

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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The Islip Elks Lodge #2533

Youth Enrichment Services

IDEA COALITION TASK FORCE

Minutes – January 15, 2019

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

ATTENDEES: See sign-in sheet (copy attached)

7:00 p.m. Meeting opened by Mrs. Paehr and all welcomed. She welcomed SCPD officers Heinz, Dormer, and Simonetti who joined us this evening, and thanked them from coming. She noted that in deference to their time, we will break with our usual meeting agenda protocols this evening and allow them to speak at the start of the meeting.

Dr. Semel also expressed her gratitude to the officers for joining us this evening. She shared some of the history of the IDEA Coalition, which was founded in 1997, (thank you Mrs. Paehr for the date) and our mission of providing safe alternatives for our students and the children in our community. She highlighted some of the coalition's initiatives, mentioning Post Prom as one of our biggest. She also talked about some of our school-based programs like the open gym and our cooperative arrangement with Great South Bay YMCA.

COPE OFFICERS – Officer Anthony Simonetti spoke, noting that he works part-time with another school resource officer to cover the school districts in the area.

Dr. Semel shared that one of biggest on-campus issues we currently have is vaping/e-cigarettes. She noted that plans are in the works to pilot vape detectors, from a company called ICAS, in a couple of our bathrooms at the high school.

In regards to current, local police issues, Officer Dormer mentioned there have been a number of car thefts in the precinct recently (at least eight or nine), as a result of people starting their cars to warm them, then returning to their house, leaving them running with the keys in the ignition. He noted that car thefts are common with drug addicts looking for quick cash and cautioned against leaving anything of value visible in your car when it is parked and unattended.

Mr. Modica informed the officers that a student shared with him that the USA Gas Station will give a discount (20%?) on a JUUL if you tell say "Ahad sent you" when you go in to make a purchase. Mrs. Brown added that we also frequently hear about Shamrock selling vape materials to minors.

Another issue discussed was the recent incident involving a female high school student who was followed on her way home from school. Officer Simonetti said he has seen the video provided by the family, who has the Ring home security system, and SCPD is continuing to investigate the incident. Dr. Semel noted that she had also seen the footage, and that it was excellent.

According the Officer Simonetti, the case is now in the hands of undercover, but he will follow up and let us know if there has been any progress in the case. Mrs. Whitehouse asked the officers regarding any possible charges with which the individual driving the car could be charged. They said it would really depend on the circumstances of any given case. It could be harassment, or more, if there was a verbal exchange (Mr. Flynn noted that this did not happen in this case; only eye contact was made between the driver and student.) If they do track him down, SCPD will speak to the individual and perhaps even watch him for a few days to see if this was more than an isolated incident.

Legislator Cilmi noted that SCPD rolled out partnership with a new social media platform called [Next Door](#) last week for the distribution of community information. Subscribers receive information about the neighborhood in which they live, as you provide your address and zip code when you register.

Mrs. Paehr asked if anyone had any questions for the officers. As no one did, she thanked them again for their time, reminding them that our next meeting is February 5th.

Officer Dormer reminded everyone that SCPD does not always know what is going on day-to-day in our neighborhoods. He asked that members of the Coalition please keep SCPD informed of any unusual activity (many people coming and going to a particular house, for example) or anything suspicious. Even if it turns out to be nothing, they would like the opportunity to investigate. He provided his cell phone number on the attached sign-in sheet. (This will not be included when the minutes are posted on the District website.)

- 7:17 p.m.** Mrs. Paehr asked everyone to review the enclosed the minutes. The minutes were accepted with two revisions under the Project Coordinator's report, adding in the names of two teachers (Laura Vogelsberg and Kim Striplin) who were instrumental in creating the positive affirmation mural at Islip Middle School.
- 7:23 p.m.** Mrs. Carr reviewed the financial expenditures and DFC grant fund requests since the December meeting. She noted that we have approximately \$18,000 in grant funds that have yet to be earmarked for anything this year, plus an

additional \$11,000 in funds remaining from last year. Since this represents less than 10% of the total annual grant, we do not need to make a formal rollover request to access these funds. We do, however, need something in writing from SAMHSA/DFC in order to place these funds in district codes for expenditures. The financials were accepted by acclimation.

REPORTS:

Mrs. Paehr asked that we do these differently this week. Instead of having each individual read out their entire report, she has asked that they highlight one important item in their written report. If anyone has any questions on any other items in the written report, they may reach out to them individually.

- **PROJECT DIRECTOR** – Mrs. Vouris chose to highlight the handouts she included with her report. These are excellent resources both for Coalition members and parents. The materials included information from the CDC for teachers and parents about what e-cigarettes and other products look like, the dangers of them to youth, and also a tip sheet for parents on how to talk with teens about e-cigarettes. She also shared an article from the CDC website highlighting the increase in the use of tobacco products by middle and high school students since 2011.

Dr. Martin focused on mental health. Over the past few months, Ms. Hall, Mrs. Dengeles, Mrs. Pennington, and Dr. Martin attended a four-part mental health think tank through ESBOCES. One major item under discussion are new federal and state surveys on school climate and culture. The federal survey has been piloted in a number of districts in Nassau County. Dr. Martin has had the opportunity to review this, and is considering adapting some of it for the survey he already does at IMS. He did not that as it stands now, the federal survey is 75 questions long, which concerns him as it may lead to survey fatigue by the students.

One statistic Dr. Martin shared was the knowledge that pointing out someone's strengths positively impacts behavior 80% of the time. Interestingly, strengths are only highlighted by others 1.44% of the time. The message is clear, though, pointing out strengths can have a contagious effect on an individual. This is definitely food for thought and something for us to keep in mind as educators and parents.

Mrs. Vouris and Dr. Martin also noted that they have begun work on the Project Narrative for the Continuation Application for the Coalition's DFC grant. They are looking to refine the document and revise the Action Plan for the next 12 months. They will be emailing key sector representatives to update their information in the document. Mrs. Paehr noted that we do still have several Coalition Involvement Agreements that we need to have signed for this year. Mrs. Vouris will work with Mrs. Carr to fill in the blanks as needed.

- **PROJECT COORDINATOR** – Mrs. Whitehouse reported that her current focus is the idea of bringing back monthly 'socials' to Islip Middle School to provide students with

safe and healthy evening activities. She is working with Dr. Martin on this. The first one they would like to do is soon and would be for 5th and 6th graders to celebrate the 100th day of school (February 14th). They would like to highlight the “100” theme and have attendees do 100 minutes of activity. Plans are still in the works, but the idea is to serve a pizza dinner with beverages at either the start or end of the event and have a deejay in half of the gym and activity stations in the other half. Possible times are 5:30-7:30 or 6-8. Since the actual 100th day is Valentine’s Day, they will hold it on either February 12th (Tuesday) or 13th (Wednesday). Friday the 15th is the snow date for the SEPTA Sweetheart Dance and the start of mid-winter break, so they want to avoid that. Mrs. Whitehouse noted that the District Art Show is scheduled Wednesday, February 13th, but Dr. Semel said that should not be a conflict, as the Art Show is held in the lobby of the high school. Even if a student has work in that show, they should be able to do both, as the Art Show is a ‘drop in’ kind of event does not require anyone to be there the entire time. They will need to check to see what, if any, building use permissions have already been granted at the middle school for that date.

Permission slips will be distributed (Mr. Modica offered to provide the template that he uses for Game Night) and a donation of \$2.00 will be requested so they can get an idea of how many students may attend. This will help them determine how many teachers/volunteers they will need to help. Dr. Martin noted that they want to start this with 5th and 6th grade “to get the most bang for their buck.” Mrs. Whitehouse asked if IDEA would have the funds for a DJ for the event. She also asked if everyone thinks this something the Coalition would think should move forward. Mrs. Whitehouse suggested that she might be able to get Athletes Helping Athletes students to help out, as well as other students, like our Youth Sector members and the various district honor societies.

Looking ahead, if they wanted to hold a monthly event, Mrs. Whitehouse was considering a Fortnight Tournament for March. This would be held in classrooms utilizing the Promethean boards. They would need one supervisor per room. Mr. Modica pointed out that the district firewalls would prevent us from accessing Fortnight. He could, however, share his gaming consoles used as part during Game Night. Mrs. Paehr noted that since we are doing Game Night in March, we should stay away from doing anything that month.

A decision was made to get the February 100th Day Social going to see what attendance is like, and if it is worthwhile to continue this going forward. Mr. Modica suggested that he and Mrs. Whitehouse meet, as he has some ideas for spring.

Mrs. Whitehouse also reported that she received an educational video touching on the dangers of vaping from Danielle Martello that would be appropriate to share with 7th grade advisories (similar to what she did with 8th grade advisories in October). Mrs. Paehr asked if there could be a parent component that students could take home to go along with it, as a home-support piece. Mrs. Whitehouse noted that the video comes with discussion questions and follow up that can go home with students.

The Too Good for Drugs program will be starting in the five third grade classes at CRES on January 28th. Mrs. Whitehouse shared a sample classroom lesson (approximately 20 minutes) on frustration. Students are asked what makes them frustrated and how they handle it when they become frustrated. She will then offer students six steps to handling the emotion. The following week, each class will meet with Mrs. Whitehouse in the gym for a physical lesson as a follow up. For this particular topic, they will do the rock, paper, scissor challenge. Mrs. Whitehouse noted that much of the Too Good for Drugs elementary curriculum deals with social-emotional learning.

- **YOUTH COORDINATOR** – Mr. Modica has been working with Ms. Hall and the high school's Teacher Prep classes. They have selected a book, *What If Everybody Did That?*, and the high school students have put together lesson plans that they will use to teach 3rd and 4th graders at Commack Road and Sherwood Elementary Schools on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday next week (mid-term week at the high school). Mr. Modica and Ms. Hall will be facilitating the work at SES, while Mrs. Dengeles will facilitate at CRES. Ms. Hall will share more in her report.

Game Night will be on Friday, March 22nd from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Mrs. Carr will submit the building use form for the event and make sure it is added to the calendar on the District website. Mr. Modica has also updated the IDEA website to include hyperlinks to all of our social media sites.

As a side note, Governor Cuomo is considering legislation to raise the age to purchase of vapes from 18 to 21.

- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE SPECIALIST** – Ms. Hall said that she and Mr. Modica have met with the Teacher Prep class and reviewed what the students need to do when visiting SES and CRES. The students are excited to have the opportunity to work with new grade levels, as they usually work with kindergarten classes at Wing.

What if Everybody Did That? is a picture book for younger children that focuses on breaking rules vs. making good choices. The teacher prep students class lesson plan starts with asking the younger students to make a prediction about the book based on the cover. They will then read the book to the students and discuss the good and bad choices illustrated in it. The elementary students will then be given the opportunity to write and add their own good choice to add to the book and share it with the rest of their class. These will be collected and hung throughout each building. Photos of the work will be shared on social media and our website.

Mrs. Vouris suggested that we photocopy the best of the student responses and mail them to the author. Dr. Semel added that Twitter might be a better and quicker way to share these with the author.

Ms. Hall has also created a Facebook page for IDEA. In Mrs. Dengeles' absence, she mentioned the idea of using this platform to start an IDEA vlog to share information with parents.

- **POST PROM** – Mr. Austin's report was not included in the meeting packet, so he shared that the committee raised about \$500 through the Dang! Fundraiser in December and thanked everyone for their support of this event. Black lights for this year's event's "Glow in the Dark" theme were purchased for half price as part of a Black Friday. A couple of committee members have been working in the basement at the high school to get it organized and ready for this year's work. Due to the shift in graduation and prom this year, Mr. Mosca has agreed to move things around so the committee can start set up on Monday, rather than having to wait until Tuesday. Mr. Austin is adamant that senior parents are not working set up the day of the prom, so they may be with their child as they prepare for the evening. The bid "design and build" meeting for the Post Prom Committee will be on this coming Wednesday, January 23rd at 7:00 p.m. in the HS Faculty Room. This is the night everything is put on paper to inform and guide all of the building that will begin on Thursday, January 31st.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **CADCA Resources Access Follow Up** – Mrs. Paehr asked if anyone had an opportunity to visit the CADCA site and use our login information to see if we want to give access to the community. Mrs. Vouris noted that when she tried to go on, she was notified that our membership had lapsed. Mrs. Carr will follow up with the District's Business Office to see when the check to renew the subscription was sent to CADCA, as a request for this to happen was made in early December.

Coalition Involvement Agreements - Mrs. Paehr noted that we do still have several Coalition Involvement Agreements that we need to have signed for this year. Mrs. Vouris will work with Mrs. Carr to fill in the blanks as needed.

- **Teacher Training** – Dr. Semel reached out to Carin Winter, of MissionBE to arrange for mindfulness training for teachers, as was suggested at an earlier IDEA meeting. Ms. Winter provided pricing, and possible dates and times for the training were arranged. When Dr. Semel pitched it out to the teachers, however, the overwhelming response was "let's just focus on the 7 Habits on Superintendent's Conference Day." In short, many teachers asked that any mindfulness training wait until next year, as they felt doing so now would just give them another thing to think and worry about. Mindfulness is another tool for a teacher's toolbox, but it may not be effective if the teachers have too many new tools through into the box at once. Dr. Semel did follow up with Ms. Winter, and she understood the need to wait for now.

There will be a Superintendent's Conference Day on Monday, March 18th and the full faculty will be getting the training on the 7 Habits and *The Leader in Me*. The latter focuses on teaching teachers to share leadership with students.

The Plainview-Old Bethpage School District will be training some of their staff members to be teacher trainers and have offered to train some of our staff with them.

- **YMCA Leadership Training** – Mr. Modica had nothing new to report on this.
- **Post-Grant Funding Sources** – Mrs. Vouris heard back from the accountant, Thomas Jones of Jones and Little, regarding the steps we would need to take to file for 501(c)3 non-profit organization status. The cost to do so is directly linked to our annual budget, which would include any in-kind contributions to the Coalition. Given our annual budget size, the cost to have his firm complete the application for the IRS and NYS Charities Bureau would be \$1,200-1,500, with an ongoing annual filing tax returns (federal Form 990 and NYS form Char 500) \$1,000-1,200. He noted that an annual review of financial statements is required by the NYS Charities Bureau when revenue exceeds \$250,000 annually and below \$750,000 annually. Preparation of the Annual Review of Financial Statement would be an additional \$1,500. He was surprised we did not already have 501(c)3 status and suggests that we do this. Mrs. Vouris said we could also shop around to other accountants to see what their pricing would be. Mrs. Paehr noted that it should not cost this much, as she has been involved with this before with PTA.

Dr. Semel asked who handles the filing for the Islip Booster Club. Mrs. Whitehouse is pretty sure this organization received 501(c)3 status within the past year or so. A district parent, Tony Pitta, has been handling it for them. She suggested perhaps we can ask him for help.

- **December Vaping Presentation – Survey Results** – Mrs. Carr shared the results of the SurveyMonkey survey from the vaping presentation by Stephanie Sloan in early December. While we only had 15 responses, the overall feeling was that the presentation was generally well received. Mrs. Paehr asked Mrs. Carr to create a pdf of the results and email these to the Coalition.

One of the main items to come out of the survey was that many of those in attendance wish more parents had been there. Dr. Martin brought up the to find ways to get parents more involved – not only in attending the presentations, but also getting them to respond to post-event surveys. The middle school has been kicking around several ideas, including asking parents to pull up the survey on their phone when checking in and offering a discount or free admission to those who complete it. This is definitely something to think about.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Sample Elementary Too Good for Drugs Lesson** – Mrs. Whitehouse shared this during her Project Coordinator's report.

- **Healthy Activities, Grades 5-8** – Re-invigorating the monthly social at Islip Middle School. This was discussed by Mrs. Whitehouse and Dr. Martin during the Project Coordinator’s report.
- **E-Cigarette Flavor Ban** – Legislator Cilmi reported that a bill has been proposed in the County Legislature to prohibit the sale of flavored vaping liquid in Suffolk County. Under this bill, only nicotine, menthol and mint allowed flavored vaping liquids would be allowed. He noted that this would only affect nicotine-based products; if the vaping liquid does not contain nicotine, it would not be prohibited regardless of flavor. He also said that Suffolk County cannot control internet sales.

This bill was tabled at the request of its sponsor, due to the large number of people who came out in opposition, although there were also a lot of people who spoke in support of it. Legislator Cilmi did speak with the sponsor today, and amendments to the bill are under consideration. The sponsor is meeting with those who are opposed to it. If anyone would like to speak in support of the bill, the next meeting of the Health Committee is on Thursday, February 7th at 2:00 p.m. in the main auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building (725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown). There is also a meeting of the full legislature on Wednesday, February 13th at 9:30 a.m. in the same location. For both meetings, anyone wishing to speak needs to fill out a card when they arrive.

Mrs. Paehr noted that Suffolk Region PTA has come out in support of the bill.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

Mrs. Paehr opened the floor to any questions or concerns anyone may have.

In light of the conversation at our last meeting, Mr. Henning asked how many suspensions the high school had since early December. Mr. Modica noted that there was one wax pen incident and five students caught vaping since the December 4th meeting. Dr. Semel noted that the incidents have seemed to level off. Mr. Modica agreed, noting that students seem to have a better understanding that the behavior is not being tolerated. He and security are also checking more and teacher have been more alert to it. The students are demonstrating that they care about getting caught and are not blatantly using it. He also noted that he has yet to have a ‘second offender’ vaping incident this year. Dr. Martin added that there have been no students at the middle school since the last meeting.

Mrs. Whitehouse noted that teachers do not want to sit in possible spaces where vaping might occur constantly monitoring things (especially locker rooms), as it makes everyone uncomfortable. Instead, they are handling these areas through random sweeps, which he believes is the right way.

Mr. Flynn pointed out that the biggest piece is not just about catching them; the education piece is critical, as they need to know what it is they are getting involved in. He added that if a student is caught with anything that contains THC, the incident is elevated to a

criminal level. He does not want to see a 16 or 17 year old getting wrapped up in law enforcement.

Dr. Semel noted that the district is delivering a consistent message, both from the building and from the superintendent's office. The message to students is clear; vaping will not be tolerated. Mr. Modica lets those in the Alternative Learning Center program know that if they get caught vaping again, it will lead to a Superintendent's Hearing, which involves lawyers. He believes that hearing that lawyers are involved tends to frighten the students so they do not want to be caught again.

Mrs. Brown asked if parents are receiving information about the dangers of vaping when the child is caught, especially since there seems to be a lack of this available. Mr. Modica said yes. Dr. Semel added that the Education Commissioner just released some excellent material about vaping and e-cigarettes on the NYS Education Department website. She will have this posted to the District website under the "Parents" tab, as well as on the IDEA Coalition landing page. Mrs. Carr will also share it with Mr. Modica so it may be placed on the IDEA website.

Mr. Henning asked, then, are we trying to play the long game and short game at the same time? Ms. Dolan-O'Reilly suggested that LIPRC does have a parent component that they can share, if that is something we are interested in. Mr. Claren noted that the entire discussion is indicative of a national conversation going on right now. The Truth initiative has shifted their focus from their very successful anti-cigarette campaign and are now release PSAs on vaping. Ms. Winkler pointed out that there is no social taboo related to vaping like there is/was with smoking; no detectable smell. Dr. Martin added that it is very expensive to smoke these days. Vaping is a cheaper alternative.

Mr. Sparacio shared that the courts in Ohio recently upheld the decision of a school district that removed a student from the football team after he was suspended for vaping. The court ruled that extracurricular activities are a privilege, not a constitutional right, and the school district had done their due diligence by communicating to students and parents of the consequences through their chemical-abuse policy.

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 5th. Mrs. Paehr asked that members of Coalition support 100th day event at the middle in any way they can between now and then.

Mr. Henning suggested that IDEA also have a presence at the upcoming Sweetheart Dance (Friday, February 1st) and speak with parents at that event.

8:41 p.m. – meeting adjourned.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Tuesday, February 5th

Tuesday, March 5th

Tuesday, April 9th

Tuesday, May 14th

Sign-in sheet on next page