

High School Council Meeting Minutes January 13, 2020

Darcy Kaye, HS Council Chair

Darcy Kaye welcomed everyone to the meeting and made a motion to approve the minutes from the HS Council meeting on November 12, 2019. The minutes were approved

Roy Montesano, Superintendent

The construction is moving along and we've made significant progress. The only exception is the cafeteria expansion that will not likely be ready in September 2020 because of challenges with the soil and pilings/foundation, which required new designs that caused delays. Thank you to the Bronxville School Foundation for providing financial support for the new Innovation Center. The bidding process for the Innovation Center has begun and we will begin accepting bids beginning February 3rd. BSF's financial support for the Innovation Center freed up money from the new bond to improve bathrooms and other projects that had no funding. We hope you enjoyed the two-week break this year and next year's calendar is currently in the works. There is a chance we will have another two-week break next year but the calendar has not been approved. The proposed calendar may be ready for a vote at the next Board meeting. Many parents have suggested a scheduled day off on Easter Monday but we have not been able to build it into the calendar due to budgeted weather days. If we have unused weather days this year, we will consider "giving back" a day by having day off on Easter Monday. This is still TBD given we don't know what inclement weather is in store for us in February and March. The School is focused on building wellness into its model as part of the Bronxville Promise. We have a new committee in place that includes parents, psychologists, students and faculty to determine how we can improve wellness across our student body. We are taking a hard look at this aspect of the Bronxville Promise this year. Joyce Vastola is helping the elementary school with its Care Program as part of the ES's implementation of student wellness.

Anne Meyer, High School Principal

High School Assemblies: Before the holiday break we had a HS-wide session with Matt Behrens, a BHS alum, centered around community building and creating a space where students can be themselves in a supported environment. His sessions were very powerful, and students opened up tremendously and shared their own stories. We hope to continue this dialogue with Matt in the spring and have him come back to work with our seniors.

NoTosh Design Thinking: We have a design team made up of students, faculty, administration, parents and Board members, to evaluate the status quo across our school and challenging those areas to make improvements. There are a number of areas identified for improvements and we spread them among different working groups who are generating ideas and soliciting feedback to determine how to forward. We are looking into a range of areas including wellness, advisory, extra help, etc., to see where things can be tweaked or even restructured. There are often ideas that seem great to some, but others disagree, so it's an iterative process. At the sharing session this Wednesday we are asking a broader group of people to get involved with our process moving forward.

Wellness Initiative: We have been working to update the Health curriculum to address the social and emotional well being of our students. One semester of Health is a graduation requirement in high school and most students take it as 9th graders, but sometimes later based on scheduling. Health class is now discussing consent, sexual assault, and sexually explicit media, and Mr. Russert invited the Assistant DA in to discuss the law and sexual assault among teens. Surprisingly, the average age a child in the US is exposed to online porn is age 11. We are talking to students in HS about sexually explicit media and how it impacts healthy versus non-healthy sexual relationships. Our goal is to make health class more relevant to our students. Dr. Koetke, Ann Meyer and David Russert are working together on the new curriculum and will continue to revise it over time.

New Course Offerings: We have been meeting with each grade level to talk about what courses will be offered and to encourage them to think about creating balance in their workloads. After discussing potential courses with their parents, students should go online to pre-register for courses BEFORE meeting with their counselors. Pre-registration will NOT bind you to a course, but will serve as a place to start a discussion with advisors.

New courses for next year include a Student Global Leadership Seminar for seniors that will meet 1x each cycle and looks at how service relates to equity, identity and community. It is a very powerful seminar for seniors. WISE is an opportunity for second semester seniors to do an internship in place of either English or Social Studies. Students cannot do WISE if they are enrolled in both AP Economics and AP Literature because you can't be exempted from those classes for an entire semester. Please encourage your seniors to think about WISE this spring - it's a great opportunity to get out of the building and experience something new and different.

Due to a high level of interest in AP Physics I, we will be offering AP Physics II next year. They are not sequential courses and they are very, very different. AP Physics I is Newtonian-based (acceleration, velocity, speed, etc.) and AP Physics II covers electromagnetism and nuclear physics, which are very abstract and difficult to grasp. Please be sure your students understand these differences before taking AP Physics II. We are offering non-AP Environmental Science next year and every year we will alternate between Physics II and Chem II. In the 2020-21 school year we will offer Chem II, which is great for kids who enjoy chemistry but are/were not ready for AP Chemistry. BSF's support for the new Innovation Center makes it possible for us to offer a course in Competitive Robotics in Fall '20 and Introductory Robotics in Spring '21. Competitive Robotics will be offered first because competitions are held in December and January, so it's necessary to prepare for competition in the fall. Students don't have to be professional programmers to join the robotics team because there is a range of skills needed for the team. The current robotics team includes a software group, a design group, a mechanics group, and a team management group - so many skills are utilized. We will also offer Entrepreneurship I and Entrepreneurship II. Entrepreneurship I focuses on design thinking/new ideas and Entrepreneurship II covers the physical building of prototypes. With the new Innovation Center, we now have the capacity for prototyping with 3D printers and laser cutters.

Student Faculty Legislature: SFL is rebranding itself as we speak so SFL day will NOT take place in late January as it usually does but will be held later in the year post-rebranding. More information will be announced in late February. Students are expected to be in school on what was formerly SFL day in late January.

Anne Abbatecola, Guidance Department

We are beginning family meetings on course selection and we are focused on creating balance in students' schedules to address overall wellness. The new course offerings give students many more options and we are excited about them. Parents of rising seniors have already received their appointment information in a letter and those meetings begin this week. Workshops for juniors are ongoing and we are meeting with juniors during 40 min slots with no classes to discuss career interests and how they impact college selection as well as brag sheets, college applications, and how to highlight themselves in their college applications. In May we will conclude our year-long workshops for juniors with a speaker to discuss college essay writing. Students will then spend the last two weeks of school drafting personal statements in their English classes. When the Common Application goes live in August our students should be well prepared to complete their applications in full.

This Wednesday evening at 7pm in the Auditorium is our 10th grade parent meeting to discuss standardized testing with representatives from Bespoke Education. On Thursday afternoon there is a Freshman Transition session where seniors will discuss making short and long term goals and how they have done in setting and meeting goals during their time at BHS. Seniors have been getting college notifications and approximately one third of our seniors have made their choice already. Seniors who have made a firm decision should withdraw their applications from other schools to free up spaces for students who are interested in those schools. Mid year grades will be sent to all colleges seniors apply to so keep your list of active schools updated with your guidance counselor. Barbara Dhyne is retiring at the end of January and a transition plan is in place to hire and transition her replacement. Mrs. Dhyne's seniors and juniors will be in good hands and information on the specifics of the transition are forthcoming.

Athletics Announcement

- Thursday 1/16 is the boys basketball team's fan day.
- Spring sports registration begins in February so watch for the announcement.
- Wizards tickets will go on sale in February so watch for the announcement.

PTA, Leah Gravier

There will be an art celebration February 22 - March 2 and stores in town will display BHS student artwork in their windows. Additionally, there will be Where's Bronco (a twist on Where's Waldo) for ES students and the PTA is working with the public library on hosting an open mic night for HS students on February 27th.

Other Announcements:

9th Grade: The Andrus party was a great success and had a big turnout. There will be a second Andrus event on Valentine's Day.

10th Grade: The sophomores hope to have a dance as well a second car wash this spring. Planning is in the works and will be announced when it's finalized.

11th Grade: Juniors are holding a fundraiser with a mock ACT/SAT with Bespoke Education. The fundraiser is targeting 10/11th graders and will be held on 3/20 and 4/19 in the morning in the Multi Purpose Room.

12th Grade: February 14th is Senior/Faculty lunch so we will need parents to donate food. A request is forthcoming.

BOLD: BOLD held a student panel on 1/8 and will hold a student information session on 1/19. On 3/18 they will host an outside speaker in conjunction with BeWell on executive functioning, an important topic for all students in the Bronxville School.

BeWell: The event with Chris Herren was a phenomenal success at Concordia and was sold out. Herren spoke about his own life and addiction, and BeWell is trying to bring him to BHS to talk to upperclassmen and their parents in the coming months. BeWell is previewing a three-part film series for HS students.

Youth Council: The talent show will be held on Thursday 3/19. It is run by HS students and ES students practice and perform. There is a Youth Council leadership lunch for sophomores and juniors who want a leadership role on Youth Council next year. Everyone is welcome to the meeting at 12:45 on 1/14 in the Fireplace Room. The next Westhab event will be held on 2/29 and the dodge ball event will be held on 3/4.

BSF: BSF is accepting applications for its spring grant cycle. Parents, teachers, students and community members are invited to submit a grant. Information is posted on the BSF page on the school website.

The HS musical will be held on Thursday 2/6, Friday 2/7, and Saturday 2/8, so please plan to attend!

The next HS Council meeting will be at 8:30 am on February 11th in the Multi Purpose Room.