

February 10, 2010
Upper School PAC Minutes

Present: Dr. Gaye McCollum-Nickles, Jon Cook, Darla Garey-Sage, Tracy Stephens, Mark Lowenstern, Anne Barnes, Craig Robinson, Karen Gabriel, and Ilana Rugg.

Absent: Janet Lowe

Communication with students during day (Janet Lowe)

Parents who drive from out of town for school have expressed concern that it is sometimes difficult to know if students have received messages about carpool, pickup, sports or theater practice, etc. The traditional method of leaving a message with staff for students does not 'close the loop' in that students can't acknowledge that they have received the message and it would be too burdensome on staff to ask them to make yet another phone call telling parents students have received/acknowledged/agreed/disagreed with arrangements. Parents asked if students could check their cell phones at break or lunch so they could notify parents of their agreed upon plan for pickup.

Dr. Gaye noted that the Middle School has much tougher policy on cell phone use than the upper school. Dr. Gaye allows students to check their phones for messages or make a fast call under supervision; she recommends that they check with Laura or her to use their phones to check for messages from their mom/dad at break/lunch/after school.

Transitions to new Upper School Head

Dr. Gaye has built comprehensive files for her position and is confident that everything is ready for new head to access easily. Yet, parents are nervous about change, a natural reaction. Parents emphasized Dr. Gaye's connection to the students and we hope the new upper school head will emulate that.

AP Exams/Courses and Stress

Upper school is recommending that students limit their schedule to two (2) AP's per year; this is not a policy, but a recommendation based on faculty and administrative experience. School transcripts sent to colleges will note that the school limits AP's so that students are not penalized; this is a growing trend among schools as data is accrued on the use and abuse of the AP system. It is the experience of administration that colleges will accept private college preparation honor courses as well as AP's.

Parents express concern that there is not a depth of curriculum to support a limited AP recommendation; for example, to take 4th year science and math, students must take an AP, thereby automatically limiting AP selections in other departments.

[SAT Prep](#)

Dr. Gaye and Mr. Cook encouraged students to log into Naviance in preparation for SAT exams. Anecdotally, students who log in at least 10 times, for a 10 – 15 minutes practice session, have raised their test scores significantly. School pays Naviance to allow unlimited access to practice tests; Naviance will give immediate feedback to students pinpointing their areas of lesser performance.

National Merit

School will probably know in April if students qualified.

Service Hours

Senior Give Back...community service hours donated by seniors during the day are half-credit (work two hours to earn one); outside of school are full credit. The inschool hours are much easier for students to perform and do not require their interaction with the outside community, which is a goal, therefore are accrued differently.

Did You Know?

Jon Cook showed the video: Did You Know? The short film (YouTube) shows the massive technological changes that students need to be prepared for.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpEnFwiqdx8>

Our next meeting will be March 11, 2010, at 5:30 pm in Mr. Cook's room.

Respectfully submitted
Darla Garey-Sage