

Minutes
Joint Munsey Park and Shelter Rock
SCA Parent Council Meeting
November 17, 2009

Today's meeting took place at Shelter Rock Elementary School. Mary Jane Reilly opened the meeting by introducing Regina Rule. She is part of the Community Education Committee and was here to discuss the Bus Proposition. The current proposition is a vote to purchase buses for the school system. If passed, it would be implemented in July 2010. The Manhasset School System has been ordered to restore the bus drivers to their jobs so the vote is to decide whether the school will continue to outsource its bussing or purchase new buses. Regina made sure that everyone understood all the details of the vote so they can make an informed decision.

Mr. Gezcik, Shelter Rock Principal, next introduced the District Coordinators for the schools. They are the support staff to the teachers and administrators. The coordinators also will speak about the state exams. The coordinators are involved with grades K-12 and they have a broad view of the curriculum. They are a great resource and they work on curriculum revisions and introduce new programs such as the Reading Street program.

Patrick O'Reilly was the first speaker and is the English Language Arts coordinator for grades K-12. Grades 3-6 take the State ELA exam and are there to assess a student's knowledge. There are 2 parts to the exam for grades 3 and 5. The first is content - reading comprehension and one short response item. The second part is content - listening section with multiple choice responses and one short response item. There is also an area with editing a paragraph. Grades 4 and 6 have 3 parts to their exam and are taken over a 3 day period. The first part is content - reading comprehension. The second part is a listening section with short response and extended response items. The third day involves reading selections and short response and extended response questions.

Mr. O'Reilly discussing good strategies for preparing students for the ELA exams. The best way for students to do well on ELA tests is to develop good reading habits when they are young. The tests are targeted to specific skills, which are gained with regular reading of both fiction and non-fiction material. A student should pay attention to details in books and be focused in their reading. The test has now been moved from January to April to more appropriately assess the students for that year of schooling. There is special intensive test prep help for children who are having difficulty 5 weeks prior to the test.

The next speaker was Theresa Curry who is the Coordinator for Science and Technology. The state exams are not as rigorous for science as they are for English and Math. The first state test is in 4th grade with multiple choice, short answer and extended response questions.

Ms. Curry continued her presentation with a discussion about the curriculum for all grades. There are instruction cycles (K-4, 5-8, 9-12) and you revisit each cycle with

more in depth learning. Grade 1 learns about ourselves, plants, birds and bats, solar system and matter. Grade 2 learns about plants and animals, invertebrates, energy and motion and weather. Grade 3 discusses plants and trees, heating and cooling and astronomy. Grade 4 studies water, ponds and seashore and electricity. Grade 5 studies plants, ecology, classification, evolution, scientific method and simple machines. Grade 5 also participates in the Science EXPO. Grade 6 follows oceanography, plate tectonics, chemistry and microscopes. The key for elementary and higher grade science is to address it in a fun way. There is a lot of trial and error involved as well.

Mara Steindam next discussed the Social Studies Department. She is our District Coordinator in that area. A state Social Studies assessment is given in 5th grade, usually in November. The exam is on 3rd grade and 4th grade material. The 3rd grade studies world communities and the 4th grade studies early inhabitants, colonial life and Revolutionary War, New Nation and NYS, industrialization and government. The 5th grade reviews material already learned in the other grades and analyzes documents. The exam consists of 50 % multiple choice, 20% constructed response and 30 % DBQ. The 8th grade assessment is the same format as the 5th grade exam.

Rey Scacalossi was the final speaker and he is the District Coordinator of Mathematics. The state exams for Math have been pushed back from March to May. It starts in 3rd grade where it consists of 2 days of multiple choice questions and short response and extended response questions. In 4th grade, the test is 3 days long and is the longest exam. It is 50 minutes for each of the 3 days. It also consists of multiple choice questions but has more short response and extended response questions than in 3rd grade. Grades 5 and 6 consist of 2 days of exams and are the same format. Our school system has a good, sound mathematical program and that is why our students do very well on these exams. There is a family Math Day in April that the SCA funds and is a lot of fun for the students to take part.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.