

SHS PTO General Meeting Minutes, October 16, 2015

Present: Alex Queripel, Ines Cohron, Gloria Ron-Fornes, Betsy Phillips, Holly Moller, Mike McTernan, Luz Bazalas, Jennifer Cornforth, Monica Parminter, Jennifer Alvarez, Susan Palphreyman, Ann Rowe, Kiera Fullows, Jennine Pommier, Meagan Gaeta, Sue Roberts, Alison Chieffo, Racey Keegan, Lopa Gupta, Jane Meyer, Miriam Zahn, Linda Przedpelski, Rafa Esposito, Melissa Phillips, Nikki Bendl, Diane Carlson, Lynn Royer-Sheer, Ann Tindell, Chrissy Reinhardt, Valerie Weiss, Laura Coburn, Torie Bligh, Elisa Mezzacappa, Franolich, Susan Daniel

Meeting called to order at **9:05 am**.

Minutes from the **September 18, 2015** meeting approved.
Minutes in future will be linked to SHS PTO website.

Parent social at Elks Club will be February 5; tailgate theme

Principal's Report - Paul Sears

SHS Faculty book club, 33 members, reading *Neurotribes, the Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity*, by Steve Silberman, which traces the history of autism and investigates the diverse ways in which minds work. Book club is funded by SHS PTO.

Week of 10/7/15 was Week of Respect

10/7 Junior College planning night

10/9 – 11 Alumni Weekend

10/9 Alumni Day – speakers throughout school

10/9 Cabaret

10/14

- PSAT 10th and 11th grades
- Chromebook rollout 9th grade/ALICE presentation (response to school intruder)
- College and post-secondary planning 12th grade

10/15

DIRT presentation 9th and 10th grades (both grades fill auditorium to capacity)

Substance abuse; anti-bullying; stand up to others

10/16

Pep rally

Week of 10/19

Red ribbon week

10/19

Wear red to support Red Ribbon week

Rotary Club lunch
Speak Up Summit Meeting

10/20

Presentation on Spectrum of Substance Abuse for 11th and 12th grade and families
Hosted by SHS for consortium of area schools

10/29 BOE meeting

- Board will address issue of shortage of parking spots at SHS
- Board of Operations Committee will present need vs. cost analysis
- November BOE meeting - opportunity for public to comment on parking situation
- December BOE meeting - board will vote on whether to solicit construction bids

10/30

Halloween Assembly

Presentation: What to Expect from SHS Guidance Department

Freshman year/Laura Haney

Help students with transition to SHS and find their niche

Begins in 8th grade

- January: Night with parents at SHS
- March: Guidance reps visit LCJSMS
- May: Advisory breakfast with SHS students

August: Freshman orientation and Naviance registration

First quarter: meet with freshman individually and in small groups

- Advise on all aspects of school life
- Encourage students to develop relationship with Guidance
- Promote independence and self-advocacy
- Explain GPA and reinforce importance of transcript
- Offer peer tutoring if necessary

Sophomore year/Katie Flannelly

A great year for students

- Continue work on successful transition to SHS
- Improve in self-advocacy; learn to ask for help
- Set goals for themselves; monitor those goals, look for progress
- Learn to access support of Guidance; build relationships with teachers
- Think about career; college majors
- Take initial PSAT and review results
- Learn to use Naviance to advance goals

- Advised to stay involved – quality of involvement, not quantity

Junior year/Marie Purcell

A lot going on! Guidance events and touchpoints are many

- Emphasis on post-secondary planning for students and families
- 2- and 4-year programs, gap year, vocational training, trades, military options

Fall: meet in small groups of 6 – 8 students

- Emphasize importance of strong academic performance, pushing through difficult classes, building relationships with teachers (college recommendations)
- Encourage students to go to college rep visits at SHS
- Hold college events: Junior family college night; Fall college fair
- Second PSAT test taken; results submitted for national merit scholarships

December – Financial Aid night

January – Junior family conferences begin

- Where is student in post-secondary planning process?
- What are preliminary thoughts about type of career and possible major?
- Plan a testing schedule
- Develop brag sheets

Spring

April - College information session; this year admissions panel to provide info on process

April through May – small group meetings to review nuts and bolts of college process

- Review brag sheets
- Prep for senior year
- Plan for summer; make the most of student's down time
- Essay assistance – work with English department to introduce Common Application and essay prompt; get essay wheels moving

June – NYU workshop

- NYU rep talks about college admissions process, what schools are looking for
- SHS seniors discuss their college application experiences

Senior year/Catherine Rivera

Fall

Meet in small groups

- Review college planning – what needs to be completed
- Offer one-on-one assistance to meet deadlines

Senior year family college night – bring family into college application process
Encourage students to attend college rep visits
Financial aid night - December

Spring

- Offer support and counseling with college outcomes: acceptance/rejection/waitlist
- Educate students about local scholarships programs
- Assist in transition out of SHS

Alison Grill, College Specialist

- Collaborative role with students and parents
- Enhances services of Guidance by increasing touchpoints
- Engages students one-on-one

Fall – Works primarily with seniors

Spring – Works with both juniors and seniors with advancing/wrapping up college process

Summer – Works 25 days offering college workshops to students

- Works on essay development
- Conducts mock interviews – acts as objective observer of student in interview
- Meets with families to determine college list

Teaches about Naviance

- Great college and career planning tool
- Communications device
 - Rep visits, scholarships, need to know events, website links, test prep resources, jobs, volunteering opportunities, internships, mental health services

Other responsibilities of role

- Manages document library – a reference database to access presentations, handouts
- Travels to colleges to learn about schools
- Organizes college fairs
- Helps students explore career opportunities
- Runs annual college process event

Jim Davidson, Guidance Counselor

What to expect if student is involved in a sport

Freshman year

- Increased commitment than middle school or youth programs
- 5 – 6 days a week; travel time after school
- Can be overwhelming; a challenge to stay on top of academic work

- Coaches and counselors work with athletes; student can see teachers after school during practice time with note

Sophomore year

- First time student is mixed with upper grades
- Coaches monitor athlete's confidence as this can be tough
- Continued pressure to keep up academics amid time constraints
- Coaches provide year-long schedule of practices and games; helps with test prep and school schedule

Junior year

- Intense level of commitment – both in terms of time and leadership expectations
- College planning – requires conversations with coaches and guidance counselors
- Scheduling conflicts – may become overwhelming

Senior year – key is to learn how to best manage time

- High expectations for athletic performance, academic rigor and success, and leadership
- Students in charge of fundraising events for sport, running underclassmen events, youth events – develops leadership but requires much time
- Study hall is a great thing!

Scott Petrillo, Guidance Counselor

Helps student address and manage tasks unearthed along the way through high school

- Creates a safe and affirming environment as starting point to find help
- Provides office space to best support student
- Gives options to solve problems and make better decisions
- Assures confidentiality
- Helps students progress and solve difficulties

Many students going through difficult situations for first time

- Death in the family; loss of pet
- Challenging relationships
- Issues of sexual identity
- Self-harming behaviors
- School refusal
- Divorce and separation/shared custody
- Over-involvement/time-management problems
- Anxiety and depression
- Learning difficulties/developmental issues

- Moving in and out of different school systems

Amy Herber, Student Assistance Counselor

Works with students and families in need in collaboration with guidance department

Leads students and families to community resources: rehab programs, therapy, counseling

Helps students address mental health issues that can lead to substance abuse

- Takes preventative approach
- Meets weekly with guidance team to recognize at-risk cases
- Listens to students; helps them work through choices
- Offers confidentiality, but will work with families when needed

Managed DIRT workshop and Parent Wellness Series

Supports Red Ribbon Week – Planting club planted 100 tulips

Coordinating event 12/2 at LCJSMS

- Developing coping skills and recognizing how choices affect us
- The Mask We Live In – Looking at the social and emotional health of boys in society
- Speaker: Football player

Works with Health teachers to support their curriculum

Meeting adjourned: 10:38 am

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Merritt

PTO Recording Secretary, 2015-2016