

Tamalpais High School Site Council Minutes
Wednesday, Feb 24, 2021, from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. via zoom

Members in Attendance: Suzanne Alpert, Nicholas Blechman, Luc Chamberlin, J.C. Farr, Lisa Giuliani, McKenzie Holtzapple, Shana Katzman, Scott Birkestrand, Laura Keaton, Adrian McCory, Natalie Bitton.

Guests in Attendance: Elaine Wilkinson

Call to Order: 3:01 pm by Suzanne Alpert

Introductions

Approval of the Agenda: Elaine motions to approve the agenda. Adrian seconds. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passes.

Approval of the previous meeting minutes: Shana motions to approve the agenda. Laura seconds. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passes.

Public Comment (2 mins per guest):

- Elaine speaks for TH Foundation about the support for the school return to in-person learning. She expresses gratitude to and support for the school staff for making things work over the last 50 weeks.

Updates and discussion

- Honoring Jewel Barrow: JC tells us about Jewel and the process to get approval from the Site Council before it can be taken to the Board of Education. The people proposing this naming are not here to promote the idea so Luc tried to step in and say something in support of the proposal. The proposal must be formally made and in the minutes and agenda, so we will invite the proponents to the next meeting to make that happen.
- Tam today: JC explains how returning is like a huge puzzle. He gives examples of all the pieces (emotions, logistics, etc...) and how he tries to manage the process.
 - Activity for today: For us to engage in small group conversation about Tam's progress. Where are we at Tam? What are our strengths and areas for improvement? He prepared a Google slide show for us. We start with a little conversation to get to know each other and where we are coming from. We broke into two small groups for discussion. We spent 20 minutes in small groups.
 - Reports from groups:
 - Nick reports out: good staff, leadership, communication, students. Challenges: spirit, financial shortfalls, access, inclusion, equity, innovation, over-achievement, mental health, community support. Improvement: everything based on challenges. Concrete steps: restorative practices

- Shana reports out: Strengths: admin team, collaboration and camaraderie, students culture of wanting to do well, secretaries, custodians, parents support and help kids, admin helps, college and career center.
 Challenges: know better overall purpose of school, mixed messages, how to move forward, is graduation the only sign of success?
 Recommendations: more communication, classes could be more in-depth, chemistry is too hard.
- JC gives broader reasoning of purpose for this talk. What are takeaways or next steps for Site Council members to represent more of the stakeholders in our community?
- Natalie asks about how parents can more effectively communicate with each other.

Reports:

Principal report: We are coming back. We are prioritizing our students' mental health. That is our focus so people please give us grace if the quality of instruction is not perfect. We will focus on socio-emotional growth and relationships. Coming back is a very tough task without a vaccine. He supports staff and students making their own choices about health and we must respect each person's choice on this issue. We should express appreciation and support for those who are here. Answer the health screener with integrity. We continue to work together, we are interdependent and our success is based on integrity and honesty. We are as prepared as we can be. It will be some trial and error and people need to have patience with one another. He is very proud of the effort that we have put forward to this point.

Teacher Report:

- **Laura Erikson (via email):** I wish teachers had vaccines BEFORE bringing students back. Many students have asked if they are allowed to change their mind and stay in virtual learning. Students want to know more about how lunch logistics will work. PhUn is planning to have all students do the same thing at the same time regardless of whether they are rooming or zooming. I'm excited to see my students!!
- **Luc Chamberlin:** Said something or other (he took notes).
- **Nicholas Blechman:** (Just had a baby.) Things are difficult to parse out on behalf of other teachers for me at the moment. Lots of stress among teachers. Also excitement. Anxiety around everything involved with returning to in-person teaching. He is leaving on paternity leave so he is looking at it a little from the outside.) Teachers and students feel the weight of the "big ask." Teachers are stepping up to the responsibility. The roll out and implementation (the technical piece) of the technology in the classroom and safety protocols make everything more complicated. The transition is big.
- **Scott Bikestrand:** Counselors are coming out of scheduling. We feel really blind with where our students are at. We're working really hard to find out what people know to help kids. Worried about kids going back to their families and spreading covid.

Classified Report-

- **Laura Keaton (report provided for all classified):** Manny wants to share that he got the vaccine and is impressed with the organization from the county. The office is getting everything together for next week. They are so excited to see students and teachers. She wants to let all the staff know that whatever you need we want to provide. Vicko deserves a big shout-out!

Parent Report-

- **Suzanne Alpert:** I've had contentious conversations with friends where I have needed to defend teachers being nervous about coming back. I hope we can all live with compassion like JC says.
- **Natalie Bitton:** Excited and a little bit nervous about the social interaction. Questions about breaks and lunch and logistics.
- **Shana Katzman:** Happy to learn that teachers have the option of not teaching in person. Kids are not careful outside of school. I don't understand why all this effort to put kids in the classroom once a week. The academics won't be better and maybe we can do something else for the social benefit. Why are we asking this of the teachers?

Student Report-

- **Adrian McCoy:** "We appreciate everyone's work in distance learning and are looking forward to coming back. I asked students how they feel about school: and received "unmotivated, exhausted." That was the beginning of February so hopefully they feel better. I did a Google form to get feedback from students in the future." Adrian shared the form with us. JC wants to partner with Adrian before the next meeting to find a way to get the responses from this form to admin. - This was done early in the meeting as Adrian had to leave early today.
- **McKenzie Holtzapple:** A lot of kids are excited but nervous. It's like the first day back after summer. Kids have questions about lunch. (Mr. Farr will add instructions to Friday's tutorial slide show.) Is there going to be breakfast? Mostly, kids are just excited.

Wrap up: Suzanne wrapped up the meeting with gratitude and good vibes.

Meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.