

**WJHS/HMS Joint PTO
General Board Meeting
February 12, 2014**

The Co-Presidents welcomed everyone to the joint meeting of the General PTO Boards of Highcrest Middle School and Wilmette Junior High School. Chris Leutz and Ami Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

Wilmette Junior High School Business

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes of the General Board Meeting of November 13th, 2013. The Motion was Seconded and the Minutes Approved.

Nominating Committee

Rhona DiCamillo provided an overview of the role of the nominating committee, asking for volunteers and pointing out it is a small commitment with only one evening meeting to be held in March.

School Supplies

For the first time ever, WJHS will be offering parents the opportunity to purchase school supplies via SchoolKidz. This is the same supplier that the elementary schools and Highcrest have worked with in prior years.

Highcrest Middle School Business

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes of the General Board Meeting of November 13th, 2013. The Motion was Seconded and the Minutes Approved.

Nominating Committee

Karen Holmberg spoke about the HMS nominating committee, noting it was full. The formed team is anxious to get started filling the many PTO positions available for 2014-15 school year.

Variety Show

A huge thank you was offered to all parents and kids who were involved in the HMS Variety Show; it was a huge success and took place the previous Friday. A big round of applause go out to the Co-Chairs Ann Garrison and Wendy Raymond.

Parent Party

Erin Lyons provided information on the upcoming HMS Parent Party scheduled for Thursday, March 6th. Thanks in advance to the Rock House as the sponsoring venue and to all donors of fabulous door prizes.

Teacher's Report

Lori Lipke and Becky Kross were present to provide an HMS staff report. They spoke to two items. The HMS Music department is excited to receive a GRIPP grant and would like to thank everyone for their support. Next, the teachers thanked parents for their support of the Variety Show.

Youth Connection

TGIF is slated for March 7th. This is a sponsored student event for 5th and 6th graders; wristbands will be on sale the week of the event.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Danielle Black, “Validating Your Tween/Teen”

Ami Campbell welcomed Danielle Black, Director of Child and Adolescent Health at the Family Institute at Northwestern University.

Ms. Black presented the Family Institute’s perspective on the importance of validating your tween/teen. She opened her talk by explaining that validation is really about empathizing with your child’s position and making them aware that you understand their feelings on a matter. This does not mean, as a parent, you necessarily need to agree with them/their opinions. Validation is important because it improves your parent/child relationship, helps the child regulate their emotion, helps the parent understand their child and encourages tweens to regulate their social emotional functioning. Next Ms. Black spoke to how parents can better understand the tween/teen point of view and ACCEPT (an acronym she has developed) them or validate their beliefs and perspectives.

Principal’s Report

Dave Palzet provided the Principal’s Report; starting by addressing the Polar Vortex days we have endured this school year. As a result of school closures due to weather, the calendar had to be adjusted: School will be in session on March 18th (election day), March 28th will be a full day (planned as half day before spring break) and April 25th (originally students scheduled to be off).

The next topic was the Township-wide Professional Development day that took place earlier in the week including all seven districts. The central focus was on Social Emotional Learning. The day was a huge success opening with a keynote speaker, by Dr. Sian Beilock, an expert on performance anxiety, followed by 120 break out sessions lead by staff and another key note rounded out the day; Nate Ecklund who spoke on Keeping Our Fires Burning.

Next Dave spoke to student input forms for the next school year. Both WJHS and HMS offer parents the chance to complete an OPTIONAL form detailing any background on their child’s learning style, special considerations and social emotional needs as they relates to school, etc.

The Principal spoke to a township-wide Boot Camp for parents developed to educate them on technology; it will take place on a Saturday morning. PTOs will be asked sponsor the event.

Finally, Dave spoke about ongoing learning over the summer for incoming 7th and 8th graders. The goal is to encourage a deeper learning in core subject areas. This coming summer, the list of books for students to choose from will be larger list and the central theme is transitions (7th grade). For 2014, a math component will be added as well.

FAN Report

Lonnie Stonitsch presented an update on upcoming FAN events. The next major speaker is Sian Beilock, scheduled for February 18th at 7pm. The talk will take place at New Trier in the Cornog Auditorium and focus on "Performing At Your Best Under Stress". She also outlined some other speakers scheduled for the balance of the school year and directed people to the Family Action Network website for more detail: familyactionnetwork.net.

Upcoming Events

Feb 17- 18: No school

Mar. 6: HMS Parent Party

Mar. 7: TGIF, 7:30pm HMS

Mar. 11: Social Dance final session

Mar. 28: Full day school

Mar. 31 – April 4: Spring Break

April 18: No School, Good Friday

April 25: Full Day School

May 1: WJHS Outgoing/Incoming Board Meeting Breakfast

May 14: HMS Outgoing/Incoming Board Meeting Luncheon

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.