

FRIENDS OF THE HGM, INC.
Minutes

From: Judy McKelvey
To: Board Members
Subject: Minutes -- Board of Directors Meeting, March 24, 2010
Attendees: Harry Geozian, Judy McKelvey, Fern Wallach, Aviva Heston, Nita Dixit, Brent Lowensohn, Rowena Borja, Gene Woo
Guests: Phyllis Spadafora, HGM Parents including Debbie Jay, Christa Jackson, Peggy Horowitz, Thom Horowitz, Jacob Goldenberg, Stephana Goldenberg, Stephanie Smith; Bill Freeman

1. Call to Order

The meeting was held in Kennedy Hall, Room 109, and called to order 6:15 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Judy presented the minutes of the February 24, 2010 Friends meeting. On a motion made by Judy and seconded by Aviva, the February 24, 2010 minutes were approved as presented with unanimous consent.

3. HGM Magnet Coordinator Position

LAUSD is planning to cut 52 magnet coordinators from programs across the district, including the HGM, from full to half time next year. There will be a LAUSD Board meeting on April 13, 2010, so we want to deal with this issue before then. These proposed cuts will have a tremendously negative impact on our program, and our community needs to respond. Phyllis spoke on this subject, noting that many battles over our program have been waged over the years, especially in the 90s. With District budget cuts this year, and proposed for next year, our program's full time dedicated counselor and clerical staff have already been eliminated. Now, the next thing on the horizon is the plan to cut our coordinator to half-time. As of now, none of our HGM faculty has received notice from the District that their positions are in jeopardy. We have a large incoming class of 9th graders next year, and already have a long waiting list. The District's proposed plan for next year is that our coordinator will have just 3 hours per day to devote to coordinator duties. But the HGM coordinator position is in fact more than a full-time job. If the proposed HGM Coordinator cut goes through, our program will continue, but certainly not with the level of activities we currently have. If the coordinator cuts are actually made and the District insists that the HGM Coordinator position be limited to half time next year, our current Coordinator will have to leave the position.

Several Board members met informally with LAUSD District 3 representative Tamar Galatza last Saturday. She is aware of our program and the situation concerning our HGM Coordinator. Ms. Galatza seemed to understand that a full time person is

absolutely necessary for the HGM and that the program (as well as our feeder schools' programs) will flounder without a full-time coordinator. Ms. Galatzan promised to speak with LAUSD Superintendent Cortines yesterday; we've not received further word from her yet but are following up.

Funding issue: Ms. Galatzan told our parents that magnets are federally mandated and receive federal funding. Those funds go into the District's coffers, but Ms. Galatzan didn't know if those funds are being commingled with general funds, or distributed to benefit (only) our magnet programs. Determining the answer to this question may prove worthwhile.

Further discussion points: Superintendent Cortines told the HGM two years ago that the HGM is one of LAUSD's brightest success stories, and many many magnets are doing poorly. We were the only "Model of Excellence". These proposed cuts are not directed towards those programs that are failing; they are instead cutting coordinators based on numbers of students served by each magnet program -- if the program has under 400 students, the coordinator will be cut in half.

We have a special needs population, and our program needs to exist to support those students and their needs. In discussing this issue with people outside the HGM, it will be important to take care to ensure that our accomplishments and needs are known, without sounding whiney and elitist. We may want to point out that the other magnets are at least outperforming their own host schools, and that our particular program is doing much better than that, bringing students, dollars, and prestige to LAUSD. Our students and teachers will quickly migrate away from our school if they do not receive the necessary support from the District via the Magnet Coordinator position.

Discussion of possible action plan ideas regarding the proposed HGM Coordinator cuts:

- A. Let Tamar Galatzan see what she can do behind the scene with Cortines;
- B. Activate our community to vocalize our concerns to the District. To this end, several Friends board members have been contacting magnet coordinators and parents at the other 51 affected schools to see if their communities will join our efforts to maintain the magnet coordinator positions at full-time wherever possible. Also, a number of magnet parents recently appeared before District representatives to voice our concerns. At that time, in response to District assertions that it wants to keep students from traveling outside the District to go to charters and private schools, our representatives at the meeting stated that the District should do everything possible to keep our program healthy, because we attract and keep students within the District and because they are successful ambassadors for the District. Discussion followed regarding the importance for us to avoid coming off as elitist whiners, and to instead remind the District that we are its partners and why it's important to keep us -- we actually bring funds to the District by excellent students that might otherwise opt for charters and private schools; our students' accomplishments bring success and accolades to the District, improving its reputation.
- C. Let the District know -- with tact and diplomacy -- that we're considering legal action to get injunction at very least.

D. To aid in our efforts, put together a publicity packet and consider presenting it to political and media representatives. People who might be targeted for these efforts include LAUSD supervisors Galatzan, Flores, and Garcia; Assemblyman Feuer; Mr. and Mrs. McDaniel; Steve Lopez; Howard Blume; Patt Morrison; Larry Mantle.

4. Treasurer's Report

Rowena distributed treasurer's report showing a current cash balance of \$74,026.16, with certain additional funds still to be deposited. Current fundraising net is \$24,179.40. Yosemite deposits received to date 3129.65; senior night 1505 expenses. On a motion made by Judy and seconded by Aviva, the current Treasurer's Report was accepted without objections.

5. Summer SAT Preparation Course

Rowena has received proposals for summer group SAT preparation courses from Eureka! and Revolution. She will distribute those proposals by email to Friends board members; we can discuss them via email before the next meeting. Voting on the proposals may take place either by email before the next meeting, or during the next Friends meeting.

6. Next Board Meeting

The next Friends board meeting is set for April 7, 2010 at 6:30 pm. It will take place in Room 109 in Kennedy Hall, or in another room if Phyllis arranges for same. Harry to send out email to HGM parents inviting them to come to this next meeting.

7. Old Business

No old business.

8. New Business

A motion to authorize the purchase of honoraria to be provided to HGM speakers, up to \$150 after authorization by a board member who reports same to other members, was made by Harry and seconded by Fern. The motion was approved by consensus without objection.

There was no new business, other than the coordinator cuts discussed above.

9. Public Comment

Parents contributed to discussions re coordinator position, as above.

10. Adjournment

Friends meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.