

Hamden High School (HHS) School Governance Council (SGC)  
Meeting Minutes  
February 28, 2022, 6pm (on Zoom)

**Members Present** (alphabetical order): John Donahue, Katie Gurski, John Hanna, Mia Hoffman-Kamrat, Andrew Hull, Elizabeth (Liz) Marini, Karlen Meinsen, Kevin Mensah, Nancy Restivo, Susan Schultheiss, Vicki Simiola, Julie Stewart, Tykia Terrell,

**Admin Present:** Darce DeCosta, Nadine Gannon, Scott Trauner

**Members Not Present:** Frank Dixon, Judite Vamvakides

**Guests:** none

**BOE Representative:** Mariam Khan – not present

**1. Welcome – Liz Marini**

- a. Called meeting to order at 6:05pm

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Nancy Restivo**

- a. Andrew motioned to approve the January meeting minutes. Karlen seconded. All in favor.

**3. Board of Education Report - Mariam Khan**

- a. Mariam was not present due to a BOE meeting

**4. Principal's Remarks – Nadine Gannon**

- a. SAT's for juniors 3/24. Seniors will come in late. 9th & 10th will follow regular schedule
- b. Admin Team working on creating solution for 1<sup>st</sup> semester failures
  - i. May be hard for students who received low F to get full credit
  - ii. Want students to come afterschool MTW for 1 hour
  - iii. Waiting for approval
- c. Credit recovery 3 days a week and over the summer to help struggling students
- d. Continuing work with Dr. LaSalle on Equity – met today
- e. Pushing to execute Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)
  - i. Worked on it during last Professional Development Day/ faculty mtg
  - ii. Got teacher feedback on the work
  - iii. Acronym for POWER and what it means
- f. Continues to be a struggle to cover the building every day
  - i. Rarely get substitutes
  - ii. Average of 15 teachers out a day
  - iii. Often administration is covering classes
- g. Voting on mask mandate tonight at BOE meeting
  - i. Students wore them today
  - ii. Many districts going without
  - iii. Will do what asked to do
- h. Dragons United Club – shared by Kevin and Nadine
  - i. Adding more students to group

- ii. Membership of club leaders at HHS
- iii. Kevin on SGC School Climate Committee
  - 1. Proposing “Decorated Hallways” - decorate hallway in each wing for each grade – each will propose theme which will be approved by Ms. Gannon. Will be a competition
  - 2. To boost school engagement
- iv. 100 students now. Goal is to have 1700 kids who are completely engaged in how to create a better environment
- v. Need to have officer elections for 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Should be happening soon
- vi. Staff vs student basketball game
- vii. Hope to do something in March, April and May
- i. Nancy asked about the students ID’s and if students have to wear them
  - i. Not required to wear them
  - ii. Not all students have ID’s – glitch with photography company
- j. Karlen asked about clarification of students’ failures – are parents involved? How? And are students buying into program?
  - i. Nadine stated they are
  - ii. Upper grades do credit recovery
- iii. Focused on 9<sup>th</sup> grade for failure plan
  - 1. Team leaders meet throughout the week to collaborate, plan and discuss at risk students
  - 2. Zooming with parents/guardians during meetings
  - 3. Students can earn up to 63 average
  - 4. Want students to master skills and earn credit
- iv. John D. spoke about Math intervention
  - 1. Identify students
  - 2. Discuss opportunity with students to ask if they wish to partake in program
  - 3. They need to keep up with current work as well
  - 4. Can meet with tutors during study hall
  - 5. Use IXL program to go over skills they did not do well on
  - 6. Once meet threshold they earn up to a 63
- k. Vicki asked about POWER
  - i. An acronym for PBIS that teachers came up with
  - ii. For example: R = Respect – what does that look like while in school
  - iii. Have posters with expectations throughout the school
- l. Vicki also asked about credit recovery and will it continue
  - i. Credit recovery in existence for 8 years and will continue
- m. Susan asked how many students are in credit recovery
  - i. Nadine did not know exact number - there are about 195 F’s, but one student could have multiple F’s

## **5. Council and Administrative Remarks – Liz Marini**

- a. Short one teacher rep for SGC – Liz asked for help from SGC students and colleagues to reach out to teachers to join

- b. Strategic Mentorship Initiatives
  - i. Juniors met with Capstone Advisors about projects
  - ii. Once get a sense of the kinds of projects would like to connect them with outside advisors and/or resources in community
  - iii. Nadine stated the students feel overwhelmed
    - 1. Many options for what to do
    - 2. Encourage project they are passionate about
    - 3. Could be something they are currently doing

## **6. Committees Review – Liz Marini**

- a. Education/ Counseling
  - i. Did not have a chance to meet
- b. Safety/ Operations/ Communication
  - i. Joined with Mental Health Committee
- c. Mental Health /Supports
  - i. Talked about concerning behaviors
  - ii. Role of security guards and physical altercations
  - iii. Safety of teachers and staff
  - iv. Impact of learning environment
  - v. Reached out to Amanda Forcucci, District Health Director
    - 1. We asked if the 2<sup>nd</sup> required health class could be therapeutic
    - 2. Amanda stated in email they are hoping to go in this direction
    - 3. Ben Dix, Director of Special Ed, and Amanda will hopefully be attending next MH mtg to talk about supports and solutions happening or that need to happen
  - vi. MH Survey went out to all students
    - 1. 1/3 of school responded. Mia has results. About 60% weren't aware of MH services at HHS. Will discuss more at next MH mtg
    - 2. Would like the teacher survey to go out as well
    - 3. Liz: Info should be sent out to students on a regular basis since may miss/ignore it until they need it
    - 4. Andy: Used to go over resources available during Connections. Should do this again
    - 5. Liz: Need to continue to remind students of resources possibly during SEL lessons
    - 6. Karlen: Staff may not be aware of all resources at HHS – they need to be informed. Feels communication is not streamlined so info gets lost
    - 7. Nadine: In constant communication with the staff. Get Hamden Dragon Update. Get same communications as families. No way of inspecting what teachers read and disseminate. If not receiving Nadine wants to know.
    - 8. Staff meeting was in person in Dec. Last meeting broke out

- in groups to work on PBSI. Will be in person going forward
9. Karlen asked if MH survey can be resent to students to get more responses. Mia will resend it to Nadine.

- d. School Promotion/ School Climate
- i. Helping with Dragons United to help facilitate activities
  - ii. Met with Ayana and Nadine.
  - iii. Went to class advisors. Need to do their elections then get class student council reps involved
  - iv. Hoping "Decorated Hallways" will happen March/April

## **7. New Business**

- a. Darcie let us know that Nadine was given a Community Service Award from Hamden Black History Committee
- b. Nancy asked about whether or not security guards can break up fights
  - i. Nadine: Yes. They are PMT trained
- c. Kevin suggested pamphlets be made regarding info about the school, MH services, late buses, etc. FAQ's about HHS. Printed, online, on monitors, posters
- d. Karlen asked about "no hands-on policy" with fights. Need to be able to talk about issues at HHS in a way that is open and honest. No fault consensus problem solving. Need to help youth not feel so angry
  - i. Nadine is transparent and welcomes suggestions
  - ii. Hiring 10<sup>th</sup> security guard
  - iii. John H: Rumor may have stemmed from HMS issue. Rules need to be articulated. Consequences need to happen
  - iv. Nadine: Make recommendations for expulsion but up to Central Office.
  - v. John H: If expulsion is recommended and/or made Central Office should require student to have a psychiatric or safety exam before returning to school. Teachers need to be forewarned of student returning and be asked how they feel about student returning.
  - vi. Nadine would appreciate and support that.
  - vii. John H: MH Committee should make this recommendation to CO. If don't address issues good students will leave – already causing change in racial dynamic
  - viii. Vicki: Also heard HMS rumor about security guard being escorted out for being hands-on. What are parameters?
  - ix. Vicki: Consequences not necessarily a bad thing. We, as a society, are afraid to hold kids accountable.
  - x. Vicki: Who is HHS consulting Psychiatrist?
  - xi. John H: Not sure, but think district has one
  - xii. Vicki: Used to have someone to evaluate students with concerning behavior
  - xiii. John H: When fights happen districts should press charges, not teachers. Courts would hear it differently

- xiv. Andy: Things have changed. In PPT today with multiple lawyers because of expulsion. Hard for district. Teachers are hands-off
- xv. John H: Students come back feeling empowered if not expelled and behavior does not change and could get worse
- xvi. Karlen: MH support and federal money not reaching classroom and students.
- xvii. Andy: Other students see no consequences and feel they can do same
- xviii. Karlen: At what point are others' rights being violated? District works for all students. At what point will everyone's rights be honored – those ready to learn and teach?
- xix. Liz: Many good points to keep discussing. See efforts from Nadine and admin to help students become more invested and empowered in the learning environment and trying to help staff be mindful of their impact on students and their learning environment

## **8. Adjournment – Liz Marini**

- a. Andy made motion to adjourn meeting at 7:03pm. Nancy seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting March 21 at 6pm