

PHS PTO Meeting
January 8, 2019

Attendance: Christine Koobatian, Karen Harper, Hollie Ward, Paul Jones, Brian Jehning, Marge Griffin, Chrissie McKeown, William Eaton, Christine Eaton, Gabby Addison, Don Winter, Cathy Winter, Stacie McLaughlin, Liz DePalma, Jessica Clark, Heather Rodgers, Mauneen Kania, Larisa Bernier, Sandy Carbonaro, Tania Fernandez, Jen Nikolich, Michelle McQuillan, Shannon Fellin

Treasurer's Report

\$9800 was awarded in grants. Dr. Jones thanked us for the funding and relayed how useful all of the awarded items are.

Teacher Grant Committee – Hollie Ward

In December, the PTO approved over \$9,000 in Teacher Grants. The approved grants include:

- Culinary Arts - Classroom supplies
- English (9th and 11th AP) - Art supplies to enrich instruction
- Science (9th)- Purchase of an Earthquake “shake table”
- Athletics - Continued improvements for the athletics facilities - addition of graphics at the sports complex and entrance of the pool area
- Library/Media/IT - Purchase of various technology adapters/cords compatible w/the most popular devices throughout the school and backup batteries and SD cards for Canon cameras. All will be shared by staff and students. With the full implementation of Google Apps for Education and increase in Apple products w/ various ports, there has been an increased demand for tech accessories.
- Counseling - 3 Smart TVs, mounts, keyboard, chrombits
- Chemistry - Supplies to implement "Mole Day" at PHS. The Mole is an important Chemistry topic that students learn in the first part of the year and use in all levels of chemistry throughout the academic year.
- Mathematics (9th - 12th) - Purchase of a “Breakout EDI Classroom Kit” and materials to construct 6 additional kits. Breakout Box is chest shut with 3-5 types of locks where successful problem solving leads students to get inside the box.
- Pre engineering Mechanics & Transporting and Transporting II (9th - 12th) - Purchase a motor and controller for an electric car the students will build and race.
- Meteorology (11th - 12th) - New PHS weather station. The current weather station is 10 years old and malfunctioning.

- Photography & Video Production (9th - 12th) - Purchase of a drone to enhance the production quality of student work and allow opportunities for students to learn a new skill.

Thank you to the Teacher Grant Committee: Deb Broadwater, Christine Koobatian, Shanna Hampton, Jeanne-Marie Hudson, Chris Jackson, Laura Legg, Yvette Lomaro, Chrissie McKeown, Ann Marie Monahan, Maureen Nee, Jennifer Nikolich, and Hollie Ward.

Hospitality

The cookie walk was a big success with not a crumb left. Thank you to all the families that donated. This Friday the staff room will be cleaned out. Our next event will be sweets for Valentine's Day.

President's Report

Christine shared the first draft of the PTO objectives, strategies and goals. (See attached.) They will be discussed and updated at our February meeting.

There was discussion about the promotion of our meetings. They are currently not posted on the region website, but that will be changed. It was suggested to send a reminder a week before and then again on the Sunday evening prior. We may look into an app that sends a text as a reminder.

Principal's Report

Registration will begin at the end of January/beginning of February. Teachers will make recommendations. Information will come home after the next BOE meeting pending new course approval. Please review this with your student.

Midterms begin next week. If there is a delay there will still be midterms. The break may not be as long in between the two exams in the case of a three-hour delay. There are stress reducing activities happening this week planned by students.

A question was asked about science seminars. The old schedule had a lab for science. With the block schedule they are able to do labs in the teaching schedule but they lost 23 minutes of teaching time so an extra 30 minutes was added as a seminar. The seminar period has phased out largely as a result of the new NGSS curriculum. NGSS is more project-based learning to have the students do more hands on learning. This is the state curriculum adapted by the BOE.

Schedule Committee Presentation

Two representatives (Mr. Jehning and Ms. Griffin) from the scheduling committee were present to discuss the process and proposal. Discussion began last year to evaluate the four years of the block schedule. A committee was gathered with a rep from every department and met biweekly. Two things that consistently came up as needs were more frequency in meeting with the teachers

and more minutes in the class. They reviewed 38 schools similar to PHS and reviewed their models which were extremely varied. There is no perfect model. They also met with student leaders and presented at the last PTO. Some subjects, such as world languages are covering less curriculum. Some of the methodology is being changed to improve that. There is a benefit to see students 4 of 6 days and speak the language more consistently. The proposed schedule allows students to be seen 2 out of 3 days for both school climate and academic performance. When there was a homeroom for 4 years there was an opportunity to connect with the same group of kids. That hasn't been part of the schedule recently.

Advisory programs have not been effectively implemented here. Advisory periods are built-in for two of the block days in addition to a 7 minute homeroom (advisory) period on with the idea that the program will be effective. Currently they stopped the advisory unless there is a specific purpose under the current block schedule. Parents should contact the school if they have questions or would like to review the proposed schedule.

There is a concern from parents about the amount of things that will need to be carried on days that all classes meet and the current load that is in a student's backpack. Staff will review some strategies and plans in the future.

A question was asked about why the periods are rotated. This is the most research-based area to show that meeting at different times in the day is beneficial.

A point was given about the number of students that have been successful under the block schedule and been accepted into the ivy league or related schools early in the year. The data suggests that the current schedule has not caused this number to drastically increase from previous schedule iterations.

The issues of the level of anxiety in students and the fact that the current junior class is the constant recipient of changes were raised.

Questions were asked about what data is present for students who have been negatively impacted by the current schedule and what the downside of this change may be. It was also discussed that those students doing well in this schedule may struggle with the change.

Homework –The plan for this year was to evaluate the schedule and the homework load, with that piece being student driven. Professional Learning Committees (PLC) are looking at this. A parent/former teacher said that homework should be a way to support what was taught. There was a parent request to have an explicit homework practices in place regardless of what schedule is implemented.

We need to increase access to AP courses for all students. While the new schedule does not directly impact that, there are ways that increased meeting frequency could benefit students who struggle in AP courses.

There is a recognition that the current juniors have been put through the ringer. There is an effort to increase school pride for this grade.

Dates to remember:

1/12 Junior Ring Dance – Grand Oak Villa from 6 PM – 10 PM

1/14 BOE Meeting, PHS AP room 7:30 PM (Policy and Curriculum 6:30 Media Center)

1/15 Schedule Committee Information Session, 6:30 PM AP Room

1/15-1/18 PHS Midterms

1/21 MLK Day – No School

2/6 R15 Space Utilization Committee

Next Meeting is February 12, 2019.