

## **High School Council Meeting Minutes November 12, 2019**

### **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 October 8, 2019. The minutes were approved.

### **Announcements:**

- The BOLD Council has an event on 11/13 at 7pm in the Boardroom to discuss the transition to college for students with IEPs.
- On Jan 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am, BOLD will host a presentation called What is Resource Room?
- Be Well is screening Escalation at 7pm tonight for parents to learn from One Love how to discuss relationship health/violence with their teens.
- Chris Herren will be here on 11/20 to talk about addiction with 10-12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- The Youth Council has its powder puff football event coming up and information will be out soon. Youth Councils is also hosting a basketball game on 11/26 from 8-9pm and they are hosting their Westhab holiday event on 12/14 at Reformed Church and they need stocking stuffers for both Westhab and the Graham Windham event.
- The 11th grade had tee shirt sale and sponsored the ACT test event with Bespoke.
- The 9th grade is hosting the Andrus party on 12/4.
- Picture retake day is 11/18 so be sure to register if you want a retake.
- NPC candidates and Board members are available on 11/14 from 7-9pm for a public Q&A session.

### **Roy Montesano, Superintendent**

The atrium entrance will be closed for the next few months and students will come through the HS auditorium entrance but parents need to use the ES and Main entrances. The construction is moving along and the storm drains on Meadow seems to be working well with the new pumps. We had no ponding in the recent heavy rains and that is a good sign. Asbestos abatement is underway to prepare for the cafeteria construction and brick repointing is ongoing so you will see scaffolding in various areas of the exterior. The cafeteria expansion hit a snag as we discovered there is soft around the proposed foundation so we need to reengineer the foundation plan. The Library renovation is finished and students are using it now. A grand reopening will take place on 11/20 at 7pm to unveil the renovation to the community. On 12/10 we have a referendum vote on a new bond to fund the ES curtain wall and the Design and Innovation Center that were left out of first phase of construction. We have room for more capacity for debt service so we are taking on \$3 million in additional debt to complete the projects above. A project schedule is on the District web page to keep you updated.

### **Anne Meyer, High School Principal**

The HS entrances have shifted and we are having fire drill soon to ensure everyone understands the egress changes. Many of the ongoing projects will affect our students but it will be worth it because many of them will have access to these new areas next year. Last week, the Guidance Department hosted a college application event with college admissions representatives and it was very well received. A mini version of this same presentation will

be part of the junior planning meeting next spring. The field hockey team is playing in the state playoffs on Saturday at 10am in Buffalo but the game is in question because of snow predicted. Tomorrow is the Challenge Success presentation (sponsored by Be Well) on the importance of college fit impacts a student's future success more than college rankings. They will be presenting to 9-11<sup>th</sup> graders and then will do a second presentation for 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The Chris Herren assembly is next week and a Bronxville Voices assembly will take place before Thanksgiving. Matt Behrens, a BHS alum who is currently is at Georgetown Law, will give a presentation on individuality and social norms before the December break. At the January HS Council meeting we will go over new course offerings.

### **Rob Lancia, Director of Security**

Rob is a retired Lieutenant from law enforcement in Rockland County where he spent 26 years. We have been assessing Bronxville for a few months and things are good but they need to improve. For example, we need to tighten up our visitor protocol given we have an open campus. Visitors will begin to wear lanyards given at entrances to signal they have been vetted by security. After school, lanyards will be orange and during day they will be bright green. Lanyards are to be worn around the neck so they are visible and we know you've been checked in at security. Every driver's license will be run through the sex offender database to ensure no pedophiles are admitted to the building. It will take more time to enter the building and it will hinder convenience but it's necessary. Lighting and cameras will also be added to our campus to increase security. For example, we used film last week to identify someone who walked off street and stole a bike from the ES entrance. Morning arrival, lunch, dismissal, and after-school activities are the most compromised times. We will have two guards after school hours and we have a guard until 9pm at the ES entrance. All other entrances will be locked. We are not able to run a criminal history on visitors but we can legally check sex offender records because they are public.

### **Tom Viviano, HS Psychologist**

Tom introduced the group to the foundation of DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy). Validation is an important part of DBT and is an extremely effective tool. Validation is conveying verbally or nonverbally that you understand another person's thoughts or actions/feelings. It is NOT problem solving for someone else or fact checking a story that's presented to you. It is NOT agreeing with the behavior. How do you do it? First, you stick to the emotions being expressed and avoid getting into the nitty gritty. For example, you say the following: I get it...you must be frustrated...of course you're angry, everyone would feel that way...it makes perfect sense that you feel angry you weren't included...a simple hug to validate a feeling. DO be present (no phone distractions and make eye contact) and help them label the emotion and the context. For example: You worked really hard and, of course, you feel bad that it didn't work out. DON'T tell them it's going to be fine...its only one test...it's only one party...it's no big deal. Those responses minimize how they feel and say it's not appropriate to feel that way even though they do. It makes people question their own gut reactions and feelings. Try not to problem solve for them right away. Instead, validate first and the problem solving comes later after you've validated feelings. WHY it's important that we validate is because it strengthens relationships by building trust, it lowers an emotional response in the moment, and it gets kids to a rational point more quickly so they can begin problem solving. You have to check your own emotions first in order to do it appropriately. The more you love someone, the harder it is to validate someone's feelings. Avoid self judgment if you don't do it correctly because it takes time,

especially if you know someone well. A question was asked if after you validate can you be heavy-handed about problem solving? Tom said yes you can in order to teach a lesson (for example, not prepping for a test) BUT you do it later, after you validate their feelings. If a teen doesn't tell share their feelings but you see something is wrong, you can initiate the validation process by letting them know you have a sense something is going on and that you're here if they want to talk.

**Anne Abbatecola, Guidance Department.**

First quarter grades will be visible tomorrow. Be sure to validate your student's hard work last quarter and now is the time to brainstorm improvement strategies if they aren't happy with their grades. Extra help period in the mornings is now well attended, so encourage your students to meet with their teachers to talk about what they can do to improve their performance. Help your student learn to advocate for him/herself and to modify behavior accordingly. The end of Q1 is a good time to set the tone for the year!

Seniors: We have 131 seniors and 106 of them have submitted early applications to colleges. Everyone is prepared and now they have to wait for responses from admissions. Students are extremely motivated and seniors are using what they learned about the admissions process in their junior year. Colleges expect to see Q1 grades, so seniors need to submit the. A form is available in the Guidance Dept. to make the request.

Juniors: The juniors have had two post-HS planning meetings already this year. Last week, they attended a presentation with Rod Jackson from SMU admissions. He gave it a humorous tone that lightened things up for everyone in attendance. There will be a Naviance practice session held during class time after Thanksgiving. Workshops will also be held in small groups. On November 6<sup>th</sup> we had Barnard and Dickinson admissions representatives who conducted a mock application review with parents and students. Parents and students had the job of accepting, wait listing, or rejecting applicants after their review of applications.

10<sup>th</sup> Grade: – Sophomores will participate in a presentation this Friday and next Monday on mindfulness and self reflection which will help students to better prepare to address their academics by being able to focus on the task at hand. They also discussed the role of school counselors and the importance of forging relationships with adults in the school.

9<sup>th</sup> Grade: Tom Viviano and the HS psychology interns are doing DBT training session where they will train senior freshman transition leaders and they, in turn, will present DBT to freshmen on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Counselors are meeting with all freshmen the Mon/Tuesday before Thanksgiving.

A second newsletter from Guidance came out on the school website so please check it out. It includes Bill Meyer's presentation on developing good study skills. We have 11 National Merit commended students.

**Karen Peterson, Athletic Department.**

Ann announced for Karen that the National Signing Day is tomorrow at 7:45am. Winter sports start today and fall sports awards are next Tuesday at 6:45pm in the auditorium.

**Romy Coquillette, Bronxville School Foundation**

The Bronxville School Foundation is in its 28<sup>th</sup> year of existence and is currently in its fundraising cycle so please donate to this important organization! Donations make a direct impact on all students in all three schools, everyone touched by it. BSF supports additional projects not covered in our school budget that makes our school more like a private school. It is run as partnership with faculty, administrators, students and. If you have an idea for a grant, please consider submitting it to the Foundation. BSF can only approve from what ideas are presented to them. In recent years, BSF has funded Mandarin language classes, extra-curricular activities, and furniture in remodeled classrooms that is more comfortable so kids can focus on learning for longer periods. BSF is also funding NoTosh design thinking at the Bronxville School that is making an impact on our ability to innovate in education. Last May, BSF funded \$366,000 of grants. BSF is different from the PTA in that BSF is focused on professional development, facilities, and learning materials while the PTA is focused on parent/school relationships. The two organizations work closely. The Bronx River Project is a BSF-funded project that has blossomed into something huge that touches most students at some point. BSF has a general fund plus designated funds for special needs, science, arts, and technology.

**Other**

The next HS Council meeting will be held on January 14<sup>th</sup> with the location TBA.