

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

**Members Present** (alphabetical order): Frank Dixon, John Donahue, John Hanna, Mia Hoffman-Kamrat, Karlen Meinsen, Kevin Mensah, Nancy Restivo, Susan Schultheiss, Vicki Simiola, Tykia Terrell, Judite Vamvakides

**Admin Present:** Scott Trauner

**Members Not Present:** Katie Gurski, Andrew Hull, Elizabeth (Liz) Marini, Julie Stewart

**Guests:** none

**BOE Representative:** Mariam Khan

**1. Welcome – Frank Dixon**

- a. Called meeting to order at 6:08pm

**2. Principal's Remarks – Scott Trauner**

- a. Climate Coordinator/ Advisor hired for HHS - Chris Cagle
  - i. Interacts with students and families
  - ii. Mentor to students, work with them during a crisis
  - iii. Minor discipline instances
  - iv. Started today
  - v. Basketball Coach at Gateway College
- b. Lost 1 security guard
  - i. Interviewed candidates
  - ii. Selective in who gets hired
  - iii. Want someone who can connect with the students and fulfill duties
- c. Class Elections this week
- d. Masks now optional
  - i. Nice to see students without masks – sense of relief, happiness
  - ii. 50% of students and staff are without masks
- e. Frank asked how students will meet/ interact with Chris Cagle
  - i. Protocols and procedures being made
  - ii. Referrals will be made each day and will determine who will meet with him
  - iii. Meeting students in an organic way currently
  - iv. Frank said it would be helpful to be able to measure how things change since Chris's hire and justify additional hires
  - v. Chris will work full time and his credentials are being a basketball coach and being able to relate to students and be a mentor
  - vi. John D stated he knows Chris and thinks he will be an asset
  - vii. Karlen suggested Chris would be helpful to support a student's behavior plan
  - viii. Scott said HHS has Emily McClain, SRBI coordinator but for academics, Chris's role would dovetail with this
  - ix. Frank asked if Chris could come to a SGC meeting – Scott will look into that

### **3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Nancy Restivo**

- a. Karlen motioned to approve the February meeting minutes. Susan seconded. All in favor.
- b. Nancy and Frank welcomed Judite Vamvakides to the SGC as a parent member

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

- a. Mariam apologized for missing meetings. She will try to find a substitute for her when she cannot attend. She wants to be involved. She spoke to BOE about conflicting meetings. Wants all voices to be heard
- b. Masks are optional since March 21
- c. Equity Committee
  - i. Public input needs to be better during BOE meetings
  - ii. Students can apply to be BOE rep until end of March
    - 1. Wants current student BOE rep to come to SGC mtg

### **5. Council and Administrative Remarks – Frank Dixon**

- a. Karlen asked about Mental Health Survey that MH committee created and sent to admin in October for students and staff
  - i. Asked why central office needs to approve the survey for staff
  - ii. Survey will not be useful now since the year is almost over
  - iii. Only 33% of students responded first time. Mia said about 800 responded once sent again
- b. Last day of school is June 22

### **6. Committees Review**

- a. Education/ Counseling - John Donohue
  - i. Will focus on 9th Grade Credit Recovery (after-school program)... tracking the performance of those students who participate for the next school year (and beyond)... rubric for subjects to recover their credits (to streamline the work to be made up, and the work for teachers to assign/grade)... an identifier other than names for keeping an eye on students enrolled in the program this year...
- b. Safety/ Operations/ Communication
  - i. Joined with Mental Health Committee
- c. Mental Health /Supports - Karlen
  - i. Amanda Forcucci and Ben Dix were guests at the meeting
  - ii. Concern with videoing of fights – impacting climate of the building
  - iii. Rules and Discipline policy – what to enforce
  - iv. PBIS system
  - v. New health curriculum for this year includes 2<sup>nd</sup> health class
    - 1. MH committee sent letter at beginning of year to ask if this class could focus more on therapeutic side of MH
    - 2. New standards are along those lines
    - 3. More student engagement, demonstrating skill
    - 4. Will be a range of different programs for different needs

- vi. Teachers' voices need to be heard
- vii. Not same experience for current students as those students coming up to MS/HS
- viii. Risk assessment – re-entry plan for students suspended, services
- ix. Ben is not seeing so many issues with Special Ed students, more with general population
- x. No shortage of programs
- xi. Back to pre-covid rules and consequences
- xii. Vicki stated some teachers are afraid to go to work. Asked if we have a PR person so not all news reported about HHS is bad
- xiii. Karlen stated lots to PTSD among teachers
- xiv. John H said teachers/staff need to trust admin with disciplining students. Problem is decisions are made at central office. Person making the decisions should be at these meetings.
- xv. Frank asked if we should invite decision maker to next meeting
- xvi. Kids are now going after adults with no consequences
- xvii. Scott said policies are same as always. Have had arrests. Suspension means nothing to kids. No longer afraid of admin. Scott and John H were injured in altercation on Thursday. All discipline on all levels is ineffective. Admin can recommend for expulsion hearing with objective state hearing officer
- xviii. Frank said this is a town wide/ community problem. Anger is being brought into the school. Change and help needs to start from higher up – police, Legislative council, mayor, etc
- xix. John H said kids feel protected at the school – would not behave this way anywhere else
- xx. Mariam did not know the extent of the altercation. Info BOE receives is limited and inaccurate at times. Doesn't always get info. Let her know if we want her to voice any concerns to BOE
- xxi. Scott said the speed of info is a challenge because trying to beat students and news outlets from posting. Still investigating altercation. Both students were arrested and are up for expulsion. Freshman and sophomores are causing trouble.
- xxii. Mariam and BOE members not getting all the info
- xxiii. Judite said communication flow has gaps between schools and CO
- xxiv. Nancy asked why there is not another school/place for the students with high level mental health issues to go to receive the proper intervention they need. HHS is a learning institution, not a mental health facility for this level of need
- xxv. John H said need more alternatives for troubled students and expansion of HCLC – need funding
- xxvi. Scott said HCLC does not take 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Only 60 spots. Parent/guardian has to agree with placement of child in HCLC. Kids involved on Thursday were not a problem before. Need a track record of many offenses before referred to HCLC. HCLC is for all students. To be recommended to Cedarhurst or outplacement need

- to have IDP/ be Special ed student and need to have exhausted all reasonable accommodations at HHS to be considered
- xxvii. Years back students that were in those programs were brought back to HHS and many of the outplacement programs have been closed due to lack of funding
  - xxviii. Kevin said there are conflicts out of school and bring them in. Videos of fights being posted, being downplayed. Social media is the problem. Should be consequences for posting
  - xxix. Karlen said new standards address misuse of social media and technology, talks about consequences
  - xxx. Scott said students arrested were charged with assault and breach of peace
- d. School Promotion/ School Climate - Kevin
- i. Working with Dragons United to bring variety of events to HHS
  - ii. "Spirit Hallways" has some possible themes
  - iii. DJ Fridays – 50 cent donation for Karaoke during lunch

## **7. Old Business**

- a. Asked for second PPT coordinator and a Mental Health Director at Central Office – neither have been approved
- b. Having a MH consultant may be worth exploring

## **8. Adjournment – Liz Marini**

- a. Nancy made motion to adjourn meeting at 7:43pm. Vicki seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting April 25 at 6pm