

Parent Connection Meeting

October 21, 2008

7 p.m., 3rd Tuesday of the month

Alesia Duncombe, co-chair, opened the meeting with a brief reminder that the purpose of Parent Connection is to foster communication within CHS.

- Encourage people to access the new master calendar through the Corvallis High School website
 - Calendar lists essential school information, visit dates for college representatives, school concerts, link to athletics, dances, etc.
 - Permits people scheduling meetings to check on other school events to avoid conflicts
 - Will grow over time, goal is to add all school activities [contact Gretchen to contribute to our CHS information database Gretchen.Cuevas@corvallis.k12.or.us]
- Notice new display TV in the foyer
 - Intent is to display daily announcements (previous school-wide speaker system was disruptive and difficult to understand)
 - Additionally provides opportunity for visual display of school interviews and projects
 - Useful tool for communication funded by Parent Connection

Next Meeting: Donna Keim, Career Education Specialist, November 18th, noon

- Donna will explain the Career Information System (CIS)
- Parents will have an opportunity for hands on experience in the computer lab

Treasurer Report: Mary Ellen Brown

- Sponsor checks deposited, \$3,800
- E-script deposits approximately \$120/mo.
- Have funded the purchase of new teacher nameplates
- Funded staff appreciation luncheon and gifts from last year

Staff Appreciation Luncheons: Pat Collier

- Will send out an email requesting potluck assistance for upcoming parent/teacher conferences
- Next month senior sponsored luncheon
- Last month pizza, salad, brownies.
- We have 130 staff. It is wonderful giving them a chance to converse with each other, or pick up a quick meal and go back to their rooms. They appreciate it a great deal.

District Office Liaison: Shawna Molitar

- Meetings occur once a month with PTO, PTA leaders and district administration
- Dawn Tarzain addressed the concern as to why staff and principals are moved around so much? She said it is to find the best long-term fit.

Site Council Representative: Jan Zajicek

- Meetings are once a month for 1 – 1.5 hrs.
- Intention is to have 3 parents and 3 teachers, Linda Keller and CHS principal sit on Site Council.
 - One parent and one teacher recently resigned and need to be replaced. (If interested in serving please contact Jan.)
 - Intend to stagger appointment terms
- Discuss topics such as “school climate”, school report card, meeting state requirements in math, etc.

Principal Report: Dawn Granger

- Master School Calendar: goal for future that it will be interactive/internet based. Important tool for communication between parents, staff and students
- Budget: Can't start too early thinking about next year's budget
 - Budget needs to be driven by priorities and goals; personal preference for small class sizes. Also try to provide support staff to help teachers meet students' needs.
 - Money comes from 3 different sources:
 1. General fund: state tax dollars appear fairly stable for next year
 2. SIF, School Improvement Funds: currently paying for 2 English teachers (shortfall in staffing money will be about \$155,000)
Funded through the legislature and with the current economy this is not expected to be funded for next year.
 3. Local Option Levy: major impact. Funds 4 teachers and variety of other things, previously 37-38 students in core classes, now 26-27
 - Budget proposal due to district office March 20th
Have time to gather input from wide variety of sources
Some expenses are non-negotiable, such as teacher's salaries
Leaves about \$100,000 from which to make choices

Q: How did things change since the former principal's budget report last year?

A: Suzanne made a number of cuts and by the time Dawn Granger arrived as new principal there was some money available.

- Was able to hire Gretchen Cuevas as support for the 2 assistant principals, works in front office, handling the master calendar
- Re-hired Monica Schlechter, ELL Family Coordinator
- Hired Chad Morrow to assist with behavior support (attendance)
We now have 2 full-time behavior support specialists (CV has had 2 with fewer students for awhile.)
- Previously cut Science E.A., would like to hire an hourly person to keep track of science chemicals and help set up labs for students.

Enrollment also impacts budget, we are gaining enrollment over projections. Must increase by a certain % for money to increase, we expect our student money to remain about the same for next year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

- Goal is maximum participation and we want them to be meaningful for parents. Input is welcome.
- Ready for a change, teachers and school board are wondering about effectiveness
- Pinnacle is now available for parents and students to monitor online grades, assignments, and eventually attendance
- About 30% parent participation, often the parents the teachers really need to connect with don't come. Wondering if it is the time offered? the 10 min. time limit? the arena situation making people uncomfortable?

Q: As an office volunteer I phoned specific parents, per teacher request, to encourage them to come. Do we have data to show it made a difference?

A: Sherry keeps track of that data. I think it was a good idea.

Parent: Two of the teachers I requested conferences with already had full schedules.

A: AP & honors teachers tend to fill up. 12 hours of conference time are mandated. We chose to have 2 evening times to attempt to make them most accessible.

Attendance: School wide goal is 94% so far we are meeting it! Seniors, at this time, have a slightly higher attendance rate. Last year the overall average was 89.7%

Grants received from district:

- Brian Wake for greenhouse
- Donna Keim for career related field trips
- Robotics team received \$600

Guest speaker: Nancy Schaffer with beyond CHS (BCHS)

Parents are always, always welcome to come into BCHS.

College Now program

- When students take certain classes at CHS they can simultaneously receive college credit.
- April registration for next year, check CHS catalog for the words "LBCC credit option"
- Example: College Algebra Trig. can waive math 111 & 112 at OSU
- One time \$25 fee, applications available in BCHS and from teachers. Student fills out form and parent writes check
- Can fill out the form anytime, will receive a postcard with ID#. Must give the ID# to the teacher.
- Can receive College Now credit and still elect to take AP test
 - A junior doesn't know which college he/she will be attending. Some colleges accept College Now credits, some accept AP credits, some accept both, some accept neither.

- If a student knew for certain he or she would be attending OSU it would be unnecessary to take the AP exam.
- AP exams, cost \$ per exam, scores range 1-5, must earn 3 or above to earn college credits. Granting of credits and number of credits varies by college.

PSAT [many students took the test last Oct. 15th here at CHS]

- An opportunity for those who take it to get a sense of what the SAT will be like and experience the formal environment of a nationally standardized test. Students needed to bring their IDs, calculators, were separated from their cell phones etc.
- It is also a test that gives very high scoring juniors the opportunity to qualify for the National Merit Scholar program. This year we had 8 seniors who made semi-finalist as a result of scoring in the 99% range (of Oregon test takers) last year as juniors. They will continue through the process to most likely achieve finalist status later in the year.
- I always make a special effort to encourage those with high GPAs (grade point averages) to take the PSAT as juniors.
- This year the state mandated testing for all sophomores. Many sophomores haven't learned the math necessary for the PSAT. Taking the test as a sophomore is just a test of skills. Next year I will seek out the high scorers to make certain they take the PSAT as a junior.
- During PSAT testing day the freshman class went to OSU to see what a college campus was like.
- Seniors (and juniors who didn't sign up for the test) were invited to visit LBCC. Food was provided and those who went enjoyed themselves. A senior who is a National Merit Scholar was impressed; she commented she wished she'd known what was available at LBCC. There were services she could have taken advantage of.

College entrance testing offered this year at CHS:

- ACT (Feb. and April) and SAT (March and June)
- Must register online. Hope our students will take advantage of this opportunity and register early. Last year students needed to commute to Eugene or Salem. Students from Monroe, Lebanon, Albany etc. will find CHS a convenient site.
- First come, first serve. CHS students have no priority.

SAT Subject Tests (formerly known as SAT IIs)

- Some colleges require 2 of these tests as proof of knowledge in a subject area
 - Take the test as soon as the student finishes the class. Some students take Pre-Calculus in their sophomore year, which correlates with Math II. Parents sign up for the Subject Tests online, collegeboard.com
 - Tests are given on the same day as the SAT reasoning test. Not available at the CHS site. Can take up to 3 Subject Tests in a day but not at the same time as the traditional SAT.

- For example: suggest taking the Subject Tests after Chemistry, Physics, AP Biology, Foreign Languages level 4, AP Literature, College-Algebra-Trig (Math I), Pre-Calculus

Q: Difference between AP exams and Subject Tests?

A: AP exam is an opportunity to earn college credit. Subject Tests are less rigorous and only used for college entrance.

- Reed College requires 2 Subject Tests and the SAT. If a student applies to Reed without 2 Subject Tests the student has an incomplete application.
- Small town students may not have the opportunity to take AP classes. Every school is different. Subject Tests permit a student to demonstrate their knowledge.
- AP tests are elective, (also administered by College Board) but not an entrance exam.
- Fee waivers or difficulty at home go talk with Nancy. [Students on Free and Reduced lunch can receive fee waivers.]

Financial Aid Night – December 9th, 7 p.m.

- Based upon attendance may not continue to offer, hoping OSU will come present.
- All welcome.

Nancy attended national organization for NACAC [organization of professionals dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education.] Brochure available in BCHS listing what students should do during various grades, e.g. college searches etc.

Seniors: encouraging seniors to have college applications done by November 1st.

Junior year the tests students should take: PSAT, ACT, SAT, Subject Tests and AP tests if the student has taken AP classes. Subject Tests need to be taken on a different day than the SAT.

- SAT prep class offered for juniors by Assistance League of Corvallis
- Since the SAT will be offered at CHS in March the League is considering shifting the spring class to a winter session so it will be complete in time to take the March test.
- 30 hours of study could raise a SAT score by 50 points

Q: You recommend both the ACT and SAT?

A: When Nancy looks at a student's PSAT score she can tell if the student should take one or the other or both.

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) permits students to enroll in a college outside their state for a reduced tuition rate.

- Pay 150% of resident rate which correlates to approximately half of out of state tuition
- Washington State is popular. Requires certain GPA and SAT scores.

Q: What are the advantages of becoming a National Merit Scholar?

A: A student could attend Arizona State for free.

- Sometimes a student receives scholarship
- Can help to gain entrance to special programs within a college
- Can give more edge to a college application and help the student to be awarded more money if accepted
- Can help earn corporate scholarships

Q: How many juniors took the PSAT?

A: About 200 (from about 300 juniors)

Q: How does a student move from a semi-finalist to finalist?

A: GPA, rigor of course load, counselor recommendation, SAT scores

Next Meeting: November 18th, noon, CHS band room. All parents welcome.

- Dawn Granger, principal's report
- Donna Keim, presenting about Career Information System, state mandated system to be used by our students for Career Related learning

Respectfully submitted:

Carol Hennessy
Co-chair