

Bergen Academies PPO
August 30, 2006 7:00 PM
Freshman Parents Orientation Meeting Minutes

Shiaoling Paxson called the meeting to order at 7:15.

- **Introduction of Board Members**
- **Membership**
 - As of today, 85% of freshman parents have joined the PPO
 - Several freshman families have joined tonight, perhaps bringing freshman membership to 90%
 - Early bird special of \$55 until September 8, 2006
 - After September 8, 2006 dues will be \$65
- **Family Directory**
 - Still waiting for permission slips to have information published in directory
 - Deadline is September 12, 2006
 - This is necessary, in order to have directory in parents' hands by end of September
 - Family directory is disseminated to all PPO members
- **PPO Buddy System**
 - New this year
 - 100 Freshman parents have requested an upper class buddy
 - 200 parents are involved – 100 pairs of buddies
 - Help parents navigate through the Academies, during Freshman year
- **E-mail Blast**
 - Requested parents' e-mail addresses
 - E-mail addresses will not be published
 - E-mail addresses used to notify parents of early dismissals, school closing, and other last minute matters
- **Roseanne Colletti-Harris, International Dinner**
 - International Dinner and Picnic are two events open free of charge to paid PPO members
 - International Dinner will be held in gymnasium Saturday night October 21
 - Usually attended by more than 500 people
 - Takes advantage of culinary diversity in the Academy
 - Great way to meet other parents
 - Looking for committee chairs to organize food by ethnicity
 - Volunteer opportunities available for set-up, clean-up, serving
 - Co-chair is Lalitha Ramakrishnan
- **Pat Cosgrove, Principal**
 - Mrs. Cosgrove thanked Mr. Russ Davis for putting photo montage together
 - Discussed student handbook, which will be given out at end of meeting
 - Combination of student handbook, parents handbook, guidance information and PPO information
 - Discussed transition for 9th graders from middle school to high school

- No longer the oldest or the brightest
 - Now the youngest in school and in a class with everyone who was “the brightest” in middle school
 - Expect different reactions from different kids
 - Some may retreat, some show lack of self-confidence, some may doubt decision to come to BCA, some may become overzealous
 - For some freshmen, today was the first time they were on a school bus
 - Spoke about the 9th graders’ activities during orientation
 - Orientation is run by SPARK kids (juniors and seniors selected as Peer Helpers)
 - Orientation is so successful because it is run by the students
 - Freshmen relate better to students
 - They look up to upper classmen
 - Learn how to get involved
 - Get advice regarding teachers and classes
 - Orientation is an opportunity to meet kids from other Academies
- **Introduced SPARK students, who have been guiding freshmen through orientation**
 - SPARK volunteers are Peer Leaders
 - Each SPARK volunteer has a SPARK group of 8-10 freshman
 - Lead orientation activities
 - Act as big brother/big sister throughout the year
 - Goals of Orientation are to make new friends, to smooth the transition, to meet kids from other academies to become more comfortable with campus and to meet older students who can be a great source of advice
 - Talked about today’s orientation activities
 - Ice Breakers
 - Campus Tours
 - Group dynamics – team building skills
 - Skits to combat bigotry, racism and prejudice
 - Guidance (Guiding Light)
- **Rona Gabin, Program Manager for Guidance**
 - Acknowledged and thanked SPARK kids for all their hard work and help in making Freshman Orientation a success
 - Welcomed Freshman Parents
 - Guidance sheets in handbook list all counselors, their extensions, their email addresses and their Academy/Grade responsibilities
 - Explained guidance office’s “open door” policy
 - Discussed schedules and time management skills
 - Students were given elective sheets today
 - Sheet must be signed by parents
 - If no electives are picked, please write “none” on sheet and sign
 - Although students may choose electives in order of preference, they will be placed in one elective, in order to make sure than everyone who wants an elective, gets at least one elective
 - Electives that are appropriate for 9th graders (based on course pre-requisites determined by teacher/curriculum) have a “9” next to them
 - “H” denotes Humanities Elective
 - “A” denotes Arts Elective

- If a student chooses a sport, practice is held at end of day (Mods 22-24) and is in place of elective
 - Guidance encourages a minimum of 10-12 free mods per week
 - 9th Grade teachers have been specially selected to guide freshmen
 - Freshman Guidance seminar is held once a week, first trimester
 - Each freshman is in a seminar with his/her own counselor
 - Time management skills
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Self-advocacy
 - Various assessments
 - Your child gets to know his/her counselor
 - Grade level guidance meetings are held for every grade level, each year
 - Freshman guidance meeting will be in the winter
 - Contact procedures
 - For academic problems, first contact teacher
 - Be sure to cc Guidance counselor in email to make guidance aware of situation
 - Second, contact your child's guidance counselor
 - If you don't hear back from counselor within a day or two, contact Rona Gabin
 - If Guidance can't solve problem, they will direct you to the next level of support
- **Russ Davis, Vice Principal**
 - Discussed safe environment of school
 - As per homeland security, every room and area in school must be numbered, so all rooms have been re-numbered
 - Don't bring valuables (IPods, lots of cash) to school
 - If your child must bring an Ipod, please etch name into it and keep serial number at home – try to make it look distinctive
 - Discussed Transportation
 - For issues with bussing, call your local Board of Education
 - Your child should at the very least, know which bus company is providing their transportation
 - Finding their bus will get easier within the first month of school
 - It is fine to pick your child up at the end of the day, but it would be best to plan to do this at 4:30, after the busses have left
 - Once the busses start to go, they caravan out of the parking lot
 - Cell phones
 - Are allowed in school, but may not be used – not in classes, halls, cafeteria, etc.
 - Leave phone on vibrate – if you get a message from home, you may go to the main office to retrieve message and return call
 - High Expectations – Code of Conduct
 - Students on this campus don't use foul language
 - Students dress appropriately
 - Administration doesn't anticipate problems – in fact, students are in the principal's and Vice Principal's offices, more often to talk, eat, etc. than for disciplinary problems.

- Frost Valley
 - An outdoor nature center which instills team skills, teaches students to get along with others
 - Three day trip for freshmen – 9/27-9/29
 - Night activities include square dancing and reptile show
 - Team building activities include zip line, rock climbing, cable bridge
 - Parents will receive forms in packet which will include code of conduct, FV's behavior contract, FV's health info, clothing list,
 - If your child needs medication, check with Mrs. Hynes and make her aware of medical condition
- Nurse and Medications
 - School nurse is Laura Hynes
 - Nurse's suite is being redone and will be in middle of Freshman Hallway
 - Her extension is 2254
 - If a student needs to carry an Epi-Pen, the forms need to be on file in nurse's office
 - Need parents' signed permission to administer Tylenol, Advil or Mylanta
 - Nurse needs to know about all medications – prescription and OTC
 - Students may not carry medication with them
 - Nurse should be made aware of all medical conditions
- **Maria Careri, Athletic Director**
 - Bergen Tech Knights = Hackensack + Teterboro + Paramus campuses
 - Fall sports started August 14, Boys soccer started August 7
 - It's not too late for freshmen who have been away for the summer to try out for freshman programs
 - Transportation is provided to and from all games
 - There are 3 late buses that leave the Academy at 6:30 PM – North Bergen County, Central Bergen County and South Bergen County – all drop off at local high schools (if regional HS, they may drop off at elementary schools)
 - If games are late, buses will still leave BCA at 6:30 – then you need to pick your child up
 - If you're picking up at school, pull into a spot – do not block the busses that are coming in
 - Practices take place on fields all over Bergen County
 - Transportation is provided to practices and back to BCA
 - You can check any sport's schedule on-line
 - For daily schedule, call academy, extension 2264
 - Email address is marcar@bergen.org
 - \$20 to join Knights Booster
 - Must maintain a 2.8 GPA to participate in sports
 - Practices are every day, last three mods of the day
 - For the trimester your child is in a sport, they do not take Phys Ed.
 - If your child has Health that trimester, they **do need to** take Health

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,
 Susan Bromberg
 First Vice President