

# Hastings High School PTSA Parent Meeting

## **MINUTES**

### **JANUARY 13, 2020 - PTSA PARENT MEETING**

#### **Midyear Exams:**

Lou addressed the concern of some parents of freshmen about having two midterms, in math and science, on the same day. He explained that it was unavoidable because trying to change the dates created more scheduling problems.

He went on to say that he would prefer to do away with midterms, but some teachers, especially in classes with end-of-term Regents or AP exams, see the midterms as good preparation and useful to gauge student progress. Lou said he would prefer to have school that week, and that there are other ways to assess students other than midterms. "We can be more creative with that January testing period." Nothing has been decided for the future, and he noted that the number of midterms has already been reduced.

#### **Ranking/Deciles:**

The administration has been discussing eliminating ranking of students and deciles. Colleges are moving away from asking for students' class ranks, Lou noted, and most Westchester and Rockland County schools have eliminated them. By next year "we probably won't be ranking," he noted.

#### **Student and Parent Surveys:**

The administration is still unpacking the results of a Climate Survey given to students last month. Lou found the results "shocking to say the least," because he expected the students to be more "connected to the school."

The school is still awaiting the data from the parent survey done by Challenge Success.

#### **Late Start Update:**

Lou is still hoping that a pilot of a later start of the school day will be held in March or April. Information requested by the Board of Education is still being gathered. He has polled other districts in Westchester, many of which are likewise considering a later start time, and some, like Scarsdale, are putting it into effect.

**Scheduling Process:**

Students will be taken out of a gym class early in the third quarter to sit down with their guidance counselor and discuss classes for next year. Parents are asked to look at the portal in May and review their child's choice of classes. The school will build the master schedule at the end of April or early May. If there are conflicts between classes a child has chosen, they will be called in to guidance in June to resolve them. Lou explained the challenge of accommodating students who wish to take several classes that are only offered in one period. Seniors get priority in their class selections. The student class schedules will be sent out in mid-August; appointments can then be scheduled with guidance counselors to make any needed adjustments.

**Southern Westchester BOCES:**

Lou offered an overview of career-oriented BOCES classes that are open to HHS juniors. Students attend half-day programs in either the morning or afternoon; they are bused to the BOCES campus in Valhalla. The offerings are mostly two-year programs, in areas such as animal science, automotive technology, commercial arts, culinary arts, EMS, fashion design and TV video production. BOCES is "an excellent resource," Lou said, and many students who attend its courses go on to college. Interested students should talk to their guidance counselor and arrange a visit.

**Vaccinations:**

Every student in the school has met the New York State requirements for vaccinations. One middle school and one high school student got pertussis despite having been vaccinated.

**Chris Herren Presentation:**

The student assembly on substance abuse and addiction was one of the most powerful and intense held at HHS and evoked strong and varied reactions from the students, Lou reported. Many discussions between students and staff members followed the assembly.

**PTSA Announcements:**

Donations for the Used Book Fair in March are being accepted at Hillside during the month of February, leading up to the February 29 Big Sort. Lots of volunteers, parents and students, are needed that day to organize the donations. Food will be served, and volunteers will be rewarded with a book of their choice.

**SEPTA Announcements:**

An information session on IEPs will be held on Tuesday, January 28, at 7 p.m. in the library. SEPTA will hold a trivia night on Saturday, February 8.