

High School Council Meeting Minutes from Tuesday, April 14, 2015

The minutes from the meeting on March 3, 2015, were approved.

Bill Meyer, Presentation

Bill Meyer spoke about the upcoming Voices Assembly, taking place next week on April 22nd. It is a great speaking series where students talk about passions they are engaging in outside of school that others don't know about. There is a Meditation Club that meets every Wednesday at 12:30pm in Mr. Meyer's room. The club was started 4 years ago and has anywhere from 12-24 students. There are sometimes counselors and teachers who participate. Mr. Meyer and Ms. Rosenzweig led a trip over spring break in Europe and they did a series of meditations on the trip including one in the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral. Last year a group from the meditation club went into 5th grade classrooms to talk about mindfulness.

David Quattrone, Superintendent's Report

Dr. Quattrone presented the site modifications for the field renovation. The plans and renovation take into consideration our students' mental and physical well being in addition to their academic life. The Board listened to the community in a series of presentations and workshops and have modified the plan to try to address those concerns. The Board would like to lay out the facts regarding the changes to the plan.

The Board has evaluated the use of natural grass on Hayes Field but it will not give us the utility we need to have the necessary activities we offer for all students including recess, athletics, after school clubs, etc. There is a perception that this has come on quickly but it has been in the works for a number of years because of both the flooding issue and field usage constraints. There is no perfect solution to all of our problems (flooding, insufficient field space, etc) but synthetic turf offers a solution to the majority of these issues. State regulations require a full drainage system to handle any runoff from the turf so that issue has been addressed. Regarding health issues and artificial turf, the Board has looked at all information available to them and has found no convincing data to say there are health issues. In fact, the elementary school carpeting contains the same synthetics that are in mouth guards and toothbrushes that we put in our mouths!

Parking has been taken out of the plan but remains a significant issue because we have significantly more employees than we have parking. There will be temporary parking (gravel) off Meadow during the construction and we have engaged a consultant to look at more comprehensive solutions to our parking issues. The current parking lot adjacent to the field will be used for construction so the temporary parking will be for the employees who currently park where the construction vehicles will be staged. The elementary play area remains unchanged with easy and immediate access to the building. We are maintaining a natural grass area near the playground in response to community concerns. This area was previously planned to be artificial turf but will remain natural grass. The fields are used for school activities, not athletics, between 9-3pm for all students in our school. Gym classes and recess all take place on our fields and we have a limited number of useable, consistent outdoor spaces because of our small size and location in a flood zone.

Regarding drainage, Chambers Field has survived two big floods and the new field will be no different. Drainage is included in the project and is engineered to manage runoff. There is a lot of weekend use of our fields for family recreation as well as community athletics. The new 4-foot fence along Midland is for safety purposes because there is a retaining wall below it. We will plant new landscaping in front of the fence so will not be blatantly visible.

Jeff Rohr, School Board

Jeff has a senior, a fifth grader and a third grader and was not present for the Chambers Field renovation that was privately funded. Jeff has a finance background and is the Board liaison for finance. Improving our facilities benefits all of our students and is important to keeping the school among top institutions. It is not just academics or athletics, but the combination that benefits everyone and makes us competitive with better schools. Because we received FEMA funding for flood mitigation, which was critical, we have a unique opportunity to address our field space issues. The Board looked at a large number of solutions and cannot solve every problem but feel this solution addresses the majority of issues for the majority of students. The Board considered many alternative solutions, busing to off-site fields included, and did not think busing to other locations would be a good long-term solution given the time constraints on our students with homework, extracurricular activities, etc. When you look at the new turf field as far as utilization, it is superior to the existing facilities and the other solutions considered.

Ann Meyer, Principal's Report

There have been a number of field trips that have taken place in recent weeks. We limit the timing of field trips because of AP's and finals and that deadline was this week. The juniors went to the 9/11 Museum yesterday as a part of their history curriculum and a group went to a human rights conference before break. We are trying to get a Holocaust survivor to come and speak this spring who was 15 at the time so it would be meaningful to our students. A group went to Montreal and a trip to Tanzania will take place this summer. Applications for the trip are now available on the school website. Last week, the 10th grade saw Selma and went to the Museum of Tolerance. We have some students going to the state competition for history for the first time. The topic for the competition was leadership and students made presentations about a leader they chose after extensive research.

Senior shadowing proposals are due this Friday so if you're interested, please get an application in by then. We have 47 kids in the WISE program this year so almost half the class is participating. Mr. Doyle, Ms. Flood, Dr. Lutter, Mr. Meyer and Ms. Allen are members of a team who is studying innovation in the school environment and they are evaluating how classroom spaces can be modified to encourage learning and innovation. We hope to have one classroom restructured by the fall to test in our school. The week of May 4th and May 11th are AP exam weeks. On the days that students have an actual exam, they do not attend their other classes that day. Once the AP exam has taken place, students don't attend that AP class for the rest of the AP exam period (those two weeks only) but do attend their other classes.

Anne Abbatecola, Guidance Report

Senior families are making final trips to colleges to make decisions by May 1st. It is important to let Guidance know of all final decisions so that they can send final transcripts and dates of graduation to colleges as part of the colleges' requirements. Counselors are helping students who want to remain on waitlists and are meeting with those students regularly. Brag sheets are due on April 16th for juniors and their parents so please make every effort to get them in on time.

Juniors should be asking teachers now to write recommendations and get those forms in. Tenth graders are doing the annual My Road exercise soon and will also open College Board accounts. Ninth graders are doing course selection now with counselors and will finish up soon. Counselors have already presented to 8th graders to give them an introduction to high school. Third quarter ends today and report cards will be on line Monday, April 20th.

Karen Peterson, Athletic Department

August 17th is the start date for JV and Varsity fall field sports. There is a scheduling meeting coming up and we may start tennis, swimming and cross country on August 24th but we are not sure that we will be able to make that happen. We will let everyone know after the scheduling meeting. We have fan days coming up and teams have picked charities to support. We also have Meet the Athlete Day where varsity athletes go into classrooms in 3rd and 4th grades to talk about athletics and leadership. The athletic website crashed recently because of an overload but will be up and running today with updated schedules.

Grade Reports

12th Grade – Senior Shadowing is coming up so get applications into Ms. Flood by Friday. We need parent volunteers to help with Senior Week. Tuxedo information is coming out for prom and graduation.

11th Grade – Working on Promenade for Friday, May 15th. Need to check in by 6pm at the latest.

10th Grade – No report to give.

9th Grade – Our car wash made \$1911, could be a school record! We are doing a jewelry fundraiser with custom sterling necklaces (\$65) and cufflinks (\$48) with Bronco B. Will be great for graduation gifts and a link will be available on line to order.

Rose Crawford, Athletic Council

This Saturday the fan days kick off with girls and boys varsity lacrosse. The girls are supporting One Love and boys are supporting St. Jude's Children's Cancer. Track and Field is running an elementary clinic on 4/27 as their community service project.

Annette Adamiyatt, SFL

Casey Gerald spoke last month and got kids thinking about making a difference after high school. SFL is planning the next dance for April 24th. They are planning a half day Field Day in place of SFL Day that was cancelled due to snow.

Sarah Kraemer, Be Well

We had a great speaker come to speak about marijuana usage and we had a very poor turnout. We taped it and are trying to make it available for those who couldn't make it. We are deciding whether we should continue to fund these types of speakers if there is little interest because it uses PTA funds.

Jill Pytosh, PTA

We sold out tickets to the benefit as of this week! Please go on line and bid for auction items if you are interested – we have great auction items. High school clubs who want to sell on MD weekend are welcome to set up tables. Please check with Jill if you are interested.

The next HS Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 5th.