

Parkland Community Advisory Council

October 15, 2009

CO-PRESIDENTS

Nicole Mandry
David Hein

VICE PRESIDENT/MEMBERSHIP

Deb Martin

SECRETARY

Melissa Maggioncalda

ATTENDEES : Nicole Mandry, Lisa Adams, David Hein, Stephanie Hodges, Ann Segan, Ismail Kashkoush, Deb Martin, Melissa Grube, Shital Rane, Cheyo Appel, Linda Perlman-McKenna.

GUESTS : Brian Hodges, Nina Weiss (substitute for Melody Terrano), Lisa Haydurek, Daniel Spiegel, Carol Facchiano, Tonya Bruder, Tara Imdorf, Debra Miller.

ABSENT/EXCUSED: Melody Terrano, Mark Hanichak, Bob Fager, Cheryl Smith, Melissa Maggioncalda.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Tyler Coulton and Eugenia Kim

SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Roberta Marcus—excused

ADMINISTRATION: Richard Sniscak-Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Donohue, Superintendent—excused

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by David Hein at 7:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve the minutes from May 14, 2009 was made by Ann Segan, and seconded by Ben Gullledge.

PRESENTATION: Update on Class Rank Committee

Dr. Debra Miller

Mr. Richard Sniscak

Dr. Miller, PSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction, began the presentation by explaining the background of the examination of class rank in the Parkland School District. Since 1997, this topic has been brought forward and then shelved numerous times due to the emotional nature of debate.

Surveys conducted during last year's PSD 2008-2014 Strategic Plan research, however, identified class rank as a leading area of concern for students, parents, faculty and administrators. From this came the Strategic Plan goal to "Investigate the alternative(s) to the current practice of reporting individual class rank." Next, a Class Rank Committee was formed. Students, parents, teachers, administration and the school board were all represented in the group that met several times last year to discuss the current class rank system and examine alternatives.

Dr. Miller explained the current class rank system to the group, and explained how our district's demographics (large size and high-achieving student body) impact class rank, and presented both the benefits and disadvantages of reporting class rank. She highlighted research done by PHS guidance counselors Eric Roberts and Donna Pilgert on current practices of a variety of comparable high schools and the admission practices from selected universities in regard to reporting of class rank.

Mr. Sniscak, Assistant Superintendent, next explained the class rank recommendations and implementation plans that have been developed. He shared that the Class Rank Committee reached consensus on some issues, but not all.

Phase 1 of the class rank overhaul includes the following: The recommendation to the PSD board, approved at the July 2009 meeting, was to eliminate the public reporting of class rank starting with the Class of 2013. Students in the Classes of 2010, 2011 and 2012 have the option of reporting or not reporting class rank on their transcripts. The top 2-3% of the graduating class will be acknowledged at commencement. With class rank no longer being reported, the district will be sending out a newly-improved Parkland school profile to colleges to accompany the student transcript. A new K-12 "Power of the Transcript" initiative has been launched to educate students and parents on the importance of a balanced, well-rounded transcript for college admission. Another change will be the development of a three-tiered quality point system to replace the current two-tiered weighted grade system.

Phase 2 will include evaluation of any unintended consequences of the class rank elimination and the "Power of the Transcript" initiative, and continuing to improve and eliminate any loopholes in the GPA/class rank system, and further work on calculation of GPA.

There was healthy discussion and debate by members of the group on the following points:

- Will students be penalized by universities by not reporting a class rank?
- Will the changes encourage/reward students for being well-rounded (taking non-weighted classes, participating in the arts)?
- Does eliminating class rank fix the problem of hyper-competition and "working the system"/finding loop-holes if we have not yet revised how GPA is calculated? (Have we put the cart before the horse?)
- GPA calculation is still an issue that needs to be addressed.
- We should maintain level of achievement even as we encourage students to be well-rounded.
- High achieving students should still be appropriately recognized.

MOTION TO EXTEND MEETING: A motion to extend the meeting past 8:30 was made by Stephanie Hodges and seconded by Cheyo Appel.

STUDENT REPORT: S. Tyler Coulton—Class of 2010, Eugenia Kim—Class of 2011

- Tyler introduced Eugenia Kim, the new junior student representative to the CAC.
- The fall athletics season is underway, with the following teams in season:
 - Girls Varsity and JV Tennis;
 - Girls and Boys Varsity Cross Country;
 - Coed Varsity Golf;
 - Girls Varsity and JV Volleyball;
 - Girls Varsity and JV Field Hockey;
 - Boys Varsity and JV Football;
 - Boys Varsity and JV Soccer;
 - Girls Varsity and JV Cheerleading.
- On 9/25, the school hosted its extracurricular student involvement fair, which highlights different clubs and activities available for students.
- On 9/26, the Dance Team hosted the Freshmen Dance for the class of 2013.
- On 9/26, the Music Department welcomed participants from area schools at the annual County Chorus Concert.
- The Anthony Severo 5K Run took place on 9/27.
- The Math Honor Society accepted applications from students until 10/2.
- The National Honor Society also accepted applications from prospective students of the class of 2011 until 10/6.
- On 10/7, the German Honor Society hosted its inductions ceremony.
- The Music Department presented its first annual “Night at the Opera” concert on 10/7.
- Shirt Off Your Back Night took place with students and their teachers at the home football game on 10/9.
- The Orchestra’s Strolling Strings ensemble had its first performance at the PHS Bus Driver’s Banquet on 10/10.
- The Debate Team held tryouts during the week of 10/5. The team held its first practices on 10/15, and 10/16.
- The Scholastic Scrimmage season began with the QuizNet online tournament. The team will host the LVIAC Fall League Tournament on Mondays starting 10/19.
- The week of 10/13 – 10/18 is Homecoming week at the high school:
 - The events began with the girls’ Garter Bowl game on 10/14 at 6:00 PM, where Homecoming Court was also announced.
 - Clubs building floats for homecoming will construct them on 10/16 at Orefield Middle School during the school day.
 - The homecoming parade and football game will take place on 10/16 at 7:00.
 - The homecoming dance will take place on 10/17 at 9:00 at the high school. There, the homecoming King and Queen will be crowned.
 - This year’s Homecoming theme is “Come Home to a Good Book,” and all proceeds benefit the local Cops ‘n’ Kids Literacy Program. The school’s National Honor Society is hosting a book drive in conjunction with the student council to reach a goal of nearly 6,000 books to benefit schools in the Allentown School District.
 - The school is also hosting spirit week, and encouraging students to dress with Parkland Pride on 10/17.
- On 10/15, an informational meeting will be held for students interested in attending the EF Educational Tour: World War II and the Western Front trip to take place next year.

- The PSAT will be hosted at the high school on 10/17; registration took place for juniors on the week of 10/5.
- The Girls Tennis Team was named the LVIAC champion; they will participate in more matches during the week of 10/19.
- The Music Department will host District Chorus Auditions after school on 10/19.
- Students of the class of 2010 are busy completing their college applications, early decision / early action applications are due around 11/1, while most regular decision applications are due around 1/1.

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT: Roberta Marcus

Rich Sniscak, filling in for Roberta Marcus, presented the School Board update on redistricting:

The Jaindl School is expected to be completed at the end of June. The goal is for all elementary schools in the district to have a population of 450-500 students. Letters have gone out to 723 families who will be reassigned to new schools. 450 students will be reassigned to the Jaindl School, and others will be reassigned to achieve parity in student populations. The district is offering to “Grandfather” families with older students in 3rd and 4th grade to allow them to finish elementary grades in their present school. This means a double run of busses in certain neighborhoods for 2 years, but makes a more family-friendly transition.

In the next phase, a professional survey will go out to all K-12 staff in the district to elicit requests in assignment change. The last time this was done was in 1999. The district is striving for equity in staffing, and positive culture and climate throughout the district. In January the Jaindl principal position will be posted, with an anticipated start date for the new principal, secretary, and custodian in April.

OLD BUSINESS: All members were asked to check their contact information and send any corrections to Deb Martin.

NEW BUSINESS: none

ROUNDTABLE:

Discussion took place around the room with several members expressing appreciation for the presentation, the discussion and debate, and the opportunity to learn. Mr. Sniscak commended Dr. Miller for her outstanding service to the district and wished her well in her retirement from Parkland.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: At approximately 8:55 David Hein called for a motion to adjourn. Ben Gulledge moved, with Stephanie Frank seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Mandry, Co-President