

PTAC  
September 1, 2016, 6:30 pm, Library Media Center

Minutes from September Meeting

In attendance: Mr. Dirkson, Ms. Duthie, Ms. Mansfield, Mr. Marciano, Ms. Palange, Ms. Ryan

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by Ms. Mansfield. The minutes were read and accepted by Ms. Ryan and seconded by Ms. Duthie.

Officer positions for the Sheehan PTAC were discussed as Ms. Ryan needed to step down from the chairperson position due to new obligations. Ms. Mansfield has assumed the role of chairperson of PTAC leaving her previous position as vice chairperson vacant. Ms Palange was nominated to this position and she accepted. Ms. Mansfield and Ms. Sabo, who was unable to attend this meeting, will both serve as representatives to the system-wide PTAC committee.

Ms. Duthie shared the planning for our 9th grade parents meeting. The evening includes presentations/conversations from school counseling, the administration, a video highlighting a "day at Sheehan" provided by Nick Ives, and a representative from PTAC. Ms. Mansfield volunteered to address the ninth grade parents. Ms. Duthie asked whether it makes more sense to break the parents into groups or keep them all together. She shared that keeping all parents together allows for a consistent message. Ms. Ryan explained that she liked the breakout session when she attended because meeting with the counselors allowed for an overall plan to be shared. With this in mind, running a program that begins with a presentation for the whole group, then breaking into small groups with the school counselor, and we, the administrative team, could be available in the auditorium for further questions. Ms. Ryan suggested that we add social media contacts to the FAQ so that parents can get new information through these outlets. After using an electronic form for feedback last year, Ms. Duthie explained that the most effective way to gain feedback is through a paper form.

Ms. Duthie explained the new program, an Open House for Prospective Families, will be held in October. The goal of this night is to bring in parents of 8th grade students so that we can share Sheehan with these prospective parents when they are considering where to attend high school. Ms. Duthie shared that we do invite the surrounding private middle schools to come to our evening events, but Ms. Ryan suggested that we add information about the school events to newsletters that are at the schools. We discussed the concern that this program should be separate from the 8th grade orientation night that we have later in the school year. Ms. Duthie asked if the program should be open to both students and parents and all agreed that it would be great to have both. Ms. Ryan asked that we have members of student council, athletes, student ambassadors to provide information and share our school. Ms. Duthie suggested that there be stations for each department so that parents/students could walk through the school to see what is offered, the texts, the curriculum, etc., where teachers and students could speak to the visitors. Ms. Ryan and Ms. Mansfield shared their experiences of touring the private high

schools and how it was a big event for those schools. Considering the success of the design for the 8th grade orientation night, Ms. Duthie suggested that there be a presentation and then department chairs and students could help to showcase the specific areas of focus. Ms. Ryan thought it would be good to have students and staff to direct and lead tours around the schools and Ms. Duthie suggested the use of videos we have already shared, NEASC and a School Day, so that parents can see the school. In addition, we could ask teachers to share what they like and find unique about Sheehan. Ms. Mansfield also suggested that we highlight the "hometown flavor" of the Wallingford school. Things to highlight--playing for Wallingford, tradition, CNA, College and Career Center, the various paths that a student can take to success, socialization, homecoming dance, PowderPuff, access to technology, etc. The important message is that this is what we do at Sheehan and this is what your experience will be at Sheehan.

Since a large number of Sheehan parents "graduated" from PTAC at the end of the last school year, we discussed how to get more parents to join PTAC. Ideas were suggested such as food at PTAC to bring parents together, "advertise" at the 9th grade parents night, a "bring a friend" to PTAC night, some kind of enticement to join--Sheehan merchandise for parents who come, etc. Parents who attend could put their names in a drawing and if chosen, will get a Sheehan piece of merchandise. At the next meeting, we will share the NEASC report and Ms. Duthie will invite all parents to attend and a "door prize" will be held for the parents who attend. Ms Palange suggested that the coaches will have parents night soon for the teams and PTAC could be added to the agenda.

#### Potential Topics for the Future Meetings:

- Update on Mastery-Based Learning
- Habits of Work and Homework
- Topics that relate to the parent concerns so that we can be a resource for the parents

#### Other:

Ms. Ryan suggested that when emails are sent to all parents, the subject line should include "Sheehan--and then the subject of the email." Ms. Ryan also brought up the idea of fundraising ideas through emails...whether there is a policy for electronic fundraising and can this be more widespread.

Meeting came to a close at 8:08 p.m.

Next meeting is Thursday, October, 6, 2016.