

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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NY National Guard Counter Drug Task Force

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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

MINUTES – December 3, 2019

6:30 p.m., Islip High School Community Room

ATTENDEES: See sign-in sheet (copy attached)

6:36 p.m. Mrs. Paehr opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Mr. Modica introduced John Jimenez, the new Cultural Liaison for the Coalition.

Everyone was asked to review the minutes from the September 25th meeting. As there were no questions, the minutes were accepted as written.

Financial Reports: Mrs. Carr shared the financial reports, noting two expenditures so far for this grant year. Both were for community presentations (Timothy Shoemaker and Dr. Stephen Dewey). The report was accepted.

Mrs. Paehr asked if everyone was okay with a slight change in the order of the agenda, to accommodate a committee member who needed to leave. All agreed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Holiday Parade: Mr. Modica and Ms. Hall met with Mr. Austin and Ms. Brown about two weeks ago to discuss the Coalition marching in this year's Holiday Parade on Saturday, December 7th. Student permission slips have been updated, and Mr. Modica and Ms. Hall will be meeting with Mrs. Schmalacker at the high school on December 4th to recruit her students to participate. Mr. Jimenez has reached out to many of his ENL students and provided them with a permission slip in Spanish, as well. Dr. Martin is also recruiting students from the MS. All students will need a permission slip in order to march, or their parents must march with them.

The group is optimistic for a good turnout. They will meet everyone at 4:20 p.m., then proceed to the lineup spot assigned by the Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Brown usually gets that information a day or two before the parade. She has purchased hats and candies to give to kids, and they will also have IDEA information cards to distribute to the adults along the route. Mr. Modica will bring a Bluetooth speaker to provide holiday music for the marchers. Mr. Austin promises that Mrs. Claus will be making an appearance again this year.

Mrs. Brown reminded everyone that cold weather is predicted for Sunday, so please be sure to dress appropriately. Mrs. Paehr asked if they needed any additional help preparing and offered to stuff bags at home, if needed.

REPORTS:

- **POST PROM** – Mr. Austin reported that the Post Prom Committee was holding a fundraiser at Dang! BBQ “as we speak” and encouraged everyone to stop by for a milkshake on their way home. He was headed back there as soon as he finished his report to help out and sell more raffles for the gas fire pit.

The senior class has selected “On Cloud Nine” as the theme for this year’s event, so they are looking for cloudy, feathery stuff. Over 20 parents attended the last meeting on November 7th, and the next parent meeting will be on Wednesday, December 11th. The final layouts and plans should be complete by the January meeting, and building will begin in February. So far, the committee is in good shape, and if things continue this way, they should have most of the heavy work done quite early this year.

The committee also created and framed four certificates of appreciation for local businesses that have been extremely friendly and supportive of Post Prom the past few years. These will be given to Flowers by Chazz, Bubbas’ Burrito Bar, Good Mojo Printing, and Dang! BBQ.

Final note – the committee is still in need of a communications person to handle sending emails, etc.

- **SECURITY** – Mr. Flynn noted that he and Mr. Burke made repeated efforts to have a COPE or SRO representative from SCPD attend tonight’s meeting, but they were not successful. In their absence, Mrs. Paehr asked if anyone had any questions or concerns they would like Mr. Flynn to bring back to SCPD.

Mrs. Vouris noted that there has been a lot of vandalism in the neighborhood recently, which has been a concern since the summer. She also reported that she recently saw something on one of the community Facebook pages about someone finding a syringe at a bus stop. She will get more details and pass them on to Mr. Flynn.

Mr. Flynn reminded everyone that this is the season for “smash and grabs.” He implored everyone to be mindful of the items you leave on the seat of your car or in clear sight when stepping away, even if it is just for a couple of minutes.

- **CO-PROJECT DIRECTORS** – Dr. Martin continues to focus on sustainability, and what we can do when our DFC grant ends. He reached out to Michelle Raider at Northwell Health, who provided him with brochures listing programs available through their outreach. They not only offer programs for students, but staff development programs, as well. Programs come in a wide variety of topics, really

running the gamut of health-related areas. They do have a vaping program, but as this is a hot topic, this will not be available until at least late March. All of the programs are free. They can be done in large groups, but the preference would be to meet with small groups in classrooms as opposed to an auditorium assembly presentation.

Mrs. Vouris noted that we have administered the Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment to sixth, eighth, and tenth graders every two years since 2011 and prior to that, we administered the PRIDE survey in 2000. This provides us with a robust history of results for comparison and evaluation purposes.

Pamela Mizzi from the Long Island Prevention Resource Center (LIPRC) shared that they can put together a one-page “quick look” of the results based on the report we received from Bach Harrison this year. We would need to communicate to them the components/features we would like to focus on, or they can select those topics they have deemed key from experience. She noted that they recently did this for a school district in Nassau County, and the event they put together to share these results drew over 200 parents. Dr. Martin asked if he could be put in contact with that district to see what they did to draw such a large crowd. Mrs. Paehr suggested that this could be based on timing and/or the size of the district. Ms. Mizzi agreed, noting that they are in their first year of a DFC grant, so this is new to them. She also added that if we do have LIPRC evaluate our PNA data, they will keep this information in the strictest of confidence.

- **PROJECT COORDINATORS** – Ms. Hall reported on Mrs. Whitehouse’s behalf, as she had another engagement this evening. She shared that the first HS Dodgeball tournament was a success, with 65 students participating in total. Based on the buzz generated by the event, she believes more students would join in if we did the event again. She also noted that while spectators were not allowed for this pilot event, as a staff member, it was really fun to watch. There was also an IDEA information table at the event.

Mr. Henning asked if we could do something like this at a lower grade level. Mr. Modica noted that we hold a Game Night in March every year that includes a European handball tournament. At this event, he speaks to parents prior to pick up about IDEA and information is also included in the goody bags given to everyone at departure. Dr. Martin added that we will once again be running the 100 Minutes of Motion event for fifth and sixth graders in February this year.

Dr. Martin invited Mr. Henning to meet with him to share any ideas he may have. One thing Mr. Henning would like to see on the permission slips for these activities is bullet points outlining what IDEA does and why we do it.

- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE SPECIALIST** – Ms. Hall reported on the presentation by Dr. Stephen Dewey on November 13th. This was a well-received and successful program. She shared the results of a SurveyMonkey survey sent to attendees to support this.

While only 12 people responded, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Almost everyone found the presentation to be incredibly informative, with the only drawback noted that the presentation contained too much information to absorb. There was a unanimous interest in attending more presentations of this type.

Mrs. Brown attended the presentation and described it as wonderful. The scientific nature of the presentation provided a why you should not use substances (like ENDS products) to the traditional “don’t do it” message. The information was great, and she could see parents in the audience whispering to their friends, “I didn’t know that!”

Ms. Hall reminded everyone that Dr. Dewey did a similar presentation for the entire high school last year, so everyone there but the current freshmen have heard his message. While this was dialed down a bit for the students, it was definitely a scientific approach to the issue since he is an addiction researcher. Dr. Martin expressed an interest in grabbing students when they younger, and perhaps have Dr. Dewey present at the MS level. There was concern, however, that his information may be at too high a level for them. Ms. Hall and he discussed the possibility of bringing Dr. Dewey back for a single grade level every year – perhaps starting with next years sophomores.

- **YOUTH COORDINATOR** – Mr. Modica reported that he has been trying to have Open Gym two nights a week (Tuesdays & Thursdays) whenever possible. This has been drawing 25-30 students a session.

The YMCA program is also doing very well, with a consistent number of students attending both the Tuesday and Friday visits. The bus has been almost full every week. Students are also sharing that they are going to the Teen Nights offered by the Y, as well as getting a ride and going on their own on other days.

Mr. Modica and Ms. Hall are once again working with the Early Childhood Education classes to plan lessons for the students to teach at Commack Road and Sherwood during Regents week in January. They will be speaking with the principals at both schools in the next week or so to coordinate the visits. The book the lessons will be based on has not yet been finalized, but one possibility is a book on digital citizenship.

Mrs. Paehr asked that they mention the Jenkins Memorial Scholarship to students in the Early Childhood classes. This scholarship is given by NYS PTA to students planning to pursue a career in education. Ms. Hall said she would bring copies of the application with her when she next meets with the students.

As a final note, Mr. Modica asked that we do more to promote the IDEA website. Dr. Martin suggested reaching out to the building principals to include a link in their building newsletters. Many principals are now doing a digital newsletter, so this would definitely fit. It was also decided to eliminate the IDEA landing page on the website, and instead link directly to the IDEA website. Mrs. Carr will reach out to the web team to have this changed.

- **CULTURAL LIAISON** – Mr. Jimenez introduced himself. He is an ENL teacher at the HS, and also co-advisor of the STAR Club at the building, so he is looking forward to bringing a diversity piece to the Coalition. He commented that he was hearing a lot of great things during the meeting and looking forward to contribute to our efforts. He will be sharing permission slips for the Holiday Parade with the STAR Club at their next meeting and try to encourage the students to march with IDEA.

Dr. Martin wondered if there is a place for IDEA to do some kind of outreach to new students, whether they are ELLs or not. There is a perception that the majority of new students coming into the district are ELLs, but this is not accurate. Mr. Jimenez concurred, stressing that it would be good to go beyond the educational piece and get new students involved in the community, so they feel more comfortable outside of their own “like” group.

Mr. Henning wondered if we could incorporate something like the new house system they are doing at Sherwood. Dr. Martin will reach out to Mr. Walerstein to see if this is something the Coalition could utilize to encourage inclusivity.

Mr. Jimenez wrapped up his report stating that he will help out the Coalition with translating flyers, permission slips, etc. as needed.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Review of Autumn Programs/Events** – Covered during reports or in written reports distributed at meeting.
- **Volunteer T-Shirts** – Mrs. Whitehouse has pricing and other information. Ms. Hall will follow up with her tomorrow. Mrs. Paehr reminded everyone that this was an effort to increase our visibility at events and say thank you to those who help out.
- **Islip Travel Baseball, “STRIKE OUT DRUGS”** - This project is in the works, and Ms. Hall will be meeting with Mr. Rempe later in the week to go over more details. She asked if purchasing the patches would be an allowable expense under the DFC grant. Mrs. Vouris answered that branding initiatives like this can be paid through grant funds, and it was agreed to make funding available. Mrs. Paehr added that this will need to be inclusive, not just for baseball.
- **Special Olympics** – Tabled, as both Dr. Semel and Mrs. Whitehouse were absent.
- **Sustainability** – Using Northwell as a resource, as per Dr. Martin’s report earlier in the meeting. Dr. Martin did ask Ms. Mizzi if LIPRC also offered any kinds of programs. Their function is more related to technical assistance, not programming. Other possible sources would be Youth Enrichment Services (YES), which may be able to provide programs beyond Too Good for Drugs. Jessica Olsen-Hoek will get Dr. Martin a brochure of the programs YES offers. Mrs. Vouris added that the

Suffolk County Police Department also has a variety of programs available, some of which we already bring into the District. Mrs. Paehr shared the Sheriff's Department has quite a number of programs, as well.

- **Fundraising Committee Update** – Mrs. Paehr did research into what the Coalition would need to do in order to get 501c3 (nonprofit) status. The process is involved, and will not only require a time commitment to get the status, but also to meet the requirements to maintain the designation going forward. Before we undertake this endeavor, she wants to make sure that there are people committed to the effort long-term. She recommends a sub-committee to thoroughly review the steps and decide how to proceed, as this will not be a quick and easy task. The process includes: (1) creating an association; (2) filing articles of incorporation; (3) applying for a federal tax exemption; (4) applying for a state tax exemption; (5) drafting bylaws; (6) appointing at least three directors; (7) holding a meeting of the board; and (8) obtaining any necessary licenses and/or permits. We can either pay someone to handle the process for us, or we can try to do it on our own and see how far we can get. The initial cost (not including paying someone to help with the filing) is \$750, although this can potentially be reduced to \$400. The Coalition would also have to establish their own bank account, and think about insurance, as well as being obligated to file a 990 annually in order to maintain the non-profit status.

Ms. Mizzi suggested that our Coalition members reach out to everyone they know to see if we can find a lawyer who is willing to do this for us pro bono. That is definitely the ideal situation for this. Mrs. Paehr will speak with Dr. Semel to see if the District's legal counsel may be able to recommend a firm or attorney with whom we can discuss the process and obligations.

Mrs. Brown asked about the benefits of becoming a 501c3. It was noted that with this status, any donations made to the Coalition would become tax-deductible. It could also potentially help with the sustainability piece, as there are a number of grants available that require 501c3 status.

Mrs. Paehr mentioned that one thing to bear in mind is that being appointed a director becomes a legal obligation. We must make sure there are people willing to take this on long term. Dr. Martin noted that this would have the Coalition now be more like a business, and in a business, you need people with different skill sets to make it successful. Mr. Henning stated that PTA does this every year with a group of volunteers. They have the procedures in place to make this work. Mrs. Paehr added that problems may be created if filings and any other necessary paperwork is not done correctly or at all. Something to bear in mind.

In short, becoming a 501c3 is completely doable, if that is what the Coalition wants to do. It needs to be understood, however, that if we start it, there is work that needs to be done to maintain it.

- **Other Sub-Committee Reports** – none offered.
- **Legislative Update** – Discussion was tabled, as Legislator Cilmi was unable to attend the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Prevention Needs Assessment Results** – Dr. Martin prepared a brief PowerPoint presentation on the results from the Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment. The report was just received last week, so a deeper dive into the results will be presented at the January meeting.

As an overview, Dr. Martin noted that 1,000,000 students take the Bach Harrison survey nationwide. They send two reports – a crosstab of all questions and answers and a profile that includes three-year comparison. Since there are so many different avenues the information provided could take, they suggest narrowing down to three to five topics of focus after looking at the data. Dr. Martin agrees, and he feels that we need to share these focus areas with both the committee and the community. This is incredibly important.

For his presentation, Dr. Martin selected graphics from the profile report focusing on substance use and antisocial behavior and antisocial behavior and gambling at each of the three grade levels (6, 8, and 10). In reviewing the information, Ms. Mizzi noted that the Bach Harrison norm included on these graphs does not include data from New York. She also stated that inhalants tend to be used most amongst younger students, as they are generally easier to access and serve as an entry point. The higher percentages there are not entirely uncommon. Energy drink showed a marked increase at the sixth grade level, with a smaller increase at eighth grade a drop at tenth.

Another spike that popped up was in gambling behaviors. Mrs. Paehr noted that a rise began in this category with the administration of the survey in 2014. Ms. Mizzi noted that the New York State Gambling Prevention Center does offer programs if we want to address this issue. Mrs. Paehr wondered if gambling was gender-driven when drilling down into the data. This may be something to look into. Dr. Martin suggested that going forward, we look at other areas/things that pop up as we review the data.

Dr. Martin will speak with Dr. Semel about what we want to do with the data and will also reach out to LIPRC to get their input and review. The Coalition will need to decide what to share, and how to share it.

Mrs. Vouris noted that protective factors have always surveyed as being pretty strong, but there seems to be a lot of risk takers, too. In terms of alcohol, drinking, and binge drinking, Islip students have always seemed to be at or over the national

norm. This is concerning, and seems to have its origins in a perception of community acceptance of the behavior. The question is, how do we change this perception?

Mr. Henning feels the information should be shared with the parents of the youngest students in the district – perhaps including it in the packet that goes home with kindergarten registration. He stressed that drinking is a learned behavior that starts in the home, and we need to address it to change the community perceptions. Mrs. Vouris worried this message would not be a priority and get lost in the whirl of starting school. Ms. Olsen-Hoek suggested that if the data shows kids are drinking at home, then we need to get this out to the community and share it with parents and others where they make regular purchases. She advocated for a sticker shock campaign, where students put messages in the community – on pizza boxes, at beer distributors, etc. – that talk about alcohol use or reinforce the consequences of the social host law. The more people see this, the more likely they are to get the message. It may also trigger a concern that there is a greater crackdown on underage drinking and those that provide alcohol to minors. Most places will be receptive to students requesting to place these stickers. At the end of the day, parents need to understand that behavior changes must start with them.

A balance needs to be struck; a problem cannot be solved without first identifying and naming it, but there is a risk that talking about it too much fuels a perception that the problem is bigger than it really is. Mrs. Vouris suggested that we pull out the breakdowns a key areas that were put together after the 2017 PNA administration. These may be used as a basis for comparison with this year's report. For now, Mrs. Paehr asked that the full report not be sent. She and Dr. Martin will confer Dr. Semel about how to proceed.

- **Holiday Parade** – Discussed at beginning of the meeting.
- **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide** – Ms. Mizzi has been contacted by this organization. They are offering their services to put together a free full day conference/challenge day on the prevention of teen suicide. This would be a regional, day-long event that would include speakers, panels, and workshops. Schools would be invited to send six students (sophomores and juniors) and two staff members to the program. They would provide a continental breakfast and lunch for all participants (through donations), and they may also be able to provide transportation. What they need, however, is a facility to host. They did recently hold a Youth Wellness Summit in Nassau County with 27 schools participating. They are looking to do something similar in Suffolk. Ms. Mizzi will send more information to Mrs. Carr.

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Reminder that the Holiday Parade is this Saturday, December 7th.

TASKS FOR ALL:

- 501c3 – Do we want to proceed with this? Who is willing to serve on a sub-committee?
- Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment – How do we want to handle the reports we have received?

Mrs. Paehr closed by wishing everyone a very happy holiday.

8:11 p.m. – Meeting adjourned.

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SIGN-IN SHEET
 September 25, 2019

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