

Parent Connection Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2008

Topics: Political Action Workshop and Counseling Department

Guests: Colleen Works, Danny Finnen and Suzanne Dalton

The Parent Connection (PC) officers are turning over a few positions for the 2008/09 school year and would like to invite CHS Parents to consider becoming involved. We are rapidly moving into our planning stages for next year and would like to include next year's officers in the discussions. Please let Carrie Thompson know of your interest at csthompson@peak.org by April 21st.

Chairperson (or co-chairs): facilitate meetings, meet with principal prior to meeting, finalize agenda, mostly delegate

Secretary: take minutes of meetings, submit to listserv and attend PC planning meetings

Treasurer: majority of effort involved in the fall when depositing PC sponsorship checks, 3-4 bills a month, track finances, attend PC planning meetings

District Meeting Liaison: attend district meetings, 2 hrs., once a month (currently Thursday mornings) and report information as useful

Staff Appreciation Luncheon Coordinator: Organize and coordinate monthly luncheons, training available (or consider apprenticing for next year)

CHS Parents Listserv Moderator: Requires access to internet connection, commits to checking for messages at least every 48 hours (more often is preferred), if message fits established guidelines submits message to listserv. If a message is rejecting for posting, appeals can be made to Sherry Faller makes the final decision.

Two of the current officers are leaving next year and the remaining four are willing to change their current assignments to best make room for you to join! If you have questions about a job, you may contact the current officers at:

Chairperson - Carrie Thompson csthompson@peak.org

Secretary - Carol Hennessy chenness@peak.org

Treasurer - Mary Jo Chapman chapmak8090@gmail.com

District Meeting Liaison - Signe Danler signe@danler.net

Staff Appreciation Luncheon Coordinator - Pat Collier pacollier1@comcast.net

Listsers Moderator - Alesia Duncombe alesia.duncombe@gmail.com

Treasurer report: Mary Jo Chapman

Sally Boyer has completed translating '08 – '09 CHS Catalog and Parent Student Handbook. She is continuing to translate the monthly school newsletter and adding

translation of PC and Site Council minutes. Parent Connection is funding the translation costs. In addition PC is financially supporting Gretchen Cuevas's ongoing efforts to create a master school calendar.

CHS Parents Listserv Moderator: Alesia Duncombe

The listserv will be moved onto the district listserv this summer, and then tech support will be available.

Principal's Report: Suzanne Dalton

- Tried a different parent teacher schedule this spring, which included only one evening and Friday morning. We had a higher turnout last fall but that may be due to other reasons than scheduling.
- Staff loves the meal PC provides on the evening of parent teacher conferences.
- Mr. Spartan event 2 weeks from this Sat., please mark your calendar. Mr. Spartan recently hosted a 3 hrs. talent show. It was a very fun evening.
- Next year Jane Kiekel will return as Leadership teacher.
- Steve Gardner, CHS alum, created gorgeous ceramic artwork at CHS. Hope to have posters of his work available for sale as school benefit. Suggestion: make into greeting cards.

Q: Why was registration date set prior to parent teacher conferences? CV collected registration after parent teacher conferences.

A: Suzanne: Counseling department announced due date. Hopefully that can be changed for next year. (The district sets the calendar, which determines when parent teacher conferences are.)

Guest speaker: Colleen Works, teacher of AP U.S. history, Sociology, Government, Honors Government, Political Action Workshop (PAW), facilitator of Site Council and lead mentor teacher at CHS. She was invited to speak about her class, new this year, Political Action Workshop. If she had time it was requested she also speak about Sociology.

Political Action Workshop has only one section with over 40 students. Class wasn't advertised, students signed up by word of mouth or because previously taken class with Ms. Works.

PAW history: A few years ago Ms. Works had a student in government who learned about the situation in Sudan and Darfur (prior to making national news). It was April/May during the student's senior year and she felt so motivated to make a difference She considered requesting the Avalon Theater to donate a night to raise funds.

- It was unfortunate there wasn't the time to be able to take on the project. Students tend to have packed schedules and busy lives outside of school.
- Junior and senior students begin to see themselves as citizens within a broader context and feel motivated to make a positive contribution.
- PAW is an opportunity to have class time to focus on a project of the student's choosing and interest.
 - What does it mean to be an active citizen?

- How to set up a time line?
- Key people to talk with?
- Examples: Literacy project, students started a letter writing campaign with elementary school students.
 - Project working to get recycle bins downtown
 - Project working to get businesses to use alternative to styrofoam
 - Project working with middle school students on body images and prevention of eating disorders
 - Project increasing gardening within CHS and Corvallis
 - Project working to bring influential speakers into CHS during lunch time
- Class is still evolving. Students keep journals and are encouraged to learn from “road blocks”. It’s a dynamic group of students and exciting class.

Q: Is the class year long?

A: It would be more effective as a year long class but at this point it is only 1 semester.

PC Suggested topics: recycling for batteries and how to use less energy to operate our school.

Sociology: Study of how individuals interact with society and how society interacts with individuals.

- First part of class is theoretical. Second part involves a group project and then third part an individual project.
- Study impact of socialization, gender issues, impact of career changes, divorces, roles. Inherently fascinating subject.
- Example of recent group project: Students placed signs blocking off doors on CHS 2nd floor. Then students sat on other side of doors and kept a log counting how many students of which gender ignored the signs and went through the doors. One gender went through twice as often as the other gender.
- Sociology tries to make you aware of how you see the world. We’ve all been carefully socialized to see the world in the ways that we do.

Government: We study a lot of current issues, ballot measures; we had the opportunity to study all the presidential candidates before any dropped the race. We study issues in the U.S. and world issues that impact the U.S. It is fascinating watching your government at work.

- Example of an assignment: Write a 2-page essay about a key issue of importance to you. Describe in detail how you would propose to solve this issue. At the end of the class we email student papers to the appropriate people.
- There is no state requirement that students take Civics or Government. It is a Corvallis requirement. Only 1 credit, single semester class; classes meet every other day plus Friday

Q: What is the difference between AP and Honors?

A: CV has AP Government. It is a year long class. AP tends to have lots of definitions and facts. I prefer teaching Honors because it is more about grappling with the issues of government. I think it is more stimulating.

Guest: Danny Finnen, Counseling Office

Overview: Registration leads to forecasting where each dept. looks at the needs (within the allotted teacher time they have available) and decides which teacher will teach which class.

- Summer: use computer program to build schedules
- 7 days prior to fall registration (August 15-22nd) counselors and registrar return to personally examine schedules and fill in the gaps.
 - Attempt to balance the student workload as much as possible.
 - Attempt to balance off blocks 1 each term.
- During the first couple weeks of fall term we try to make adjustments. As soon as the student sees a problem with their schedule is the time to make an appointment.
 - After 1st week students can no longer add classes
 - After 3rd week can no longer drop without penalty of receiving a grade
 - Seeing 40 students/day equals approx. 7.5 minutes per student
- More flexibility to address scheduling concerns for second semester classes.
- Oct. – Dec. try to meet with seniors to make final check that they have all the necessary classes to graduate. We talk with them about their plans after high school and write college recommendations.
- Throughout the year after grading periods we try to intervene with students who are struggling.
- Mid Jan. – Feb. we try to meet with freshmen and sophomores.
- We've recently spent 5 full days assisting 8th graders with registering for next year.
- April – May we try to focus on juniors to prepare them as to what will be happening their senior year.
- Currently each counselor is assigned to 468 students
 - Ideally 250 per counselor
 - District requested we add .5 counselor for next year
 - Next year will have 370 students per counselor
- Stacy Hull relocated to Maryland April 4th
 - Currently Diana Mortlock is replacing her 3 days a week in a temporary capacity
 - Diana has worked here before and is fitting in well.

Q: How will students be reassigned next year?

A: We try to keep as many as possible with same counselor. We assign based on alphabet and numbers.

Q: When do students meet with you? Do they need to make an appointment?

A: Goal is to meet with everyone at least once a year. However if you do the math you can see we don't have the opportunity to do that. The students that request help are the ones who receive it.

Q: How do students get the information as to when to take the PSAT, SAT, ACT, etc.?

A: They take the SAT their junior year. New for next year we will offer the PSAT to all sophomores.

Q: Is Beyond CHS (BCHS) part of the counseling dept.?

A: Yes. That is where students research colleges, can get details about testing, College Now. etc.

Q: Is there anything written down so students and parents can understand where to go for information between advisor, counselor and BCHS.

A: Suzanne: It is one of our goals to have a clear visual to explain all three.

Danny:

- Advisor is for broad general plan. Resume, job shadowing, planning skills, making 4-year plan.
- Counselor is fine-tuning for specific individual needs. Changing classes only occurs through the counseling office. All students receive a college recommendation written by their school counselor.
- BCHS is for information about colleges, testing, scholarships, and College Now.

Q: When is the final decision made as to which classes are offered for the fall?

A: You will know when you receive the student's schedule in August.

Q: Are AP classes more definition oriented? How does a student know whether to sign up for AP or Honors classes?

A: Suzanne: There is a test to take at the end. Some components of the class are geared to the test. It depends on the subject matter and what the test is like. An AP class is more normed and standardized.

Danny: The decision to take Honors or AP classes is optimally based upon work ethic rather than capability. The students who succeed are hard workers.

Q: When you spoke of meeting with freshmen and sophomores, is that counselor initiated?

A: Theoretically yes, practically no. We have too few counselors for too many students. It is not possible.

Parent: In our four years we found there were others within CHS who were able to meet my son's needs. There are many checks and balances. When he needed help he was able to receive it from his advisor or teachers with whom he felt connected. His needs were met.

Q: How can the counselor write a recommendation for a student she doesn't know?

A: I sit down and have a conversation with the student. BCHS has a packet with an activity sheet and essay questions for the students to fill out. The student chooses 3 different teachers to give a rating form. The counselor compiles information from the student and 3 teachers to write their recommendation. My goal is always to write the recommendation that will make the difference for that student.

Q: Why is the counseling office physically so small?

A: At most schools the counseling office doesn't tend to be the warm, open and inviting place we have here at CHS. Many students stop by for brief contact. Linda Keller and Cindy Gullledge in the health room create a very welcoming atmosphere.

Meeting ended at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Hennessy
Secretary