

MARK T. SHEEHAN HIGH SCHOOL

PTAC

Minutes of Meeting: February 5, 2015

In Attendance: Ms. Brinton, Ms. Burns, Ms. DeVince, Ms. Duthie, Ms. French, Ms. Koepfer, Mr. Marciano, Ms. Palange, Ms. Riley-McCracken, Ms. Mellor, Ms. Murphy, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Wiesen

The meeting convened at 6:33 p.m.

The minutes from the January 2015 meeting were read. Motion to accept—Ms. Riley-McCracken; Second—Mr. Marciano.

It is a long-standing practice to invite the grade 8 parents of the Moran PTAC and PTO to Sheehan's February PTAC meeting. Ms. Duthie explained that the invitation was sent, but she did not receive any response. Since no one from Moran came to the meeting, the discussion concerning scheduling focused on the needs of the parents who were present.

Ms. Duthie shared information concerning two new courses: Creating Community Creativity and Color Guard. Creating Community Creativity is a semester course offered to freshmen, which is based on the work of Tina Seeling, a professor at Stanford University. This course offers a unique experience in which the study of creativity is merged with real world problem solving. A team comprised of Sheehan, Lyman Hall, and Choate teachers developed the curriculum for this course. Color Guard has been offered as a course at Lyman Hall for years and will now be offered at Sheehan. Interested students must audition and be accepted to enroll in this course. Auditions will take place at Moran on February 20. Ms. Duthie also explained that music ensemble courses can be taken on the honors level beginning in 2015 – 2016. Students interested in doing so must complete an approval form during the course selection process and meet with the music director to discuss the additional requirements.

A general discussion followed in which parents were encouraged to review the Program of Studies with their son/daughter. (The Program of Studies is available online on the school counseling page of the Sheehan website.) In planning a schedule, students and parents should consider not only the courses for the upcoming year, but a pathway of study for the student's high school career.

The scheduling conversation continued with Mr. Marciano explaining that the incoming ninth graders will register for their courses online. This is a new procedure and the hope is that this will go well so that it can be extended to all grades next year. He distributed a direction sheet for the online registration and asked for feedback from the parents. Suggestions were provided, i.e., clarify whose (student's or parent's) login is to be used and to explain the override process. The parents were encouraged to email Mr. Marciano with any further comments that may come to mind after the meeting.

The discussion concerning course scheduling concluded with a review of the grade level and prerequisite requirements for some courses, the use of data such as the AP potential in making informed decisions, and the availability of school counselors, department chairpersons,

administrators, and teachers to answer any questions parents and students may have. It was recommended that teachers who are advocating that a student move up a level (e.g. academic to honors) contact the student's parent to provide the rationale for that change. The last item on this topic focused on the school's efforts in reaching out to non-Moran grade 8 students, including the challenges since the early retirement of our Director of School Counseling.

Ms. Raccio, our representative to system-wide PTAC, was unable to attend the meeting, but she provided information via a handout that was distributed by Mr. Marciano. The information provided addressed:

- Parent Checklist – Once approved on the building level, it can be posted on the school's website.
- School Health Survey – A second presentation in the spring may be offered. If it is, it will be held at Lyman Hall.
- School Budget – The Strategic Plan includes a request for additional staff: a district Health & Wellness Curriculum Resource Teacher, a district Coordinator of School Counseling, and a College & Career Coordinator. The Strategic Plan also provides for the expansion of the CNA program and the development of additional health service curriculum (pharmacy tech, EMT, Eldercare, Sport Medicine/Athletic Trainer). New this year is the opportunity for bonding of capital improvement projects, such as ADA design work, auditorium upgrades, and air conditioning projects at Sheehan.
- Lyman Hall Athletic Complex – A special meeting will be held on February 18 to discuss the status of the complex. It is imperative that parents get involved and provide input.

Towards the end of the meeting, Ms. DeVince shared information concerning the Argentina Exchange Program. Approximately twenty-five students from Argentina and their teachers will visit from March 11 through March 25, with our students visiting Argentina this summer. Multiple fundraisers are planned to defray the expenses associated with the exchange program. These fundraisers include a bottle and can drive, a Moe's Night (March 4), and a Shake-a-Can. This promises to be an exciting experience for all involved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.