

HHS SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES

November 18, 2020 (5 PM) via Zoom

Members in attendance: E. Bienfang (Parent), E. Cavanaugh (Gr. 11), D. Comer (Gr. 12), S. Cyr (Parent), R. Estes (Parent), G. Garland (Faculty), J. Hoguest (Adjustment Counselor), B. Holleran (Staff), L. Jefford (Gr. 11), B. Louchheim (Faculty), M. Melendes (Parent), C. Morley (Community Representative), P. Struzziero (Faculty), K. Sutton (Parent), P. Swanson (Community Representative) & R. Swanson (Principal) - 16 total.

Absent: J. McPhillips (Community Representative) - 1 total.

1 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of our last meeting (October 21, 2020) were approved unanimously.

2 - SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOAL #1 - ACTIVITY & DISCUSSION

Members engaged in a “warm-up activity” to prepare for discussion about School Improvement Goal #1. The results of the activity are included in Appendix A (see below). After re-reading the “Google Doc Activity” completed at the previous meeting, the Council returned to the unfinished “Activity #3” from that meeting. All members completed an unfinished sentence: “To become safer, HHS needs to...” Answers are included in Appendix B. Finally, the group engaged in discussion about the subject. Key points included the following:

- Racism must be addressed explicitly in the curriculum. (KS)
- Adults need to take responsibility for initiating conversations about race and other difficult subjects. (JH)
- HHS needs to evolve and avoid repeating mistakes of the past. (DC)
- Teachers need sustained professional development about how to handle difficult topics such as race and racism in class. (BL)
- Similarly, teachers “need strategies for teaching diversity to those who don’t think they need it.” (GG)
- HHS should stress interdisciplinary approaches to these topics. (P. Swanson)
- Short bursts of “micro-learning” can be powerful when sustained. (KS)
- Innovative approaches to professional development (e.g., with actors) have proven very effective at addressing unconscious biases in the corporate world. (CM)

- Curriculum materials need to be updated, since many texts (e.g., *To Kill a Mockingbird*) have remained staples for generations. (RE)
- The school community should emphasize the importance of people getting to know each other as individuals. (LJ)
- There is a longing for connection, especially now. (GG)
- A genuine feeling of safety requires “trust and connection.” (JH)
- Students must feel heard; perhaps we should provide more ways for students to provide feedback, even through anonymous suggestion boxes. (EB)
- The physical spaces of the building must also evolve to enable more connections between people. (P. Struzziero)
- The implementation of a flex block in the schedule could enable many of the positive changes we hope to see for both staff and students. (BL)
- The recruitment of a more diverse staff will not be easy but we should “go hard” after this goal. (KS)
- Many HHS students have never had a teacher of color at any point in their lives; this is a great disservice to them. (EC)
- The role of coaches must not be overlooked. (P. Swanson)
- HHS should try to establish partnerships with universities and launch an internship program as a way of attracting a more diverse staff.
- The “Coaching for Change” program could provide a useful model for our school. (KS)

3 - UPDATE ON HHS UNITY PROJECT

RS summarized the first two meetings of the fledgling HHS Unity Project (UP), whose work aligns closely with the first School Improvement Goal currently being addressed by the School Council. He shared a Google Form ballot that lists some initial UP proposals and asked Council members to complete the ballot before the next meeting.

4 - UPCOMING MEETINGS

Next HHS School Council meetings: 12/16/20, 1/20/21, 2/24/21, 3/17/21, 4/28/21, 5/19/21, 6/16/21

Appendix A

Warmup Activity

What color is safety?

yellow	purple	black
emerald green	light blue/aqua	blue
light blue	light blue	
pine Green	blue	rainbow
blue	green	

What does safety smell like?

spearmint	pine woods	beach/ocean
coffee brewing	wood fire!	jasmine
vanilla	fresh laundry	lilac
fresh air	a wood fire	flowers
the ocean	apple pie	

What song is on the safety soundtrack?

Imagine	O-o-o Child	One Day
We Are The World	Pocketful of Sunshine	One Love
Rivers and Roads	Lean on Me	Malibu
Beautiful	Put Your Records On	You've Got a Friend
You and Me	Something Good Coming Our Way	

Appendix B

To become safer, HHS needs to...

1	hire a more diverse and professionally developed staff- in order to create a safer environment for the students teachers and administrators must be educated on how best to meet the needs of our students Could not agree with more diverse staff hiring, but training and training that is embedded in our school schedule and for eternity is essential.
2	Very difficult to teach the acceptance of diversity....need real life experiences...cross cultural real time connection to urban schools...
3	evolve and have any offenders participate in a "walk in their shoes" program. It's not easy to take yourself away from your day to day and put yourself in someone else's shoes and their Day to day. (Offenders probably not the right word)
4	More diverse staff/teachers please.
5	More opportunities for students to connect with others like them...affinity groups...
6	Make more of an effort to reach every student in a meaningful way and not just the star students or those who need additional services. The huge middle ground constituting the majority needs more focus so every student feels part of the school community and realizes his or her value in that context. Historically, we do a good job with the top students and have improved our approach to those who have greater needs. Often, the middle gets less focus.
7	Create a 'safe space' in the school for students and teachers to go at any point during the day.
8	Increase diversity school wide, provide more tier 1 supports that all students can access regardless of academic status etc., have more spaces for students and staff to connect like an xblock or advisory
8	become an outlet for students and teachers to express themselves and to give people clarity that they are in a judgment free zone
9	Make sure every student feels accepted and make them feel like they belong.
10	Create an Advisory group that is consistent for all four years-a place in which students and staff get to know one another and are able to better connect.
11	Find ways to honor, recognize and celebrate the diversity we already have while also striving to increase our diversity
12	Support more open dialogue among students and staff regarding how connected/disconnected they feel to the school community
13	More diversity and bias training for current staff

14	Spend some time getting to know one another well, rather than superficially. It's not measurable maybe, but if I knew more of what others were going through, I'd know where I could offer a hand. Silent desperation leads to misery and resentment.
15	Seize the teachable moments about connection and compassion. Perhaps we worry that taking time and energy to address students' social emotional needs will take away from students' academic performances. However, supporting the one may actually enhance the other.
16	maybe a sister school in an urban area that can offer class swaps for diversity understanding.
17	Create a more inclusive environment; do a better job at addressing more avoided topics such as racism in our community YES