



Saint Mary School

RIDGEFIELD

HSA Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2024

HSA Board Attendees:

Allison Carballo & Ann Russell, HSA Co-Presidents

Marcy Miller & Kristy Pylypshyn, HSA Co-Vice Presidents

Janine Simon, HSA Co-Treasurer

Meghan Newman, Room Parent Coordinator

Welcome and Updates from Amy Dowding

- Amy stated that Rachel Ambrosio was unable to be at the meeting due to a prior family commitment.
- Amy opened the meeting with a prayer.
- Land's End informed the school that they have discontinued a pair of our uniform pants and shorts for girls and boys due to the material used. New regulations will take effect in about two years that will restrict the use of the old material due to chemicals that have been deemed unsafe. Land's End has made the decision to discontinue the use of the material prior to the new regulations taking effect. Amy passed around a sample pair of pants made from the new material. The pants feel lighter and are a slightly different style with a zippered pocket on one side.
- We will change to spring uniforms after spring break. There will be a uniform swap scheduled prior to break.
- The World Language Expo is next Friday, March 8th from 8-10am in the Hall. The middle school students will present information and provide a food item from a Spanish or French speaking country that they have researched. Younger students will also participate with their classes. Parents are encouraged to attend. (UPDATE 3/3/24: Please refer to the revised newsletter sent on Saturday 3/2 for the K-5 schedule. The schedule is listed as a special message from Amy Dowding at the top of the newsletter.)

- Parents will receive the schedule for IOWA testing in the next week or two. An email will be sent from Rachel with the information. The school encourages parents to have students get enough sleep and a good breakfast prior to testing so the students can do their best.
- Calendar Reminders and Updates:
 - School will be closed on March 21st due to a Diocesan wide teacher retreat.
 - There will be no school on 3/28-4/1 for Holy Week and Easter.
 - Spring break is separate from Easter this year and will be 4/15-4/19.
 - The school calendar has been updated to reflect the new last day of school which is Tuesday, 6/18. The 8th grade graduation will remain on Friday, 6/7.

8th Grade Capstone Presentations—Jeanette Campo

- Jeanette explained the Capstone Program and the process.
 - The projects must teach someone or help someone.
 - Students begin with a personal inventory that will lead them to two project ideas.
 - Fundraising and collections alone are not enough for the project. The students must be more actively involved.
 - In February, students presented their projects to the Capstone Board and use feedback from the board to make modifications as needed.
 - The projects are created by the students and a reflection of a passion or a connection they have. As a result, even students who are not initially thrilled with the idea of a Capstone Project end up really enjoying the process and their project.
 - Alumni have commented that the Capstone Project has helped them feel more prepared for college and job interviews, gives them the confidence to start a club at their high school or college, and provides them with the necessary skills to communicate with adults in an effective and professional manner.
- 8th Graders Meredith and Phoebe presented their Capstone Projects to attendees.
 - Meredith's project focused on bringing awareness and helping individuals with Functional Neurologic Disorder (FND), also known as Conversion Disorder. She chose this project as a result of a personal connection to the condition.
 - Phoebe's project was developed from her passion for field hockey and lacrosse and her understanding that many individuals are unable to play these sports because they cannot afford the necessary equipment.

Literacy Night—Jeanette Campo

- Jeanette thanked the families who attended and the teachers who donated their time and energy to make the evening a success. Any feedback and suggestions are welcome. This will be an annual event at SMS.

HSA Updates—Allison Carballo

- Marcy Miller reported that the Mother Son Night was a success with over 130 participants. She thanked the committee and all of the volunteers who helped.
- Senior Luncheon will be 3/12 with the 2nd grade hosting.
- Golf Outing 5/20
 - Andrea Wolf reported that wine donations are still needed. Each bottle donated should be valued at \$20 or more.
 - Registration will open on Monday when the site goes live.
- Gala
 - Renee Whitworth reported that the Gala Committee is looking for someone to donate a ski or beach house for a week. The committee currently has just one home that has been donated. Vacation homes help to bring in significant funds that will support the school. We typically have at least 2 vacation homes to auction at the Gala.
 - The Parent Business Directory is taking listings. If you have a business that you would like to promote, it will be listed in the directory which will be shared with the SMS community. It is a great way to promote your business while also helping to support the school. Please see the newsletter for fees and further details.
- Teacher Appreciation Week
 - Sam Maio reported that planning is underway for the week. She is making an effort to avoid overlapping with Gala communications and requests as these events will take place back to back.
 - Specific details will be shared with the parent community as we get closer to May.

Coffee & Conversation Series—Meg Whitbeck

- The HSA Meeting rolled into the Coffee & Conversation Series. Meg Whitbeck, an SMS parent and registered dietician, who specializes in prenatal through end of life nutrition presented on family nutrition. Parents who have additional questions or concerns about their own or their family's nutrition can contact Meg at Meg@nu-pros.com.

****The next HSA Meeting will be held on Friday, April 5, 2024****