Derry Township School District
Hershey High School

BAT Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 2, 2024, 8:15 A.M. – Zoom

Lindsey Schmidt (Chair) - High School Principal
Laurie Wade (Co-Chair) - HS Assistant Principal
Greg Miller (Co-Chair) - HS Assistant Principal

Staff present: Lindsey Schmidt, Greg Miller, Jamie Bean, Emily Reinert and Ashlee McCann

Parents present: Angela Mullen, Archana Sehgal, Stewart McCarver

Topics: Attendance Overview, Student Services Overview and Cell Phone Policy Overview.

- The zoom meeting opened at 8:15 A.M. and began at 8:18 A.M.
- Ms. Schmidt introduced HHS staff in attendance, welcomed parents in attendance and asked them to introduce themselves as well as give the grade level of their student(s)
    a. Ms. Angela Mullen – Kylie, 11th grade and Connor, 9th grade
    b. Ms. Sehgal – Rohan, 11th grade
    c. Mr. McCarver-School Board Member
- Ms. Schmidt introduced the counseling team:
    a. High School Counselors
        - Chelsea Mohn- A-D
        - Brendan Hensel-E-Le
        - Allison Gergent-Lf-R
        - Kaylee Hall- S-Z
            1. If you have questions about courses, college or school in general, the counselors are the ones who you want to start with first.
                a. Counselors are connected to the services within the school district and the community.
                b. Counselors can ensure the students are getting what they need as well as giving parents guidance.
- Ms. Schmidt introduced the student support team:
    a. Mark Painter- Dean of Students
    b. Emily Reinert-Student Support personnel person.
        - Focus on interventions for all students
        - Works on the tiered model of interventions
    c. Jamie Bean-SEL Coach
        - Creates what the community period looks like.
        - Help to make every student feel they belong.
        - Increase the ability to feel connected
            1. Clubs

2. Resources
3. Athletics
4. Supports available

d. Monica Breiner-Instructional Coach
   - Mrs. Bean's counter part
   - Spending time with teachers
   - Good instruction in the classroom/ Best practices
   - Help teachers that are struggling with some classes that are not hitting the mark.

- Ms. Schmidt introduced the administrative team
  a. Principal – Lindsey Schmidt
  b. Assistant Principal – Greg Miller
  c. Assistant Principal – Laurie Wade
- Ms. Schmidt led the discussion of Attendance and the recent changes by the State:
  a. DTSD modified the attendance policy
     - Only permit 5 educational trip days throughout the school year.
     - In the past the state used to allow us to send who we believed fell under a chronic absenteeism definition.
       1. For example:
          a. Students who were really struggling to come to school and missed 20 plus days unexcused,
     - PA changed their definition of chronic absenteeism under the state's lens
       1. 10% - 18 days whether excused or unexcused will be labeled as chronically absent per the state
     - Original educational trip policy allowed DTSD students to have 10 days.
       1. This puts students in the excused absent category but also put them in the chronically absent category per the state.
       2. DTSD decided to change our policy to align with the state and not have students be labeled chronically absent by the state for excused absences
       3. State change and we are trying to align with these changes.
       4. Parents are still given 10 parents excused absences per year those reasons have not changed.
       5. The change was 5 educational trip/college visits.
          a. The administration will work with all of you if we need to go beyond the 15 days.
       6. Unexcused absences that occur when the students are off and do not turn in a note.
          a. Parent Vue and mark student off
          b. Students may bring a note when they come back to school within three full school days
          c. Email Mr. Blair – Kblair@hershey.k12.pa.us
- Ms. Schmidt led the discussion of the Truancy Law & Attendance Process
  a. You will receive letters if your student does have an unexcused absence that is part of the Truancy Law from the state of Pennsylvania.
     - Every unexcused absence will lead to a letter being sent home.
       1. Upon the third unexcused absence you will be invited to an attendance conference that is held at the school with our social worker, parent and student.
          a. These are held to make sure the school understands what is going on and whether more services can be wrapped around your student to help support them being here at school.

b. Parents will hear again that we are bound by Truancy Law and also what happens if students continue to be absent with unexcused absences after that conference.
c. Upon the 7th unexcused absence there could be a referral to Children and Youth.
    i. High School students specifically it will result in a citation.
d. Judge Palino at the magistrate's office works closely with the district as well with the families to ensure students are here at school because that is the priority but supports families that are in need.

- Parent questions about attendance-
    a. Ms. Sehgal regarding sick days- asked if a sick days count under parent excused absences.

    Ms. Schmidt answered – Yes sick days do fall under parent excused absences. There is a list of days that come out of the parent excused absences, but a few examples are sick, drivers test or an educational trip that is not submitted within the 10 days in advance as per the policy. Funeral has a different code and does not come out of the ten parents excused absences.

    b. Ms. Sehgal stated that she was under the impression that a year or two ago we talked about sick days being separate. If students are sick for multiple days, multiple times throughout the school year that eats up parent excused days.

    Ms. Schmidt stated that the doctor's notes supersede all parent absences. If you get a doctor's note for students being absent for an extended period those days will be noted as doctors note and not taken out of parent excused absences.

    c. Mr. McCarver asked – When does showing up late turn into an absence.

    Ms. Schmidt stated that we code tardies and pull them by minutes they are late. This is something that she plans to bring up with the district wide attendance team because we have a lot of kids that are five minutes late. It takes an entire school year to get a full day when you are just five minutes late. We have internal processes if you are late so many times there are consequences. There are also parent meetings. She would like to work as a district team to align what tardies look like. We are seeing more issues with tardies than absences. Unexcused tardies have an automatic consequence but we give a little grace with a few unexcused tardies and resets when the marking period changes. Tardies do have an impact and can result in zeros for classwork.

- Mr. Miller started the discussion about the new cell phone policy
    - Expectations for cell phones at the beginning of this school year are the cell phone use bans.
        - 7:33am to 2:35pm that cell phones are not seen or heard
        - Reminder every morning at 7:33am
            - Turn off
            - Put away
    - Thinks the policy is going very well so far
        - 53 cell phone violations
            - 45 different students
            - Fewer than 10 students have more than one cell phone violation

- Over 1,000 students coming in the building every day and we are on student day 26 and 10 periods in a day – 53 violations is not bad at all.
    - Violations across grades
        - 9th Grade
            - 6 violations
        - 10th Grade
            - 14 violations
        - 11th Grade
            - 14 violations
        - 12th Grade
            - 11 violations
    - Students/Staff Feedback
        - Students appreciate having someone else tell them they do not have to be on their cell phone and respond and react constantly.
        - Staff appreciate that its less of a disruption in the classroom.
- Ms. Schmidt commented that the student reps presented at the school board meeting and will update monthly any feedback on the cell phone policy. It was honest feedback and not all kids loved it. They wished that it was something that could be permitted during lunches and study halls and some students have dove right in and accepted the changes. Think that some students are saying you know what the adults in my life are telling me this is something good for me and I'm going to accept it and move on. New iPads have allowed them to have music as they were worried about not having music with no cell phones. It's nice to see students talking amongst each other at lunches and in the hallways.

- Parent Feedback on Cell Phone Policy
    - Ms. Sehgal
        - It seems fine and I haven't heard any complaints.
            - Ms. Schmidt in response asked if she sees any changes at home.
            - Ms. Sehgal responded with no that he goes right back to his phone the second he is home.
    - Mr. McCarver
        - Mentioned going for a run and seeing students with their faces in their phones.
    - Ms. Mullen
        - Mentioned she did not see a change in her daughter. However, her son is more drawn to devices however he is a freshman and it was a seamless transition so he will never know what he is missing. I think it is wonderful if you really need something email me.
    - Ms. Sehgal
        - Mentioned there is enough they can do on their iPad that it has not been an issue.

- Parent Questions about anything not mentioned today
    - Ms. Mullen – Kblair is that for all things attendance and any last minute changes for trips go directly to him to change.
        - Ms. Schmidt stated that yes just email him on any questions or changes with attendance.
    - Ms. Sehgal -asked if it is the same form that the student needs to get signatures from all teachers.
        - Ms. Schmidt state that no you do not need to get the signatures you just fill out the top and turn it in within the 10 days before the trip.

- Mr. McCarver – asked about making a district school box for the attendance emails vs having it linked to a person.
    - Ms. Schmidt responded yes, we have one, however some parents like a response back so Mr. Blair has both going to his mailbox.

- Ms. Schmidt closed the meeting thanking the parents and school board members for attending.

Meeting dismissed at 8:43 A.M.

Minutes Prepared by: Ashlee McCann, Administrative Assistant to the Athletic Director