

Walnut Hills High School
Local Decision Making Committee Meeting
January 17, 2019
6:00PM

Attendees: John Chambers, Laura Stith Deck, Ashley Thomas Morgan, Francesca Bownas-Rayburn, Esme Wright, Jessica Smitson, Rich Coleman, Sylvia Nelson, Brad Smith

1. Approval of December minutes
 - Motion to approve: J. Chambers, seconded by F. Bownas-Rayburn
2. Old business
 - Class rank
 - What year to eliminate?
 - Sylvia Nelson thinks that if elimination of class rank is what is determined to be in the best interest of the students, we should change it now, starting with the class of 2020. Rich Coleman says we should change class rank now, but by keeping “top spots” could ease the elimination of the ranking. Brad Smith looks at it like a pension plan, being grandfathered in to the program. He suggests we should start with next year’s freshman class (% 2023) since they haven’t had a chance to buy in to the current class ranking system. John Chambers thinks starting with class of 2021 or 2022. At this point many of these students, current sophomores (2021) have not taken advanced courses and haven’t optioned yet. It is more relevant to current juniors and seniors as they’ve planned out their advanced courses, some with class rank in mind. Jessica Smitson agreed to begin with class of 2021.
 - Laura stated that last year’s LSDMC motion to eliminate class rank specified class of 2020, so we will need a motion if the committee wishes to change that.
 - John Chambers motions to discontinue the use of class rank starting with the class of 2021. The motion is seconded by Rich Coleman.
 - The motion passes: 7 approve, 0 oppose, 1 abstention
 - Sylvia shares that communication is key with this change and that a strategy must be addressed. Administrators will announce the elimination of class rank starting with the class of 2021 at the Grade Level Meetings scheduled for 01/24/19 and 01/25/19. John will send out a letter to parents about the elimination of class rank beginning with the class of 2021. Class rank is mentioned in the 2019 Course Handbook on page 8, so that will need to be changed. LSDMC reps will share at The Association meeting, Student Council, and ILT.
 - Procedure for determining valedictorian/salutatorian
 - We have begun discussions regarding valedictorian and salutatorian. Possibility to have the Top 5 write a letter, with names redacted, and the Cum Laude Committee blindly choose a top student. The potential issue is still about the Top 5. Is this the same at ranking? Both GPA and discipline would be a criteria for these Top 5 students.
 - Another issue to discuss – do we keep the titles valedictorian/salutatorian? Definition of valedictorian was read: “a student, typically having the highest academic achievements of the class, who delivers the valedictory at a graduation ceremony.”

- We are going to check with local school districts (St. X, Wyoming, Indian Hill, etc.) to see what speeches and recognition they have since eliminating class rank at these schools.
- Update on last year's Study Hall subcommittee and changes made
 - Last year John reported to the LSDMC a number of improvements to help improve students' mental health and wellness, including the addition of a guidance counselor and a full-time school psychologist/mental health specialist whose whole job description is to attend to the mental health needs of student and staff. The LSDMC identified a number of possible initiatives that would ultimately lessen students' anxiety and stress. The study hall situation emerged as one where we could make immediate improvements. So, as these things go, a faculty committee formed to address study hall improvements after getting input from students.
 - The study hall committee set the following as their overarching goal: study hall will be a silent, calm, orderly environment for study and whatever else student may need to do to be ready to be their best in the classroom. They recognized that different students may need different things from this time, so students may rest/sleep, listen to music, or check a device - without disturbing others - in addition to studying.
 - The silence is motivated by a desire to have a calm, peaceful, productive environment for kids. A goal we are in the process of setting up is a Collaboration Center in the faculty dining room so that students have a place where they can do peer tutoring and project work. We are hoping that students will feel empowered to think about what they need to do in Study Hall and make choices for themselves.
- Nurse update
 - Current nurse is on loan from Western Nursing. CPS HR and Western Nursing in negotiations regarding offering her full-time position with CPS.
- Motion to discuss and vote on (tabled from last meeting): Draft minutes will be posted within 3 days of LSDMC meeting.
 - Draft of LSDMC meeting minutes will be completed and submitted within three work days to the Lead Senior Support Specialist for posting on Schoology and to the Parent Association President for posting on the WHHS website.

3. New business

- Enrollment (this year's entrance exam)
 - Terra Nova was given to all 6th grade CPS students. 458 students passed, 181 from CPS Montessori schools. Many of these will attend Montessori HS (Gamble or Clark)
 - 35 SCPA
 - 40 Spencer
 - 34 Sands
 - 12 PRM
 - 6 Parker Woods
 - 34 Dater Montessori
 - SCPP Test (Dater and WHHS) Grades 6-11
 - October 218 passed (all grades)
 - November 72 passed (all grades)
- New optioning process
 - New online process, created by students in the Girls Who Code Club

- Previously, optioning was paper and pencil only, chasing teachers down for signatures and collecting a lot of paperwork. Now courses that need approval are identified in the Online Optioning program and lists of student names for optioned courses are generated and teachers choose based on the electronic list. This is a more streamlined process than before.
- Principal's Report
 - Pipe burst and A&S building closed for 2 days. A&S building will reopen tomorrow, 01/18, all classrooms with exception of 3 (Pfeiffer, Brokamp, and Riggs) work will take place in these classrooms over the three day weekend. The issue was with the caps on reservoir for the antifreeze. The caps were brass with a copper color on the outside, giving appearance of a different type of material being used. All caps have been changed as of today, 01/17/19.
- ILT Report
 - Joe Stewart and Brian Sweeney are working on a plan for PSAT day
 - AP Russian course request was tabled
 - Added Greek II as a Classical Elective course
 - Winter Pep Rally proposal moving from one day utilizing Jr. High and Sr. High gyms changed to two days, both junior high and senior high utilizing the Sr. High gym for the pep rally (Activity schedule for both days (01/17, 01/18).)
- Student Report
 - Junior High Student Pep Rally was scheduled for today, but postponed until Tuesday (01/22/19) due to A&S building leaks.
 - Senior High Student Pep Rally is scheduled for tomorrow in Sr. High gym.
 - Senior Dinner Dance scheduled for Sunday night, 01/20/19, on B&B Riverboats.
- Community Report
 - We will be getting a 3rd community member at our next monthly meeting: Richard Graeter
- Parent Report
 - Walnut Fest at Rhinegeist on February 1 6:30-10:00 pm
 - Parents have requested the use of Text Messaging in emergency situations, such as A&S building leak and for lock downs. Text messages are easier to access and message would come from the Principal and not from students. Discussion of whether Schoology could be used for this. Parents can set their phone to receive notifications that would come across like a text message. Concern that not all parents have text.
- Other Business
 - 2018-2019 District wide LSDMC Meeting Schedule
 - Wednesday, 2/20/2019 6-7:30pm
 - Wednesday, 4/24/2019 6-7:30pm
 - 1N5
 - Fran shared that the speaker, Dr. Slavin, on Tuesday was nice, but what are the next steps? We don't want this opportunity for a conversation to fizzle out.
 - Fran asked about using surveys to get feedback or areas of concern

- Jessica mentioned *What's Going on at Walnut* Newsletter that was sent out on Tuesday, 01/15, to parents and staff. Students will be informed of the surveys at the Grade Level Meetings next week, 01/24 and 01/25.
- Feedback about newsletter is to send a message in the subject line "survey attached" to avoid going to the trash.
- Next WHHS LSDMC meeting: Wednesday, February 20, 2019
- Joint LSDMC/ILT meeting as called for in by-laws (option: March 20 5-6p pending ILT approval)
- Adjournment
 - Motion for adjournment made by Sylvia Nelson. Seconded by John Chambers.
 - Motion passes: 8 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstentions

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Smitson