

IDEA COALITION TASK FORCE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION
Islip Public Schools ♦ 215 Main Street ♦ Islip, NY 11751 ♦ (631) 650-8300

Islip Public Schools

Board of Education
Central Office Administration
Islip Association of School Administrators
Islip Teachers Association
Islip School Security
Islip High School Students Wing School PTA
Commack Road School PTA
Sherwood School PTA
Islip Middle School PTA
Islip High School PTSA
Islip SEPTA
Islip Booster Club
Islip Arts and Music Parents

Great South Bay YMCA

Islip Chamber of Commerce

Islip Fire Department

Islip North Community Watch

KIC-Keep Islip Clean

Long Island Prevention Resource Center (LIPRC)

Northwell Health Southside Hospital

NY National Guard Counter Drug Task Force

Old South Islip Civic Association

Presbyterian Church of Islip

Rotary Club of the Islip's

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

South Islip Community Watch

South Shore Community Organization

South Saxon Community Watch

SC Department of Health Services

SC Legislature – 10th Leg District

SCPD Third Precinct COPE Unit

Syntax Communication

Trinity Lutheran Church

The Islip Elks Lodge #2533

Youth Enrichment Services

IDEA COALITION TASK FORCE

Minutes – April 9, 2019

7:00 p.m., Islip High School Community Room

ATTENDEES: See sign-in sheet (copy attached)

7:00 p.m. Meeting opened

Mrs. Paehr asked everyone to review the minutes from the March 5, 2019 meeting while waiting for the rest of the group to arrive and settle. The minutes were approved as written.

Mrs. Carr shared the financial reports, noting that while few expenditures were made since the last meeting, IDEA is on track to utilize almost the entirety of this year's DFC grant funding. All financials were accepted.

REPORTS:

CO-PROJECT DIRECTORS – Dr. Martin reported that he attended the Massapequa Takes Action Coalition (MTAC) presentation on "Marijuana Legalization: Lessons Learned from Colorado" in March. He noted that just about every problem and challenge you can imagine has happened in Colorado since the legalization of marijuana, including community challenges and events being pulled from the state. MTAC has plans to post the PowerPoint from the presentation on their website, but it has not happened yet. Dr. Martin has called to see when this might be available.

Dr. Semel also attended the presentation and added that the thing that stood out to her is that at no time has marijuana been recognized as a medicinal drug. Doctors cannot write a prescription for it, but rather just provide a letter recommending it for the use of pain. Because it is not considered medicine, proceeds garnered from outlets that sell it are not allowed to be deposited in a bank, as it is still considered 'drug money,' This has resulted in a counter-currency economy, with individuals becoming very creative in how the income is handled.

Legalization has also created big problems in schools, as no programs were put in place to help with addiction and education post-legalization. Colorado has served as a legalization guinea pig, but it

REPORTS (*con't*):

- **CO-PROJECT DIRECTORS** (*con't*) –

has not been a good thing overall. Dr. Semel also noted that the Colorado law allows individuals to grow up to six plants. While this does not sound like much, each plant is actually about ten feet tall and six feet wide. Obviously, no one can consume that much product on his/her own. This results in another issue of the excess being sold out of state or in another illegal manner.

Dr. Martin stated that throughout the entire presentation, he did not hear one good thing that came from marijuana legalization in Colorado, except for those that are now profiting from it.

Mrs. Paehr asked if the presenter offered any solutions. Dr. Martin responded that it really was just a warning that if this was the road your state wanted to take, it should do so with eyes wide open. Dr. Semel added that community groups need to come together and plan how legalization should be rolled out. Mrs. Paehr noted that for New York State, legalization has been pulled from this year's budget. This does not mean it will not happen in the future, however, as it has been stated that there are plans to put it back on the table for next year.

Mrs. Vouris arrived late to the meeting and did not report out, but her written report was included in the meeting packet.

- **CO-PROJECT COORDINATORS** – Mrs. Whitehouse shared that she and Dr. Martin met with MS staff members Sara Laudani and Kaitlin Rooney to discuss an event on May 16th for grades 6, 7, and 8. This will be held at Islip High School from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will be a dodgeball tournament. Mrs. Whitehouse assured everyone that this will be fun, as a new super-soft gator-skin playground ball has been created that is virtually impossible to be injured with. In addition, any student who throws a 'head shot' will automatically be out. Mrs. Whitehouse noted that the kids are very good at policing themselves in that regard.

Logistically, students will be split by grade level, and each grade will play in a separate area of the gym. Each area will be broken into quadrants, so four teams from each grade will be able to play at a time. With this configuration, they should be able to accommodate about 90 students from each grade level. A good turnout is expected, as this is something students enjoy and have asked for in the past. It is a fun game, the kids have a great time playing, and they are constantly moving, so it is a win-win-win.

Admission will be \$5 per student and will include pizza and a drink. Students can sign up individually and be placed on a team, or they may sign up in teams of five.

Mrs. Solaski suggested we consider doing something like this for HS students in the future, as she thinks they would love it, as well. Mrs. Paehr asked Mrs. Whitehouse

what IDEA can provide to support the event, e.g. water bottles, snacks, etc. Mrs. Whitehouse said they would be utilizing the large Gatorade containers instead of water bottles.

Dr. Martin noted that in terms of sustainability, this can become something that the National Junior Honor Society picks up as one of their events in the future. Mrs. Whitehouse added that starting next year, they would like to plan three to four events like this for middle school students. This would include the 100 Minutes of Movement event in February, this event, and maybe one in the fall and one before Christmas.

Mrs. Whitehouse added that any help they can get is welcome. She added that the date is the final day of AP exams, but IHS does not offer that course. Therefore, the gym should be cleared in time. Mrs. Paehr suggested that an exit survey be prepared for the students that attend. Mr. Modica will share the one he uses for Game Night.

- **YOUTH COORDINATOR** – Mr. Modica thanked everyone who helped out at Game Night on March 22nd. The kids had a blast playing European handball. He noted that over 18 students from the high school volunteered to help at the event, and it was great to see them interacting with the younger students. Mr. Modica also reported that he was able to speak with the parents for about ten minutes prior to pick up this year and actually received an ovation from them when he finished. This was a great opportunity for him to share information with them that they might not otherwise hear.

Mr. Modica also continued his work with Joan Smith from Islip North Community Watch Group on this presentation for teens at the American Legion. This has been rescheduled for April. He shared the PowerPoint presentation on vaping and wax pens that he has put together. This will be used to lead a discussion, rather than him simply reading slide-by-slide to the group. Ms. Hall and Mrs. Dengeles will assist with facilitating a follow up activity. A copy of this activity was included with Ms. Hall's materials in the meeting packet.

Mrs. Paehr noted that both the NYS Assembly and Senate have voted to increase the legal purchase age for ENDS products to 21. This legislation is awaiting Governor Cuomo's signature. Mrs. Whitehouse added that when she teaching a Too Good for Drugs lesson to third graders at CRES last week, they were mentioning wax pens, juuls, and other vapes.

- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE SPECIALIST** –Ms. Hall added to Mr. Modica's discussion of the presentation at the American Legion, noting that they had discussed the idea of a follow-up activity once the PowerPoint presentation was completed. The activity will focus on what leads people to vape, reasons to say no, and people youth can turn to with questions or concerns about vaping. Ms. Hall also shared another piece in the meeting packet from the FDA that is a handout regarding myths and sharing statistics about vaping and e-cigarettes. All of the teens who attend the American Legion presentation will receive a copy of this handout, and Ms. Hall has also added it to the materials available at the IDEA resource table at events.

Ms. Hall also reported that Dr. Dewey is coming to the HS in May to present to all students. She also shared that the HS hosted a Wellness Fair during lunch periods on Friday, April 5th. IDEA had a table at the event, which was manned by one of our youth sector members. In addition, a number of other individuals and organizations had tables where students could get information on healthy choices and behaviors, mental health resources, and much more.

Islip High School's Student Review Team (SRT) also recently met with Outreach, and a site visit to their facility in Brentwood is being scheduled. This will provide HS reps with an opportunity to see the kinds of resources being offered close by. Mrs. Brown asked if the Coalition can know when this presentation happens. Mr. Modica and Ms. Hall said they will email everyone with the information.

- **CULTURAL LIAISON** – Mrs. Dengeles reported that the first script for the video project/vlog has been created. She and Mrs. Zarate have been working on it, but they are about a month behind where they had hoped to be at this point. Once everything is approved, she will share the script and/or finished video with the Coalition.
- **POST PROM** – Mr. Austin reported that there are only a few more small items to complete to finish the construction for the Post Prom event. There are two more build nights scheduled for May – on the 9th and 16th – plus one on June 12th, but he does not think that will be needed. The DJ who is providing the entertainment spoke to the 22 parents who attended the last meeting and shared his plans for the evening. These seemed to have been well-received by his audience.

Fundraising also continues for the event: two tickets to *Hamilton* are being raffled for \$30 a chance, and 25 out of 100 chances have been sold so far. The graduation lawn signs are also being sold, and will be available at the Festival of the Arts in May and the Islip Summer Street Festival in June. There will also be another Dang! BBQ fundraiser on Tuesday, May 28th.

The committee is currently working to put together a list of food and prizes. At this point, things are ahead of schedule, and they hope to keep it that way.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Game Night Recap** – Discussed during reports
- **Marijuana Legalization Presentation** – Discussed during reports
- **7 Habits Teacher Training** – Following the training on Superintendent's Conference Day, each building was asked to form a team, which has been dubbed the Lighthouse Team. On Tuesday afternoon, the District Lighthouse Team met to review some of the implementation that is going on in the buildings and to start making plans going forward. This includes the compilation of a listing of books

and other resources for students at every grade level that echo the messages of *The 7 Habits*. In the lower grades, projects are more directed and simple, with things like bulletin boards. For the older students, however, they are being encouraged to take on more of a leadership role, and much of it will be given over to the students. Dr. Semel shared Sherwood Elementary has been focusing on one habit each month, and students have been creating Flipgrid videos highlighting what is happening in their classrooms. These videos are included in Mr. Walerstein's weekly electronic newsletter.

The District team will be meeting with Mr. McGuey from Franklin Covey who will be guiding them on the next steps.

Mr. Modica noted that the HS Launch Team has already started to meet, and their plans include having two student representatives from each homeroom who will provide presentations to their peers. The idea is for these to be student-centered activities, as opposed to teacher-led.

Mrs. Brown asked if this would be the same two students each time, or would different students present. Mr. Modica and Ms. Hall responded that the framework is still being brainstormed and evolving. There will be a small group of "Senators" in addition to the homeroom representatives. Mr. Modica is looking to target students who may have gotten in trouble in the past, but are willing to take on these leadership roles.

- **Fundraising Committee** – Ms. Mayott and Dr. Martin will be meeting with a representative from Northwell Health later in the month to discuss fundraising possibilities.
- **Legislative Update** – Legislator Tom Cilmi was in Riverhead for a legislative session, but he did text Mrs. Vouris to share some important information. The Suffolk County Legislature is currently working on two bills related to tobacco and ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery System) products. One prohibiting the sale of tobacco, including ENDS products, in pharmacies or any store containing a pharmacy was passed. A public hearing on the second, which addresses improved oversight of ENDS retailers was recessed and no vote taken. Legislator Cilmi will share any additional information on this as the legislative process continues.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Safety** – Mrs. Paehr reported that legislation to place cameras on school buses to catch drivers who pass them when the red lights are flashing has passed the New York State Assembly. It is now in the hands of the Senate for consideration. If it passes there, logistics for the legislation will need to be worked out.
- **Smoke Detectors** – Mrs. Smith shared that a new law has been passed requiring smoke detectors in homes. The American Red Cross is running an event where they will install smoke detectors for you. The aim is to install 1,000 of these on each of two days – May 4th and May 10th. She shared a flyer that will be scanned and sent to the entire Coalition by Mrs. Carr. Mrs. Paehr asked Dr. Semel if this information might also be included in the District budget information that is sent to the community or on the District website. Dr. Semel noted that the HS PTSA is hosting a Fashion Show and allowing senior citizens to attend for free. We could make the flyer available at that event.

Dr. Semel also shared that the District had been piloting an alarm system that claimed to detect vaping in restrooms. The system would send an email to whoever you programmed to receive the message when the alarm was triggered by the presence of vapor. Unfortunately, the system triggered a lot of false positives – including at 2:00 and 4:00 a.m. In fact, one was received on Superintendent’s Conference Day, when no students were present in the building. The pilot was disappointing, and Dr. Semel was surprised they let us do so, given how poorly it functioned.

- **Sector Partners** – Mrs. Paehr asked some of our sector representatives to share any important information or any buzz they are hearing around the community.

Jessica Olsen-Hoek from Youth Enrichment Services (YES) shared that every school district in the Town of Islip is in the same boat in regards to vaping. It is simply a problem for everyone. She believes that the move towards teaching them about the dangers in elementary school is the right one. By the time kids get to high school, the horse is already out of the barn, sort to speak. Information and awareness for parents and students is important.

Mr. Modica noted that he has seen a drop in vaping issues at the high school as the year has gone on. They are not catching as many students as they were at the beginning of the year. He believes that this is, in part, due to word getting out about the punishment with Restorative Justice and the writing of essays. If students are doing it, they are hiding it. They do seem fearful of being caught. Dr. Martin added that the MS is also not having an abundance of issues with vaping. At that level, they are finding that it seems to be more of a ‘show and tell’ kind of thing and more about looking ‘cool.’

Ms. Olsen-Hoek concurred, saying that they do think it is cool. She noted that what we really need is for some people with influence on teens that it is stupid. If the right

people tell youth that it is NOT cool – people like Bar Stool, YouTubers, and other ‘influencers’ – the tide will turn like it did with cigarettes.

Mr. Sparacio shared that Section XI and NYSHSAA are creating PSAs regarding sportsmanship and asked if we could do something like this with our kids regarding vaping? If our students develop and film it, we can broadcast it in house. Mr. Modica said he is definitely open to it. Ms. Hall noted that one student in the HS video production class has created one, and it is being submitted to a contest. She will try to secure a copy of it to share at our next meeting.

Mary Ellen Adams from Long Island Prevention Resources Center (LIPRC) shared information and resource flyers. One covered two pages and highlighted eight important statistics on the effects of marijuana legalization. The other provided information on the Family Service League’s DASH (Diagnostic, Assessment, and Stabilization Hub), 24/7 crisis care for mental health and substance abuse disorders for 5+. Mrs. Carr will scan and email both the entire Coalition.

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

For our next meeting on Tuesday, May 14th, Mrs. Paehr has asked the members of the Coalition to put on their thinking caps. She would like the group to start thinking about next year. Addressing some of the following:

- Are the meetings working?
- What can we do better?
- What areas need to be tweaked?

Anyone who would like to share any suggestions for consideration may email them to Mrs. Carr (kcarr@islipufsd.org) or bring them with them to the meeting.

8:00 p.m. – Meeting adjourned.