

HHS SCHOOL COUNCIL

December 20, 2023 (5 PM) in the HHS library and via Zoom

ATTENDANCE

Council members present: L. Accettella, G. Blidner, G. LaFond, J. Lee, A. Lefort, K. Manning, S. O'Horo, K. Sutton, R. Swanson, A. Varholak, and I. Whitlock (11 total).

Also present: M. Ayer (School Committee liaison).

Absent: R. Besser, G. Garland, J. Mathews, and P. Swanson (4 total).

1 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were approved unanimously.

2 - COMMUNITY SERVICE PROPOSAL (SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOAL #2)

Discussion re: SIP Goal #2 included the following points:

Students Facing Hardships:

- We should consider accommodations for students experiencing hardships that might prevent them from completing community service.
- Explore the option of allowing students in such circumstances to either opt out or fulfill a reduced number of service hours.
- Request for Waiver: Mr. Swanson expressed comfort in approving waivers; we should establish a formal process for students to appeal for waivers, perhaps even at the onset of their sophomore year.

Policy Scope and Rules:

- Proposal: Jasper suggests a broader policy framework, necessitating an examination of the rules that align with the proposed changes.
- Action: Engage in discussions with guidance counselors to provide clarity on policy details and its alignment with existing rules.

Implementation Strategies:

- Suggested 10-hour Minimum: Consider instituting a minimum service hour requirement.

- Encourage guidance counselors to categorize service hours and facilitate efficient tracking.
- Schedule a meeting with guidance counselors to discuss and remind students of the community service requirement, especially focusing on feasible ways to meet the obligation promptly.

Communication and Promotion:

- Promotion Efforts: Coordinate efforts with the Class of 2027 president to promote the finalized policy post-break.
- Outreach: Undertake an email campaign to generate interest and provide detailed information to attract student participation.
- Handbook and Program of Studies: Ensure inclusion of a concise description in the Student Handbook and detailed information in the program of studies.

Timeline and Formal Submission:

- Submission to School Committee: Submit the proposal to the School Committee a week in advance of the meeting.
- Ideal Timeline: Aim to have the comprehensive packet ready by January 4th for the School Committee's review.

Orientation and Parental Awareness:

- Mr. Swanson to mention the community service requirement during Eighth Grade Parents' Night, Move-Up Day, and Ninth Grade Orientation.
- Parental Communication: Utilize school newsletters to inform parents of incoming freshmen about the impending changes.

Student Council Hours and Representation:

- Utilization of Hours: Recognize Student Council participation as fulfilling a portion of the mandated service hours.
- Representative Inclusion: Consider involving a student representative, such as Alex Doggett, to share insights on their community service experiences.

Financial Considerations:

- Grant Opportunities: Investigate potential grants, such as the HEF Grant (\$2,500/\$5,000), with an eye on securing funding to support the program.
- If the proposed changes do not align with the school budget, explore the possibility of volunteer support to meet the grant requirements.

Accountability Measures:

- School Counselor Involvement: Collaborate with HHS counselors to incorporate a tracking form for students to confirm their completed community service hours.
- Support for Struggling Students: Task counselors with reaching out to students facing difficulties in meeting their community service obligations.

3 - UPCOMING MEETINGS

Next HHS School Council meetings: 1/17, 2/28, 3/20, 4/24, 5/15, and 6/12

4 - ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.