

**PHS PTO Meeting  
December 11, 2018**

*Attendance:* Maureen Nee, Christine Eaton, Debbie Broadwater, Jen Nikolich, Chrissie McKeown, Heidi Szymanski, Paul Jones, Barbara Vlahos, Brian Jehning, Paul E. Doniger, Gerilyn Ferguson, Yvette Lomaro, Christine Koobatian

*President's Report*

Congratulations to Dr. Paul Jones for successfully defending his dissertation!

Recycling was discussed at the last meeting. Bill Eaton (a parent) works for Pepsi Co. and through his wife Christine bins were donated for the cafeteria. There are 4 in the cafeteria. Some had been purchased by the ecology club and are in the resource center. The first week there was no availability for pick up, but it is included now through our disposal company. There is a hydration club and an ecology club that will be looking at taking the recycling. It is about \$2000 per unit to provide filtered water fountain stations that the clubs are looking into. The idea of recycling is in the forefront with students. Thank you to the Eatons!

No treasurer's report.

*Teacher Rep Report*

No response from staff with ideas or issues.

CT Drama Association has been cast and auditions have begun. The performance will be a play written by Mr. Doniger. It is a two day event that will take place at Joel Barlow HS in March. Double amount of kids have auditioned and there are parts for half of them. Auditions will be held after break for the Spring Musical which is Anything Goes.

*Cookie Exchange*

Drop off is tomorrow and the sign-up is full. Chrissie and Maureen are going to be in early that day (December 13) and will set up in resource room and staff lounge. An e-mail will go to all staff from Chrissie and Maureen inviting them to it and thanking them for all their hard work.

*Teacher Grants*

About 8 people attended to review the grants. 19 grants were submitted this year (a record number). Twelve of the 19 were awarded. Two more we are looking to get through other means. Six of the seven denied were \$23,000.00. We are spending \$9300-\$9800 for grants. All applicants have been notified with instructions given to implement the grant. Christine Koobatian presented to the staff at a meeting about the availability and process, to help build awareness. This was also helpful for Dr. Jones to hear what the educational needs are. A big THANK YOU to Hollie Ward, who led the Teacher Grant Committee for PHS this year and whose excellent organizational skills allowed for a seamless process.

*Principal's Report*

Progress reports just went out. Time is moving quickly toward the holiday break and there is an effort to try to wrap things up before then. In his school goals, one primary area is the registration, scheduling, communication and equitability of courses and how that manifests itself in courses and with students. Goal includes meeting with all staff, some students and getting some qualitative data. There is a need to make sure systems and structures are in place. January and February are registration months. The daily schedule is what is lived out every day. Prior to his arrival there was district-wide discussion about better support for students and independence and the need to review the daily schedule. Need to make sure we are giving the students what they need. One thing that was heard was the need to review the daily meeting schedule. Staff was asked from each department and the union to meet as a

committee. There is a higher probability than not that the schedule will look different than the current schedule. There is no perfect comprehensive schedule for high schools. There are constraints in the buildings. There are pros and cons to every schedule. This focus on reviewing daily schedules is district wide.

This idea came about at the end of last year to form this committee. They began meeting in September. They have met with class advisors and got feedback. Feedback has also been taken from teachers. Almost every schedule around the state has been looked at.

Mrs. Vlahos, a math teacher, spoke about her 21 years of teaching here. She spoke of the shift in teaching in a block schedule. She has seen her students 8 times in a month. She feels the students see the A days and B days as two separate schools. She likes the long time period but doesn't like not seeing them.

The timeline is that this has to be set before students register for classes. The schedule has to be set in order for it to be open to register for it.

A and B days have 4 classes each. In block 3 there is a student lunch block. Blocks are reversed the next day so that you are not seeing them at the same time each day and you see them more often. They will be seen more.

Two huge gains are that in a 6 day rotation currently you meet with them 4 times instead of 3 and staff will gain 10 minutes of teaching time. Student feedback was there is a concern about the homework. Parent feedback was the same. This gives an opportunity to talk about what the philosophy of homework is. Advisory periods need to be true and meaningful. Students will have an opportunity to be a part of the planning of this. Adding a 7 minute gives an opportunity for making a connection on a personal level. Woodland school is a model school.

The issue of homework needs to happen no matter what schedule is in place. Conversations will be happening between faculty, students, and parents to know the level of homework that is being assigned.

Dr. Jones shared that there is a lot of anxiety which impacts student's ability to do well in school. Their anxiety is real and we need to recognize that and work with it.

Parent feedback is that measures and rules need to be put in place to enforce the homework load as well as scheduling assessments.

The schedule means the most to students and teachers. There will be issues. There is an effort to try to eliminate most of the difficulty now instead of August.

The 30 minute study hall puts a strain on room usage and what can be taken. Study halls are not going away.

An idea was to have Lifetouch print the schedule on the back of the student ID cards.

#### *Next Meeting*

Tuesday, January 8 at 7 PM in the AP Room.