

Hamden High School (HHS) School Governance Council (SGC)  
Meeting Minutes  
September 19, 2022

**Members Present** (alphabetical order): Katie Gurski, John Hanna, Mia Hoffmann-Kamrat, Tracey Jacobson, Karlen Meinsen, Kevin Mensah, Janice Mira-Keenan, Sarah Northrop, Gina Parillo, Nancy Restivo, Julie Stewart, Judite Vamvakides

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

**Members Not Present:** Susan Schultheiss, Vicki Simiola, Tyika Terrell

**Guest Speaker:** none

**BOE Representative Present:** Mariam Khan

**1. Welcome – Karlen Meinsen**

- a. Called meeting to order at 7:03pm
- b. Karlen welcomed all
- c. One more teacher member needed – Andrew Hull resigned
- d. Folders handed out with SGC materials
- e. Introduction to SGC
- f. SGC here to support students
- g. Stated mission of SGC

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

- a. John Hanna motioned to approve the June meeting minutes. Karlen seconded. All in favor

**3. Introductions – All members**

- a. Sarah Northrop president of new PTSA
- b. Equity and communication important to all
- c. Making HHS a better school also important to all
- d. Need to look at broad issues of the school

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

- a. Successful open
- b. Reorganized admin team with 4 houses – significant help
- c. Pushing for kids to be in class on time. Tardiness to school has gone down, enforcing attendance policy
- d. Implemented PBIS, Pride Posters, talk about expectations, reinforce everywhere
- e. Cellphones out of sight during academic time – reinforcing, not allowed in study hall, library. Allowed in cafe
- f. Metal detectors – every student, every day, start at 6:45a-7:35a
- g. Vaping a problem. Want to do an educational session with parents in the evening
- h. Working on a policy for metal detectors - may be at extra-curricular activities, up to Superintendent
- i. Scott: Safety week – going through one drill a day in safety plan. More of a discussion. Will do monthly drills. “Say hello” program for socially challenged. Anonymous tip line. Through Sandy Hook Promise. Being promoted by student ambassadors. Student embassy located where “bank” used to be.
- j. Dragons United has subcommittees as well and may coincide with SGC. Students asking for what they want. Teachers helping with Connections topics. Connections trying

- to tap into that DESA – SE wellness. Baseline survey with kids to see where they are. Staff needs to be trained.
- k. Meet with Clifford Beers (CB) and Cornell Scott as to where to send kids who need help. Need signed permission from parents to be seen. CB started last year towards end of year.
  - l. Karlen: Need to communicate with Clifford Beers
  - m. DESA – content and teaching tools – need to be trained. SE health
  - n. Holding tight with discipline. Feel supported by Central Office (CO). Issues at football game. HHS has a no admittance list. Admin at all entrances. Any outside student needs to be accompanied by adult. Mr. Dyer working with security and police to make sure all entrances are covered. Kids with double detention are not allowed. Suspended kids not allowed to anything
  - o. Crime watchers report on anything that happens.
  - p. Homecoming – working on date, but probably Nov 4 weekend. In gym. Recognize all sports while in season. Want to do in conjunction with pep rally but will do it the day before Thanksgiving game. Lights on. Homecoming catered. Decorate C-Hall. Have to be in good standing to go. 7-10:30p
  - q. Traffic pattern change is much better. Positive feedback. Much safer for kids.
  - r. Karlen: Superintendent communicating well
  - s. Karlen: Traffic calming near HHS needs to be looked at. Very dangerous for students. Will work on it in sub-comm

## 5. Sub-Committees – Karlen

- a. Reviewed by-laws
  - i. Purpose
  - ii. Duties – come to meetings
  - iii. Sub-committees should have parent and teacher representation. Need to report out each month
  - iv. Operational and programmatic changes to improve achievement
  - v. Surveys to students, parents, staff annually
  - vi. Close communication with PTSA
    - 1. Table will be setup during open house on 9/22 near auditorium. Nadine will announce during open house
- b. Overview of Sub-committees
  - i. Commit to one, can do more
  - ii. Students crucial to communication with student body
  - iii. Mental health/ safety, School climate, Career pathways – sub-committees
  - iv. Suggest sub-committees meet at 6pm before general meeting
  - v. Members should decide which sub-comm want to be on
  - vi. Members free to suggest other sub-comm options. Should Equity be own subcommittee?
  - vii. CO committed to dealing with leveling issue – needs to be addressed and live in this comm. SGC needs to be a part of this.
  - viii. Members rotating going to BOE meetings and report back
  - ix. October meeting – talk about issues of leveling, equity, GPA
  - x. John: Policy changes being made without public knowing. Now an equity issue being brought up by students to BOE. Have trouble finding out who makes some policy changes and how those changes were made

## **6. Board of Education Report – Mariam Khan**

- a. Introduced self
- b. Should have people there when decisions are made
- c. Unilateral decision making, importance of transparency
- d. What are the roles we each play in the system?
- e. BOE meeting tomorrow. May make decision on GPA issue
- f. Would like to bring in BOE student reps to SGC meetings
- g. Karlen: Emailed Melissa Kaplan, BOE chair to say wanted to work with BOE and she was open to that

## **7. Introductions of those on ZOOM**

- a. Kevin suggested GPA of students be shown again on PowerSchool
- b. Vee Cangiano – guest parent listening in and interested in SGC

## **8. Future Work**

- a. Sarah: Equity should be its own sub-committee
- b. John: Shef vs O'Neil - need to meet these requirements
- c. Karlen: Also talk about leveling
- d. John: Need to have conversations about all these issues
- e. Nancy: Who do we have these conversations with? How do we know who to have these conversations with?
- f. John: Superintendent (SI) is the first person to talk to for policies
- g. Nadine: Operational – admin at school. Leveling and GPA bigger than admin. Teachers, staff, students, parents need to be involved. Ned to speak with BOE, CO,SI
- h. Karlen: SI committed to coming to meetings
- i. Mariam: Need to have norms as to which are unilateral decisions and which are by committee. District policies decisions either need to come from SI or BOE. Need access to meeting minutes so know how and when decisions were made. Chair of Equity sub-committee at BOE level. Would like to collaborate with SGC. Email Mariam with questions
- j. Next meeting: Oct 17
- k. Should sub-committees meet between now and Oct? Will share document for people to fill in and potentially meet between now and then
- l. John: If GPA issue not addressed tomorrow need to have emergency SGC meeting.
  - i. GPA issue: Students who took gym over the summer do not have gym factored into their GPA. Those who took it during the school year have it factored in as a weighted course and it brings down their GPA even if they receive an A. Only affects seniors, juniors and sophomores because policy changed for freshman. Important because comes into play for merit scholarship money.
  - ii. Nadine: BOE and SI have been working with legal council
  - iii. Scott: Students who signed up for program that allowed them to take gym over the summer feel a change now would adversely affect them
  - iv. Nadine: Notified SI as soon as issue was brought to her attention. Complexities in issue and seeking counsel. A lot of pieces
  - v. John: Knowingly continuing to do the same thing is an atrocity

## **9. Adjournment – Karlen**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm