should attend, what to wear, what to bring, etc. The HSA board will work on providing this helpful information in more channels: including more details in the email blast, posting on the [Central HSA Instagram](#) and [Central Facebook page](#), and providing more in-person presence at a table outside the school about once a month during pickup or drop-off.
- **Food Days:** A parent suggested an additional sign-up opportunity for Food Days in the middle of the year. The group discussed the pros and cons of flash sales after the first Food Day vs. a mid-year signup, for students, parents, and volunteers, and impacts on potential earnings.
- **Yearbooks:** A parent asked whether yearbooks were available for elementary school students; Mrs. LaCroix answered that only the 5th grade does yearbooks, but all the students' school pictures from K-5 can be included.

The meeting adjourned at 10:16am.