

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

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**Syntax Communication**

**Trinity Lutheran Church**

**The Islip Elks Lodge #2533**

**Youth Enrichment Services**

**IDEA COALITION TASK FORCE**

**Minutes – October 2, 2018**

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

ATTENDEES: See sign-in sheet (copy attached)

7:02 p.m. Meeting opened by Mrs. Paehr and all welcomed.

Requested that everyone take a moment to review the minutes from the September 4, 2018 meeting prior to approval. No issues were found and the minutes were accepted as written.

**REPORTS:**

- **FINANCIAL REPORTS** – Mrs. Carr presented the financial expenditures since the September meeting. Only two expenses were made: \$3,108 to Hoop Dreams for the Chris Herren presentation at Islip High School on September 26<sup>th</sup> and \$300 to Good Mojo for the new tablecloth and banner. Mrs. Paehr drew the group's attention to these items, which were on display for the duration of the meeting.

Mrs. Carr noted that September 29<sup>th</sup> marked the end of the 17-18 grant year. Since we have under the 10% threshold remaining of the year's funds, we should be able to continue to access the money without making a formal rollover request. The financials were accepted by the group.

- **PROJECT DIRECTOR** – Mrs. Vouris discussed the progress report required as part of the DFC grant that was submitted in August. She recently received word that the report was approved. This is a 53-page document, so Mrs. Paehr requested that a copy be emailed to everyone, rather than printed. (*Note: this was done on Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.*)

Mrs. Vouris then shared some upcoming programs and conferences that may be of interest to the group. The first is a performance of "Addict or Not" on October 25<sup>th</sup> by CM Performing Arts Center and sponsored by the Connetquot Cares Coalition. Mr. Modica noted that Dr. Harris will be attending with some of his theater students, and they are trying to recruit other students, as well.

Another upcoming event is a half-day conference on October 9<sup>th</sup> at Suffolk County Community College through the Long Island Prevention Resource Center and Partners in Prevention. The conference, titled *Protection our YOUth: Substance Abuse Prevention and Wellness*, will feature three breakout sessions on issues related to prevention.

Mrs. Vouris also shared information on The Bryan Gallagher Memorial Foundation. Mr. Michael Gallagher had hoped to attend the meeting, but recent shoulder surgery prevented it. He did share information on a scholarship for treatment of addiction at center in Upstate New York the Foundation provides to families in need. This is being done in memory of Mr. Gallagher's son, Bryan, who died of an overdose two years ago.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Vouris attended a meeting of Keep Islip Clean (KIC) on behalf of the IDEA. There is a relationship between clean communities and drug prevention. She has asked KIC to share data collected during their national clean-up events, as the types of litter (cigarette butts, bottles, drug paraphernalia, etc.) and location where it is found is relevant to us. Finding certain types of litter in specific areas can identify 'hot spots' where kids gather. It was noted that business owners do sometimes complain about debris issues that are then shared with the COPE officer for follow up and possible extra police patrols in those areas.

Mrs. Vouris also suggested that work be done with ISACC and YES (after school program at IMS) as the students who take part in these programs represent an educational opportunity. We may want to consider providing them with activities.

Mrs. Paehr briefly interrupted the agenda to allow new attendees a moment to introduce themselves. Courtney Betcher noted that she was representing Youth Enrichment Services (YES) on behalf of Jessica Olsen-Hoek, who was unable to attend. Matt Marano, a 2016 Islip graduate and former Youth sector representative, was welcomed back to the Coalition.

- **PROJECT COORDINATOR** – Mrs. Whitehouse reported that Theatre Three would be providing a program on bullying and positive choices ("Class Dismissed") for all grade levels at the Middle School on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, as part of Red Ribbon Week. She also is working with Shayna Pirkl and the IMS Advisory Committee on small group discussions led by Advisory teachers. This will go along with some very, very powerful videos.

Mrs. Whitehouse is also creating a "Literature Corner" at the MS during Advisory. For six days, a table will be set up for eighth grade advisory groups to visit (two to three groups per day). There will be literature and visual displays on vaping and e-cigarettes, as well as resources on leadership opportunities and family programs (many of which are free). There will also be handouts on mental health issues relevant to the age (e.g. dealing with stress, etc.)

Mrs. Brown suggested that Mrs. Whitehouse reach out to the Islip Public Library as a resource for other teen and family events at low/no cost. Mrs. Dengeles wondered if there was a way for IDEA to help fund the cost of the YMCA Youth Leadership Training (\$40/year) for students who receive free or reduced lunch. Mrs. Vouris will research if we can use grant funds for this.

Mrs. Brown asked if Mindfulness was still part of the curriculum. Dr. Semel explained that a few years back, Carin Winter trained teachers on this practice. When Ms. Winter left the district, teachers were reticent to continue the program without her at the helm. Dr. Semel feels their needs to be someone at each building willing to take the lead on this (likely a social worker or psychologist). ESBOCES is offering a five-session training during the fall and winter, as you really need to be immersed in this (it is not a two-hour training and your done kind of thing). Dr. Semel has been looking at this, as it really took off at CRES when implemented years ago. Mrs. Feminella (the principal of CRES at the time) reviewed data on recess incidents and found that these dropped dramatically after implementation. Dr. Semel also noted that NYSED has mandated social-emotional learning for students starting this year, and mindfulness is recognized as meeting this mandate. It is not a fad.

- **YOUTH COORDINATOR** – Mr. Modica started with a review of the IDEA Coalition website and updates that have been made. He did note that since he changed the url (removing his name), he is not getting emails from visitors with questions or suggestions of things to add. In the past, he would frequently get these kinds of requests.

The Restorative Justice program is kicking off at the high school now. The school has discovered that 70% of parents still get upset with out of school suspensions, so they have altered the punishment for students caught vaping to two days out of school and three days in the Alternative Learning Center (ALC). While in the ALC, students have assorted activities and assignments to complete, including reading articles and answering questions about the dangers of vaping.

Mr. Modica will be starting Open Gym at the high school on Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup>. Students who meet attendance and grade criteria are able to come in and play basketball from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m.

The YMCA program will start on Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, running 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays with transportation to/from Islip High School. Students may also visit on Saturday nights, but have to provide their own transportation. The pool at the Y is available to them on Fridays. Last year, Mr. Modica had a full (big) bus until May-June-ish, when attendance dropped a bit. Many ENL students took advantage at that time, as well. Guidance has been providing Mr. Modica with names of possible students for this year's program.

Mr. Modica will be running the HS Exchange program again this year with Amityville High School. He has worked with Ms. Hall to identify students to recruit for this program. A group of approximately 50 students (mentors and those who need

mentors) travel to Amityville High School, where there is an assembly, and the students are partnered with an Amityville student for the remainder of the day. The Amityville students then come to Islip in the spring (April). This program has proved successful in the past, with many of the partnered students keeping in contact with each other via social media.

Game Night plans are underway, with a target date for the event in mid-March, or possibly April. The European handball tournament was very popular last year, but an outdoor event (with a kickball tournament) is still under consideration for this spring. If we go with an outdoor event, efforts should be made to involve more staff to help out and/or play in the tournament.

Mr. Modica, Ms. Hall, and Mrs. Dengeles are once again working with Mrs. Kissinger-Stevens, who teaches the teacher prep classes at Islip High School. Seniors in this course will be visiting the elementary buildings during the January Regents week. They are looking at doing something different this year, instead of a read-aloud activity.

Mr. Modica is also working with a friend of his who is a lieutenant in SCPD to set up a positive police involvement program. This would potentially be some kind of after school activity involving interaction between the police and students, such as a basketball, or another sport, game.

- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE SPECIALIST** – Ms. Hall has created signs to be put in local stores and businesses for Red Ribbon Week. She is looking for volunteers to visit these businesses to ask if they are willing to show their support by posting a sign. Community Connectors Paul Austin and Peggy Brown will coordinate the distribution. Mr. Modica also suggested reaching out to the Junior Chamber of Commerce at the high school to see if they might want to help. Carissa Siry from the NY National Guard Counterdrug Task Force suggested that we put together a press release thanking those who agree to hang the signs, to provide promotion to these supporting businesses.

The high school will be painting inspirational rocks for the courtyard again this year as part of their Red Ribbon Week activities. Sgt. Manzueta can set up a Snapchat filter for use in the high school for Red Ribbon Week. The cost is \$33 for one day. Samples of possible filters, that include “Islip Pride” and “IDEA” on them were shared. Ms. Siry will do some research to see if Snapchat will accept purchase orders or payment methods other than a credit card or PayPal.

Chris Herren visited the high school on September 26<sup>th</sup>, presenting his “UnGuarded” program to juniors and seniors. Afterward, Ms. Hall distributed the same survey she did two years ago, to judge the impact on students. The packets of surveys were “branded” with IDEA logo when placed in teacher mailboxes. Ms. Hall just received the completed surveys back, so she will go through them and have a report on the results for our next meeting. Dr. Martin suggested that future surveys be done using

Scantron, which should help collate the data quicker. Dr. Semel will speak to Mr. Ferritto to see how this can be done and how the data can be accessed.

Several of the seniors in attendance provided their personal feedback to Mr. Herren's presentation, describing it as good and moving. They noted that he was very serious and made lots of direct eye contact with the audience, which intensified the experience. They also mentioned that there were a lot of tears in the audience.

Ms. Hall and Mr. Modica will do research into other possible presentations for the high school, taking into account some of the feedback provided at the September meeting. Possibilities include reaching out to Father Pizzarelli at Hope House. Mrs. Paehr also mentioned Julia Floyd-Ventura, who is a recommended contact for the Brentwood Campus of Phoenix House. These both may provide opportunities for free programs.

Final Notes: There was an IDEA table set up at Meet the Teacher Nights at the both the middle school and high school. Updated and bi-lingual resources were available. Ms. Hall has been 'liking' local businesses through the IDEA Instagram account, many of whom are 'liking' the IDEA account back. This is helping build our social media following. Mr. Modica will add the logos of these businesses with an "IDEA Supporters" page on our website. Mrs. Brown suggested that Mr. Modica also add the family and age-appropriate activities that Mrs. Whitehouse is collecting on the website. Mrs. Whitehouse is trying to limit this list of activities to those that are free/low cost, to prevent pricing out some of our families. She will email the list to Mr. Modica for inclusion on the site.

- **CULTURAL LIAISON** – Mrs. Dengeles is continuing to search for resources in English, Spanish, and other languages. She did find nice tabbed brochures in both English and Spanish through Channing Bete and passed around samples of these. She will forward a link for the brochures to Mrs. Carr to investigate purchasing some. Perhaps IDEA palm cards could be attached to these when distributing.

Mrs. Dengeles is also looking into possibly hosting parent workshops that would specifically target our ELL families. There is a lot of cultural reticence in this population toward school, and she is trying to find ways to overcome this. She is currently working on a proposal for this that she will bring to a future meeting.

- **POST PROM**- Mr. Austin reported that there is still no theme for this year's event. An early contender, "Enchanted Garden," has fallen by the wayside, and current possibilities include "Glow in the Dark" and "Carnival." (A "Pajama Party" theme was squashed already.) The students should be voting to make a final decision soon.

Meet the Teacher night garnered another 32 people signing up to be added to the Post Prom email list. They were also able to sell 26 lawn signs (Congratulations Islip High School Graduate) at the event. They are hoping to sell at least 100 of these throughout the year, which will net the committee about \$750.

Post Prom has a permit to have an IDEA/Post Prom table at the Islip Street Fair on Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. They will be raffling off a money tree at this event, to help them reach their fundraising target of \$5,000 for the year. Other fundraising possibilities being looked at include selling t-shirts (Proud Parent of 2019 IHS Senior), another Paint Night, Dang! BBQ events in November and March, and a bowling night at East Islip Lanes for students, parents, and/or both. Carissa Siry suggested the possibility of taking advantage of the Amazon Smile program. It was noted that we would need to be a 501(c)(3) organization in order to do so.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Branding/Domain** – Proofs for the magnet and retractable sign, with the preferred domain included, were shared. Alexis Bates noted that, if there is room, the Twitter and Instagram handles should also be included on these items. Mrs. Carr will work on the layout to see if this is possible.
- **Fun Run** – Commack Road Elementary School is moving their Color Run to May, which would create a conflict with ours. Mr. Henning spoke with Mr. Clareen and Dr. Semel about the possibility of doing a craft fair instead. We can have a company organize this, but they generally take 30-50% of the proceeds. There is a 'craft fair circuit' on Long Island, with the biggest one held in Northport (two times a year – one around the holidays and the other around Mother's Day). We can limit the number of booths based on available space. Mrs. Paehr recommended Mr. Henning reach out to the East Islip PTA, as they also do a craft fair. She will get him contact information. Mrs. Carr will also get him contact information for DECA at Northport High School, as they run those craft fairs. We would have to decide if this would be an indoor (vendors in lobby & cafeteria) or outdoor event. We definitely would have to think about crowds and potential security and custodial needs. Rain dates are tricky, as once you get into a possible Sunday, you are looking at overtime for the custodial staff.

Dr. Semel noted that there are other run options, such as a Bubble Run, where participants run through bubbles. She'll get more information on this, but noted that it would definitely be weather-dependent. Ms. Betcher said that Patchogue is doing something called the "Running Dead," which is a zombie run that riffs on the TV show, *The Walking Dead*. It might be another option to look at, perhaps for next fall.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Teacher Training** (*7 Habits of Highly Effective People* through the Covey Foundation) Over the summer, all administrators and some staff attended training in this program. It appeals to all students in grades K-12, and looks at how to tap into the leader in everyone (includes the book, *The Leader in Me*). Dr. Semel would like to train the entire Islip staff. This is a daunting undertaking, and she would need to declare an additional Superintendent's Conference Day, likely the Monday after spring recess in April. There is already a lot of buy-in for the program, as SES initiated it last year. Dr. Semel is waiting to see if the Covey Foundation can provide enough trainers for a one-day

marathon training session. She should know more by our next meeting, and if it is possible, would like to access IDEA funds to help pay for it.

Dr. Martin, who attended one of the summer training events, noted that the program is holistic with very broad themes. This allows it to be tailored for each specific building's population. It emphasizes traits such as leadership, character, and positive choices. He noted that a huge piece is buy-in from the right facilitator. Dr. Semel added that it is teaching character and getting to the heart of what it is like to be an adult. This is something she feels the District has neglected for ten years, as the focus has been on reading, technology, ELL, special education, and other academic programs. She also noted that it ties in with mindful education. Mrs. Dengeles added that CRES now has 20 minutes at the end of the day when they work with the seven habits. She's currently working with teachers on this and intertwining it with mindfulness. Mr. Henning asked if this could be called mental health training; Dr. Semel said yes.

Dr. Semel referenced the Chris Herren presentation; no one decides to become a heroin addict. This happens through lots of little decisions along the way. She noted that at one point Mr. Herren said, "Why was I willing to chase death in order to enjoy some single moments?" The *7 Habits* work on inner strength and looks at what drives you.

#### **COMMITTEES:**

The list of the committee members on the agenda were reviewed, and some updates were made. Mrs. Paehr reminded these sub-groups to meet, and forward the minutes of these meetings to Mrs. Carr.

#### **UPDATES/QUESTIONS/CONCERNS:**

The Shamrock gas station in Islip was caught in a recent SCPD sting selling vape materials to minors. This is a name that has frequently come up at our meetings.

The Suffolk County Department of Health is offering free, seasonal lawn signs related to traffic safety. Mrs. Paehr has ordered some and will let us know if they are worth it. Mrs. Carr will also call to see if they can send some samples.

Referring back to 501(c)3 status, Mrs. Vouris noted that there is some cost involved and insurance requirements, as well. Dr. Semel and Mrs. Whitehouse both suggested that Mrs. Vouris speak with Tony Pitta, who is the Treasurer for the Islip Booster Club. He may have some thoughts/advice on the topic. Islip Arts and Music Parents (IAMP) is currently in the process of trying to secure this designation, so they may be of some assistance, as well.

Mrs. Paehr asked Mrs. Carr to make tent signs with names and/or organizations/sectors for use at future meetings.

Mrs. Brown asked about the Town of Islip Holiday Parade, which will be on December 1<sup>st</sup>. She would really like to see more than just herself and Mr. and Mrs. Austin participate this year. She feels it would be really great if we could recruit students to walk with them and asked for Mr. Modica's and Ms. Hall's assistance with this. A concern about the road not being fully closed during the recent Homecoming Parade was raised. It was noted that as this is being coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce, the road will definitely be closed. Mrs. Brown also asked that printed handouts be available for the event. She will coordinate this with Mrs. Carr.

Mrs. Brown would also like IDEA to purchase a large banner to be hung annually for Red Ribbon Week. This could be displayed over Montauk Highway by Town Hall and/or Islip Middle School. She will coordinate with Mr. Dineen to find out how permission is granted to hang the sign, and for the Islip Fire Department to assist with the actual work. The sign should not contain any dates, so it could be used over and over again.

Carissa Siry noted that Gabriel Manzueta had asked her to mention the possibility of hosting a Safe Halloween event at Islip High School next year. Dr. Martin noted that Islip Middle School holds a Spooktacular event for elementary students on October 30<sup>th</sup>. This is sponsored by their student government and is free for students with a guardian.

Mrs. Paehr asked the core team to please stay for a few minutes to discuss core meeting dates and times.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

#### **UPCOMING MEETING DATES**

Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>

