

HHS SCHOOL COUNCIL

November 17, 2021 (5 PM) via [Zoom](#)

In attendance: Ayer, Anderson, Hoguet, Knight, Lefort, McPhillips, Rabinovitz, Struzziero, Sutton, P. Swanson, R. Swanson- 11 total.

Absent: Cavanaugh, Davis, Garland, Jefford, Lee, Mathews, Melendes, Pena, Whitlock- 9 total.

1 - INTRODUCTIONS

All members in attendance (10 total) introduced themselves.

R. Swanson gave a brief overview of the minutes from last month's meeting, and all present members gave a quick self introduction. The group then approved the Minutes from our October meeting.

2 - DISCUSSION OF MIDYEAR & FINAL EXAMS

R Swanson explained to the present members of the council that HHS counselors and administrators (including department directors and coordinators) have unanimously recommended reducing the value of midyear and final exams from 10% to 5% of students' year-end grades. The change would represent a response to 1) current levels of stress and anxiety and 2) most students' lack of experience with high-stakes cumulative exams, which have not been administered at HHS since January 2020.

The present members took a vote on this matter, and there was also a unanimous vote to lower the weighted percentage of midyear and final exams. This vote was decided specifically in response to:

1. Observations of stress and anxiety among students
2. The sheer fact that most of our current student body lack experience with high stake exams.

Before we can confirm this change, the administration is planning to solicit input from external stakeholders, i.e, school council, parents of students, and community members.

Dr. Struzziero explained how midyear and final exams looked in the past, "With these exams comes a tremendous investment of time. We dedicate 10 total hours of instructional time to these exams." Benefits include local control for teachers to measure how well students are progressing through their curriculum. These exams also allow departments to come together to help motivate each other while grading and sharing the collective experience.

Members of the group shared their thoughts; with the gap in in-person learning, many students feel unprepared to study and take high stakes exams. Hingham students gain good preparation for college or other secondary education through their exposure to high-stakes exams. However, these exams generate stress and increase students' anxiety.

3 - OVERVIEW OF AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

J. McPhillips visited HHS on November 15th to demonstrate composting on our school's campus. America Recycles Day was also recognized during lunch by the HHS Green Team.

4 - QUESTIONS AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

Q:/ As a parent, they did not feel qualified to vote on lowering the weighted percentage of Midyear and Final exams because they're not educators. How long would this change be made for? This person has no objection about reducing the value, but is unsure about total elimination due to unforeseen challenges. A:/ R. Swanson explained that this change would be implemented for this year, but hopes it will lead to a broader discussion with the community at large.

Q:/ Would this change be a policy that the administration has to make? Or does the HEA need to come to an agreement before proceeding? A:/ It would not need to be bargained as a change in the grading policy. This does not require a school committee vote, but the school administration must consider input from a variety of stakeholders.

Q:/ What impact would it have? A:/ We would expect to see various results per subject.

Q:/ Could we look into changing the exam times? Start time at 10am instead of 8am? A:/ Administration will look into that possibility.

Q:/ When J. McPhillips came in for the teach-in, she did not see the lunch trays. A:/ R. Swanson explained that maintenance staff picks up the trays on Monday mornings and delivers them to the town's transfer station.

5- OTHER GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS

E-Waste Drive? How can we save our town money by disposing of rare metals (e.g., laptops, phones, batteries, etc). Looking to see if we can promote an educational campaign surrounding the topic.

K. Sutton has contacted Laura Burns (light board) re: our hopes to implement solar energy on the HHS campus. In the past, the HHS School Council has envisioned solar panels along the walkway from the far parking lot. We could perhaps contact the MBTA, or whoever owns the solar panels on top of the Hingham Commuter Rail Station near Bare Cove.

If we want to run future School Council meetings in the Zoom webinar format as an additional security measure, Sherry Robertson could probably help us.

6 - ACTION STEPS

- Dr. Struzziero will contact the Northfield Mount Herman School to see if we can make a visit to learn more about their sustainability measures.

7 - UPCOMING MEETINGS

Next HHS School Council meetings: 12/15, 1/19, 2/16, 3/16, 4/27, 5/18, 6/15

Environmental Stewardship at HHS

School Council Worksheet - October 20, 2021

Did you know HHS lists “Environmental Stewardship” as a Core Value?

Yes	yes	Yes		Yes.
Yes, and we should start a SCHOOL FARM.**	yes	yes	yes	yes
No	yes			

On a scale of 1-10, I would rate HHS as a ____ for its commitment to environmental stewardship.

We are an 8, and we will be a 10 after we start a SCHOOL FARM.	5/10 but only because I don't know everything (feel like this could change as I learn more)	I would rate the school as a 7 for environmental stewardship.	I think we are an 8, many make it a primary concern-but more to do	7/10
I'd say we're a 7		5	Despite the Green Ribbon Status, there is more that can be done so I'll give it an 8 / 10	7
Don't know enough yet to rate!	7/10			

What is best about our school's environmental practices?

START A SCHOOL FARM. We compost well, but our recycling is inconsistent. We use a lot less paper now than we once did.	In the cafe we do not throw away the trays and kids recycle their recyclable items most of the time. When athletic teams volunteer at lunch to promote a green school.	Kids are really champions of it and invested- recycling, green team does alot to educate and keep students involved	There are some solar panels by the side of the cafeteria. (?)
Emphasis on individual recycling/composting in the caff	Composting, invested green team, fun competitions that get kids excited. Would like to see better communication outside of the school about all	More engagement and commitment and spread of this environmental stewardship ethos to the parents in the community for	I love that “slash the trash” has become such an ingrained tradition at the high school.

	the students are doing.	behavior change - re-starting composting at the school if it hasn't been done already and at home, eliminating plastic water bottles from the school and the town, and solar panels at the school!	
The buy-in from many students, though I wish it was more universal.			

What aspect of our school's environmental practices is most deficient?

We are deficient because we haven't built a SCHOOL FARM. And we are inconsistent with recycling.	The energy use and not having any renewable energy.	I second the school farm:) growing more of our food would be great oo, as well as solar panels and using green spaces more	Outside of very specific places, there are not very many places to recycle.
Staff have no place to recycle stuff near them, like plastic used in lunch items or cardboard. Also, the heating system's inefficiencies must waste a ton of energy.	Lack of renewable energy; we should have solar on the campus.	I still see tons of single use drink bottles overflowing our bins at sports. We should just ban them.	Renewable energy. Get a solar array over the parking lot
There are not enough generalized recycling areas around school. The small blue buckets in the classrooms always get a miscellaneous variation of recyclables	Single use bottles (though this may have increased in last year with covid); more green space for use		

How can we get better?

We can get some source of renewable energy.	Introducing solar panels. +1	Solar panels, ban plastic bottles	Consider short term solutions like recycling bins along with long term plans with renewable energy.
WE SHOULD START A SCHOOL FARM RIGHT	I've loved the idea of solar panels; eliminate		Solar panels would be incredible! Maybe

NOW. BUY A GOAT, and GO! And we should recycle more consistently.	the single use bottles wherever possible. Possibly new programming for environmental/Green Week		promote Green Team and their message a bit further by adding their crew to assemblies
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Notes from discussion

- Q: Are we composting still? / A: Yes, we are sending compost out to the bins each day
- Q: What goes into becoming a Green Ribbon School / A very extensive application on behalf of the school that show how our school's community strives for appropriate curriculum, updated science education, promoting environmental preservation in student body, and demonstrating growth in terms of water preservation by purchasing hydration stations, and an increase in recycling percentages rather than allowing a high percentage of straight trash.
- Q: Single use water bottles through the school's food service? / A: Due to COVID-related restrictions, people didn't have full access to hydration stations during the past two years, so that issue was sort of inevitable, unfortunately, but the plan is to put this issue back into focus and reduce the prevalence of single-use water bottles.
- Q: Solar panels? / A: K. Sutton will contact Laura Burns about our collective hope to implement solar panels on our campus.
- Q: How can we educate and re-educate about statistics surrounding the use of plastic bottles? / A: Possible usage of video content (e.g., "The Story of Plastic") to provide education to parents and in households. The sale of water bottles in the cafeteria contributes to the school's revenue, so we may need to find a way to balance this issue in next year's budget. M. Ayer explained that "it's not a budget maker" but was tabled previously by the School Committee because of safety regulations related to the pandemic.
- -Q: How could we implement giving the kids reusable bottles? / A: Incentives and promoting a positive school atmosphere! Distribution of raffle tickets during lunch for students with reusable bottles or lunch bags; the "greenest table" gets lunch delivered

"Call to Action" Steps:

- Restoring past "Green Team" promotions in the cafeteria during lunch
- Promoting the school's grow towers
- Push the remaining fall sports teams to sign up for the "Slash the Trash" competition
- Do more messaging around single used water bottles, primarily with student voices
- Celebrate America Recycles Day on Nov. 15th
- Explore the establishment of a school farm