

## CHMS PTO General Meeting Minutes November 14, 2018

Meeting was called to order.

### Presidents' Report (Lisa Romberger & Theresa Gannon)

- The September 12 minutes were approved.
- The PTO presidents attended the November Presidents Meeting and shared two items.
  - There is a resource called The Parent List which is housed on the HCHS PTO website and can be accessed at <https://hcpto.org/parent-list>. Two pages were passed out to parents in attendance, detailing this resource. Parents are able to leave and/or read reviews on health care providers that have helped their children with their emotional, learning, developmental or health issues. Postings are anonymous.
  - Not enough people attended the D181 Caucus meeting so there will be no caucus endorsed candidates for the open D181 board seats. There was a meeting on November 14 for those interested on learning more about the role and process in becoming a D181 board member.

### Treasurer Report (Julie)

For the current fiscal year, a P&L was presented for 7/1 - 10/31/2018. \$47,523 has been collected to date, with an additional \$14,253 projected (provided we raise \$22,500 with Pizza Wars and Phantom Ball). As a PTO, we have around \$90,000. After expenses, we will have around \$60,000 with around \$20,000 available to spend this year.

We have decided to push Phantom Ball to the spring so that we will be able to fundraise for a cause/need. That being said, there is a current identified need at CHMS, a class set of TI-84 graphing calculators for 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. These calculators would replace a class set that was purchased 13 years ago and are no longer working consistently. The cost for these replacement calculators is \$3,300. There was a motion to approve the purchase of new TI-84 graphing calculators at the cost of \$3,300 and the PTO unanimously approved this spend. These calculators will be purchased immediately and used as soon as they are received.

### Fundraising & Activities

- Gift of the Season 2018: CHMS is supporting 20 local families by purchasing holiday gifts for them. Students can pick up a wish list item during lunch from November 13-15. Unwrapped new gifts (with the tags – saying item and recipient – attached) are being collected on December 3-4.
- Care for Carolina: November 14 is the last day to drop off notebooks for the school supply drive for students affected by Hurricane Florence in North Carolina. CHMS is collecting wide ruled notebooks. The packing of bookbags with school supplies and the loading of the delivery truck will take place at CHMS on Thursday, November 15 from 3:30-6:30pm. There is still room to volunteer.
- Book Fair: The book fair is opened on Thursday and Friday, November 15 & 16 and on Monday and Tuesday during the Parent/Teacher Conferences. Students will be attending during their LA classes.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Meeting: There is a Transition to High School meeting for parents of students with an IEP and/or 504 plan. This meeting will take place on Thursday, November 15 at HCHS in the Community Room.

### Endless Appreciation

- Sixth Grade Parent Social: Thank you to Wendy Phillips for planning a fun parents' night out at Bakersfield on November 1<sup>st</sup> for our new sixth grade parents.
- Care for Carolina: Thank you to Kim Anderson and Elaine Gilman for their assistance with recruiting volunteers to help pack the truck on Thursday.

- Veteran's Day Assembly: Thank you to Kim Anderson, Elaine Gilman, and Amy McCurry for their assistance with planning the Veteran's Day assembly on Friday, 11/9 and for hosting the brunch offered to our guest Veterans.
- Book Fair: Thank you to Marie Strimaitis and her team of parent volunteers, along with Ashley Rasmussen, for planning our annual Fall Book Fair.
- Gift of the Season 2018: Thank you to Stephanie Hamman and Parita Singla for coordinating our annual gift drive for needy families in our local area.

#### Hinsdale Central High School Parents Panel

- Academic Takeaways
  - Do research before 8<sup>th</sup> grade night in January; ask friends; there is not a lot of time with your child's counselor (around 15 minutes), so you need to have an idea of the best fit for your child prior to your individual meeting. Parents are not spoon fed. They need to do their own research. Your time with your child's counselor goes quickly – not really a counseling session. You can reach out to your child's counselor or department heads ahead of time via email or phone to ask individual questions about placement.
  - Talk to your child and ask how big of a workload they want. Think about what other activities that they want to balance with their school work.
  - Consider your child's strengths, weaknesses (including organization, time management), as well as time commitments to other activities when deciding AP/honors or on level classes.
  - You can access course offerings online at the HCHS website. They have hard copies available at the counseling center.
  - Know your child. There is no need to take multiple honors level classes. At the same time, for some students taking multiple honors/AP courses is their "sport". How much work load does your child want and what are they comfortable with?
  - AP class offerings begin sophomore year. Try honors level classes before AP classes. AP classes can give students college credit, depending on their score at the end of the course exam (and the college that they choose to attend). AP classes are more self-study in nature and have an intense reading level.
  - There is often more pressure from students' peers than parents. Students need to enjoy freshman and sophomore years. Regular level classes are not easy. Many kids are stressed out in high school.
  - GPA (Grade Point Average) is cumulative. Freshman year grades count toward the overall GPA.
  - Honors and AP classes are weighted by a full point (6.0 for an A in AP/Honors; 5.0 for an A in an on-level class)
  - Honors World History and Honors Biology are more difficult and time-consuming classes with a lot of reading.
  - The jump from 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA to honors English is a big jump.
  - The science courses are often self-study in nature. Students sometimes access video support on YouTube.
  - Honors band students at this point are able to opt out of PE.
  - Freshmen can take one elective per semester. Look at future classes that your child may be interested in and choose an elective that may be a prerequisite for this class (i.e. pre-engineering).
  - There are a lot of fun and interesting electives, like learning to fix computers, pre-engineering, graphic communications (which leads to honors video game design), intro to business (great class but a ton of work; teaches students to manage money and balance a checkbook), investment planning. Some electives are mixed grade levels. Band/orchestra/chorus would be the freshman's elective (there is an honors level). Use the electives to explore interests.
  - Students take PE/Health (including RULER curriculum) every day for four years. Varsity athletes can have a study hall instead during season. The frequency of PE may change if budget needs to be cut, as the state minimum has changed to 3 x a week. Sophomore through senior year, students can choose the type of gym (i.e. weight lifting).

- There are two different study halls. In the general study hall format, students get little to nothing done. There are some study halls where there are two teachers and students can get help.
  - Kids get 1:1 Chromebooks.
  - It's easy for students who are not organized or who procrastinate to get behind in classes. Stress the importance of not digging a hole at the beginning of the semester so that finals aren't as stressful. Often times, first quarter is 40% of grade, second quarter is 40% of grade, and the final is 20% of the grade.
  - There is an app that lets kids know what score that they need to get on their finals to get certain grades.
  - Students often need a tutor. There is a tutor expo and you can gather a few options in case your child needs extra support. Another option is using an NHS student (who needs volunteer hours) at around \$10-\$15 an hour. The Guidance Department also provides options.
  - There are websites for homework management. Teachers have used different formats. They are moving towards Canvas for all classes.
  - The average class size is around 25-30 students.
- Extracurricular Takeaways
    - Many clubs take up as much time as a class (like Model UN and Forensics)
    - Encourage your child to try at least one club and/or sport (for social and academic reasons). Students can try new things. Some kids need to be forced to be involved their freshman year.
    - Kids should try many things freshman year but then let them specialize in the activities that they are most passionate about in the later years.
    - Many families notice that their child's grades are better in season than out of season because they are forced to be more focused in a smaller window of time.
    - There are some no-cut sports.
    - Sports are a great outlet to meet new people and feel connected.
    - Parents recommend the kids do summer camps, before freshman year and even earlier. The athletics department has summer camps for athletes 8-18 years old.
    - Tryouts for Poms, Cheer, and Color Guard are in the spring, so start looking at tryout information before the fall of freshman year. CHMS will let families know of club and athletic opportunities. Parents can also sign up to receive HCHS newsletters earlier.
    - Band is also a built-in friend group and kicks in over the summer.
    - Student Government is another option. Students in Student Government are responsible for planning the assemblies and dances. CHMS is the largest feeder school, which helps with winning class officer elections freshman year.
    - Peer leadership, Ambassadors, and Habitat for Humanity are nice activities.
    - Clubs often meet before school and sometimes only meet 1 x a month.
- Personal Development
    - Students need to become self-advocates. They need to be the primary communicators with their teachers about questions and concerns. They also need to advocate for themselves when they need extra support.
    - Kids need to figure out an organizational system that works for them. One family reported that each child had a file storage box and put old tests and assignments in class folders to use to study for finals.
    - Keep pushing kids to get involved and to be social.
    - Kids need to learn soft skills and have the ability to work in groups.
- High School Choices Impacting College Options
    - Don't always look at college as an end game. Need to balance school work with other high school experiences. Even students with all A's in all honors classes do not always get into their "dream schools".

- Colleges like to see students build year to year with a more challenging course load. Pick and choose more difficult classes based on child's interests and ability in freshman year. You can choose more difficult levels in subsequent years.
  - Students need a minimum of 18 credits and 26 is the maximum. Some competitive colleges require more credits and certain classes (world languages, LA, math, etc).
  - Many colleges require four years of the same language. Some parents recommend that freshmen redo Spanish 1 and get a stronger foundation and to have an easier class. Other students start out in Spanish 2 or 3 (or choose to start a new language).
  - Regardless of which math class your child starts with, he/she still needs four years of math. After calculus, there is AP Stats and Seminar class options. The SAT/ACT tests only up through Algebra and Geometry so there is no rush to get through the math curriculum for standardized test purposes.
  - Students should develop a relationship with their guidance counselor, as the counselor will be able to better recommend classes and help with college choices if they know your child better). Guidance counselors are assigned by alphabet, so families often have the same counselor for all children.
- Advice for Parents
    - Go to Curriculum Night. It is super helpful to learn teachers' expectations, get on email lists from teachers, learn about the syllabus/course expectations, etc.
    - You can buy HCHS spirit wear through the boosters in the first week in December. They make great Christmas presents. There will be another opportunity to purchase HCHS items in the spring when eighth grade parents are invited to a coffee.
    - Get involved as a parent by selling spirit wear (allows you to be around the kids and to observe lunches).
    - Parents can join both the PTO (parent education, with speakers) and the Boosters (fundraising arm to help support clubs, musicals, athletics). Last year, the Boosters raised \$80,000 and uses this money to support extracurriculars through funding grant requests. As a member of the PTO, you have access to the online family directory.
    - Don't plan vacations or take days off at the high school level.
    - Definitely sign up for parent/teacher conferences. You may not get all of your child's teachers but they are very helpful.
    - Parents can read the daily announcements online. This is often the best way to know what is going on at the school. You can then encourage your child to get involved before the deadline expires.
- Other Advice
    - All grade levels are in lunches together. Their time to eat lunch may change midyear, depending on their classes. Lunches are like the buses. There is a pecking order (seniors sit in a certain place; freshmen sit in a certain area).
    - Kids need to push outside their comfort zone and talk to other kids in their classes. They need to reach out to many students and get to know as many people as they can early on, as they may not be in class or lunch with many of their close friends from middle school.
    - Textbooks are expensive (around \$500 per student per year). Look on Amazon or on book swap sites. Some use the Clarendon Hills Moms List to buy/sell books.
    - Wait to buy school supplies until the first day of classes because teachers will tell the students what to buy for their classes.
    - Many students carry over the color system from middle school for organizational purposes.
    - Summer school in D86 is not to get ahead. Instead, it is used to retake a class when a student didn't do well or to take a math class to jump sequence (when recommended by a counselor).
    - There is only a five minute passing period. Students use backpacks in lieu of lockers. Walk the halls with your child a few times in the summer, so that the incoming freshman is comfortable navigating his/her schedule. Then suggest that they go back and walk their schedules again with friends.
    - If you think that your child would benefit from a 504 plan, get one established at the middle school level because it is a lot easier than getting one established at the high school level.