

Hamden High School (HHS) School Governance Council (SGC)
Meeting Minutes
May 23, 2022, 6pm (on Zoom)

Members Present (alphabetical order): Frank Dixon, Katie Gurski, John Hanna, Mia Hoffman-Kamrat, Andrew Hull, Karlen Meinsen, Kevin Mensah, Nancy Restivo, Susan Schultheiss, Julie Stewart, Judite Vamvakides

Admin Present: Nadine Gannon, Scott Trauner

Members Not Present: John Donohue, Liz Marini, Vicki Simiola, Tykia Terrell

Guests: none

BOE Representative: Mariam Khan

1. Welcome – Frank Dixon

- a. Called meeting to order at 6:06pm

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Nancy Restivo

- a. Susan motioned to approve the April meeting minutes. Karlen seconded. All in favor.

3. Principal's Remarks – Nadine Gannon

- a. Lost another HHS student over the weekend due to drowning
 - i. Crisis team activated, faculty meeting, script for teachers, Clifford Beers came in to school
 - ii. Visited family, asked for privacy
- b. Chalkfest postponed until tomorrow due to Elijah's service
- c. Prom Friday at Aquaturf
- d. HCLC will remain open next year
 - i. Asked for clarification as to whether will support 9th graders
- e. Summer program was approved
 - i. Transition program for 9th graders
 - ii. Credit recovery for 10-12
 - iii. Bussing will not be provided. A big problem because don't know how students will get to program. Shared concerns with Mariam (BOE) and Legislative Council. Students won't be able to get supports they need or access program. Virtual learning doesn't work. Flat funded so money is not there
 - iv. Karlen: Take a closer look at numbers getting for K-12 programming to make this work
 - v. Nadine: Had transportation last year for almost 300 students
 - vi. Frank: What is reason?
 - vii. Nadine: Does not think providing transportation for any program
 - viii. Karlen: Will check into it
 - ix. Nadine: Thinks there is bussing for mandated programs. Talked to Mariam about it. Chris Melillo, Asst SI, is leaving. Summer program starts June 27. Can't let too much time lapse. Will still run program but don't know how many kids will be able to come. Will start recruiting staff.

- f. Graduation June 22. Last day June 23. Jody had to get permission from State Commissioner of Education and lawyers to have it on 179th day. Raindate June 23.
- g. COVID #'s rising. Attendance has been laid back because students had to stay home if ill.

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

- a. Lost two students in two weeks. Visited school the day after and went to funeral and vigil. Plan to visit again. Feels that those closest to the problem have the solutions
- b. Leadership changes – both Jody and Chris are leaving (superintendent and assistant superintendent). Need vision of what want to see in these roles. Consultant hired. Setting up focus groups, surveys. Need to offer more sessions and make sure everyone is aware. Nadine posted survey in last Dragon update. Email was sent out by BOE – not everyone received it. Group is being paid up to \$15,000 to do national search
- c. HCLC: There was a proposal for it to be taken over by ACES. HCLC is under resourced. Decided against doing this. Looking for partnership where can leverage facilities without sacrificing community. ACES offers 7-9 grade program which is needed. Connection between HHS and HCLC – students go to HHS to take certain classes.
 - i. Andrew: Needs to be an option for 9th graders. Haven't seen some students since Q1. Need more support and resources
 - ii. Mariam agrees. Should also be for 7-8
 - iii. Karlen: Need intervention at HMS. Vertical teaming 8th to 9th.
 - iv. Nancy: Why does HCLC not take 9th graders?
 - v. Nadine: Don't have staff or money. At HHS have gone from 1400 to 1700 students with fewer teachers and administrators, have less overall. Can't run school the same way as ran it this year. Admin went from having 400 to 600 students each. Overwhelming. House meetings not happening because in crisis.
 - vi. Karlen: Can someone explain how HCLC works?
 - vii. Nadine: Don't have staffing or courses. Some kids are there FT, some PT. Not all can be successful at HHS. Talks to Michelle Coogan everyday about how to better service kids and families
 - viii. Frank: Is staff only issue?
 - ix. Karlen: Can HCLC be at HHS?
 - x. Andrew: Not even enough room for classes now
 - xi. Mariam: Environment at HHS can be hard for HCLC students. Used to be Steps and Reach for grades 7-12. HCLC under resourced. Unacceptable that they have learned to make due with so little. Culture change needed. HHS as well. Being brought to the edge
 - xii. Frank: Been on edge for too long. Administrators need to be able to manage the school. Need help from BOE, mayor, legislative council to reach out to Hartford for money we should be getting
 - xiii. Andrew: Taught at school in Milford similar to HCLC that had excess money. Money gap is demoralizing. Teacher morale is down

- xiv. Frank: Money is not being distributed as it should be
- xv. Andrew: Did not have copy paper for half the year
- xvi. Frank: Need to hold politicians and executive branches accountable
- xvii. Mariam: HCLC has no security guard. Has 1 social worker, need another. Budget approved by council and going into finance committee – will keep us posted
- d. Bussing for summer program: Who said no buses?
 - i. Nadine: Meeting with Central Office. Received email saying no buses because flat funded and no money
 - ii. Mariam: Unacceptable. BOE has not revised budget
- e. Masking policy for next year – none yet. No criteria about when to mask and when not

5. Assistant Superintendent Remarks – Chris Melillo via Karlen

- a. Leaving Hamden
- b. Long term Ideas
 - i. Supports for AP students so they can be successful at higher levels
 - ii. Adding more career pathways, more offerings, more alternative programs, hands-on options
 - iii. Study Hall opportunity for credit recovery
 - iv. Expanding relationship with Clifford Beers
 - v. 9th grade teaming – teaming the 9th grade up like the MS model, students grouped by core 4, assigned dedicated guidance counselor and administrator to them
 - vi. Nadine: Had 9th grade administrator previously. Have 4 houses. Proposed shuffling admin team, hiring new admin (a 5th), have 9th grade admin stay with them through all 4 years. Another option is staying as is. This is first year without dedicated 9th grade admin – teams shared concerns about lack of support from admin that they had in the past. Used to have guidance counselors dedicated to 9th grade, but previous SGC recommended changing to have same GC all 4 years. Looking at having administrator assigned to 9th grade. Tough to have freshman every year. Submitting suggestions to CO this week
 - vii. Frank: Should SGC send letter to BOE and CO with these wants and needs as they go through SI hiring process? Send our visionary needs
 - viii. Karlen: Yes. Need to ask potential SI “What will you do for Hamden?” Need to serve our community and come up with solutions.
- c. Nadine asked Mariam if BOE decided if metal detectors are staying. Admin at them from 6:45-7:45. No security guards on other floors because at metal detectors. Teachers are supervising students on floors and being paid to do so. Not sustainable. Don’t have enough people
 - i. Mariam: Will go through policy committee. Will reach out. Not on next month’s agenda. Needs to be addressed
 - ii. Scott: Uncomfortable not having them, have prevented items from coming into the building. Who wants to be responsible for making

- the decision to remove them? Hard to go backwards. Need to consider comfort level in the building
- iii. Frank: Talking about having additional resources to man metal detectors, not discontinue them
 - iv. Scott: How do we sustain them? Longevity?
 - v. Mariam: Some students like them, some think they are not effective. Will ask when it will be on the agenda. Should ask HHS community their experience with them.
 - vi. Nancy: Regarding metal detectors, son's opaque pencil case in plastic bag not being checked .
 - vii. Scott: He should put it in his backpack or should be gone through. The team reflects on these issues
 - viii. Nadine: She goes through items like that
- d. Nancy asked Nadine regarding 9th grade counselor, which way seems to be better? Also, if SGC were to write a letter to BOE, CO, Legislative Council it would probably be 5 pages long because there is so much needed
- i. Nadine: Mixed feelings on it. More impactful is having a 9th grade administrator, but there is lack of continuity of not knowing student for 4 years. Need another administrator – would solve problem. If flat funded will not get another one. Administrators need more support and fewer kids. What do parents feel? Consistency is good
 - ii. Karlen: Make a list of what freshman need, maybe need consistency of same supports all 4 years. Need to do what the students need. Agree about metal detectors, and need to remember about why we have them, what got us to this point
 - iii. Andrew: More than half level 5 students don't know they have a guidance counselor or that there is a math lab for help
 - iv. Mia: Consistency of supports best, less confusing
 - v. Kevin: Agrees. Guidance counselor should meet with students so they can get to know each other.
 - vi. Katie: Consistency better, for siblings as well
 - vii. Frank: Consistency better

6. Council and Administrative Remarks – Nancy Restivo

- a. Karlen nominated for Chair by Nancy. No nominations for vice chair.
- b. Frank nominated Susan for Vice chair
- c. No other nominations.
- d. Karlen voted in.
- e. Karlen accepted. Will work very hard, lots to be done, make list of priorities, and would like to work more closely with BOE, need more direct communication. Need State reps to come to us to see issues, listen to our needs, and we need to fix our underfunding
- f. Frank agrees. Need hard lobbying and need to hold people accountable
- g. Susan accepts nomination. Susan voted in.

7. Committees Review

- a. Education/ Counseling
 - i. No report
- b. Safety/ Operations/ Communication
 - i. Joined with Mental Health Committee
- c. Mental Health /Supports - Karlen
 - i. Joined Clifford Beers focus group. Would like them to be a part of our mental health subcommittee meetings next year so we can work together
- d. School Promotion/ School Climate
 - i. No report

8. New Business

- a. Next meeting June 13 at 6pm. Hoping to bring on our new parent member at that meeting. 4 parents applied. Need 3 teachers for next year – John Donohue resigned, Liz is leaving and still have 1 open spot from this year. Nancy reached out to a few teachers to ask them to join. Liz and Karlen reached out as well. SGC members should reach out to teachers
 - i. John H: SGC should write a letter to teachers asking them to join, explaining the importance of the council. Would be a good way to connect to teachers.
 - ii. Nancy: Who should we give the letter to be passed out?
 - iii. Nadine: Any teachers can send the letter to the HHS staff
 - iv. Frank: Liz can send it. Frank and Nancy can write it
 - v. Karlen: Emphasize that this is an opportunity and gives them a voice, gives them an avenue to get things done
- b. Frank, Liz, Nancy, Karlen and Susan will have a transitional meeting to transfer any info, passwords, docs, etc.

9. Adjournment – Liz Marini

- a. Nancy made motion to adjourn meeting at 7:29pm. John seconded. Meeting adjourned.