

Walnut Hills High School
Local Decision Making Committee Meeting

October 17, 2019

6:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Laura Stith Deck, John Chambers, Jessica Smitson, Lisa Brokamp, Francesca Bownas-Rayburn, Sylvia Nelson, Richard Graeter, Judy Neff, Dillon Vorherr, Matthew Eggers

Guest: Sofia Tollefson

Not in attendance: Terrance Poole, Ashley Morgan, Rich Coleman, Brad Smith

1. Approval of September Minutes

- Motion to approve L. Brokamp, seconded by R. Graeter; all approve

2. Old business

- **LSDMC calendar** – any school conflicts?
 - Other than music events and a theater performance there are no conflicts.
 - September 19, 2019
 - October 17, 2019
 - November 14, 2019
 - December 19, 2019
 - January 16, 2020
 - February 20, 2020
 - March 19, 2020
 - April 16, 2020
 - May 14, 2020
- **Distinguished Scholar Guidelines** (Walnut Hills Distinguished Scholar – suggestion to use *Insignes Scholar* or *Scholar Insignes* (Latin translation for DS) *need to verify with Latin teacher prior to announcement)
 - Distinguished Scholar will replace current Valedictorian
 - Salutatorian graduation role will be replaced by Student Congress President
 - Starting with the class of 2021, Cum Laude speaker will be chosen by the Cum Laude Committee
 - Cum Laude criteria will stay within the Cum Laude committee
 - Students must apply and be eligible to be a Distinguished Scholar speaker at graduation
 - The application will include:
 - Resume, recommendation letter, Essay prompt
 - Recommendation letter from a coach, community member, club advisor (not a teacher)
 - Student names will be redacted from all application parts prior to committee review
 - Timeline:
 - Students will be notified of their eligibility after Cum Laude fall tapping
 - Application due date: March 1 by 2:30 pm
 - Distinguished Scholar subcommittee members will be chosen by Principal and consist of: (student names will be redacted from the application)
 - 2 teachers
 - Alumnus; must have graduated at least five years prior to graduating class
 - Principal
 - 1 Cum Laude committee member

- Walnut Hills Insignes Scholar designation will be chosen from the cum laude top 20%. The top 20% of the cum laude students who have attended Walnut Hills High School for 5 full consecutive years will be invited to apply to the Insignes Scholar program. The subcommittee will determine the additional criteria beyond what is listed above.
 - A communication to the Walnut Hills School Community will be drafted by LSDMC chair and Principal to provide detailed information about the elimination of class rank and about the Distinguished Scholar Graduation Speaker. This document will include a link to the cum laude website.
 - Science department feedback: it is important that names are redacted from applications for review panel (subcommittee) – LSDMC agreed
 - ELA department feedback: recommended that students also be part of the subcommittee and to hold auditions for the speeches – LSDMC did not agree about students on subcommittee; subcommittee to determine if they want auditions.
- **School safety**
 - Current questions:
 - Metal detectors, how is it going?
 - The metal detectors seem to have created more questions or concerns than prior to the installation
 - The Principal never heard anyone share that he/she felt unsafe prior to the installation
 - Some items have been caught with the metal detectors that don't cause a major issue, i.e., scouting knife and swiss army knife
 - Kids now think twice before bringing something in
 - We do what we can to keep the kids safe
 - We have additional security staff that are posted outside during bell changes. Blair Circle is also closed off during passing bells.
 - We've had two threats, one at the end of last school year and one about a month ago. What is the protocol for these threats?
 - The threat that occurred at the end of the year last school year was made by a senior who posted a message on a group chat (with other seniors)
 - The student was in the auditorium
 - The chat was seniors only and it was taken "out of context"
 - The student was taken out of the auditorium; his parents were also asked to leave the auditorium
 - The Principal message regarding the incident only went out to the parents of the senior class student group
 - Someone from that original message forwarded it on to the media outlets
 - The latest threat was reported by two eighth-graders who reported that they heard someone say "shoot up the school"
 - The student who reported the threat sent the message out through social media; the student had over 5000 followers
 - The district and the media got a hold of the message from the social media posting
 - When does CPS get involved in these types of situations?
 - When there is a concern, the principal reaches out to the public affairs office. The public affairs office issues statements to be sent out to parents, staff, and students
 - Six local false threats have been put on social media in the last few months
 - What is the protocol for absences when there is a threat?
 - If parents keep students home the actual day of the "threat" we are sympathetic to the absence

- Update on Herr Collins?
 - Police notified Mr. Chambers that they were going to arrest one of our teachers
 - Police made the arrest the next day
 - Detectives came and searched computers
 - The case has been adjudicated
 - Mr. Collins is no longer employed at CPS
- Missing student at the end of last school year?
 - Mr. Chambers contacted the parents of the student on multiple occasions. He hasn't been notified that the student has been located.
- Did someone break into the school?
 - Someone did break into the main office lobby space
 - The window was broken from outside
 - The intruder crawled through the window and ransacked the main office. He also broke a window in Ms. Watling's room and took some items from the art room.
 - Crimestoppers showed the intruder's picture on television about three weeks after the incident
 - He was apprehended
- **Mental wellness update**
 - A new chart has been created to help guide parents and students in the right direction of what steps to take and who to contact with specific scenarios.
 - [The document is currently under revision](#)
 - Dr. Sorter from Children's Hospital will be scheduled to speak at a Parent Association Meeting about Adolescent Brain Development in November 2019

3. Principal's report

- Homecoming/Earth Jam/Chalk Drawings took place on October 4, 2019
 - It was very busy, but successful
- Gravel was added to lower Lot D parking lot to make more parking spaces available
- District Facilities is removing the tree that is in Blair Circle and is planted alongside Alumni Hallway. It is causing water damage to the building
 - CPS was given 100 trees from the Arbor Foundation. A new tree will be planted on November 1 in place of the one that will be removed in Blair Circle
- Evanston Community Council Meeting: Walnut recognized along with Evanston Academy for receiving "A's" on the state report card
- IOWA test was administered on Wednesday, 10/16. Our students took the test to see how we compare to the national norm.
 - 70 on the national norm means that the student scored above 70% of the population who took the test
 - CPS 6th graders also took the test
 - The 6th graders were given the online test

4. ILT Report

- Brad Smith was not present to give ILT report
- [ILT minutes October 2019](#)

5. Student Report

- Chalk drawing/Earth Jam/Pep Rally went fairly well
- In the spring the Chalk Drawings and Earth Jam give a break
 - Maybe move Earth Day closer to Earth Day
- Mr. Schneider proposed block scheduling at ILT and from the students' perspective it was positive
- The scheduling for the double bell science classes that are aligned with the upper-level math classes; students aren't too pleased with the way the schedule didn't allow all students who opted for the combo classes to take them
- *Curious Incident of the Dog* is scheduled for the first week of November!

6. Parent Report

- No report

7. Community Report

- No report
- A group of alumni from the Class of 1969 sat in on classes for their reunion
- A group of alumni from the Class of 1959 will also sit in on classes for their reunion on October 25

8. Other Business

- a. 2019-2020 Districtwide LSDMC Meeting Schedule (6-7:30p - **Meetings are located at the CPS Education Center in the Mayerson Banquet Room – 2651 Burnet Avenue.**
 - Wed 11/20/2019 – All current LSDMC members
 - Wed 3/4/2020 – All current LSDMC members
 - Wed 4/22/2020 – All current LSDMC members
- Other?

9. Next meeting – Thursday, November 14 at 6p

10. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made by S. Nelson and seconded by R. Graeter; all approve.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Smitson