

**Parent Advisory Board Meeting Notes**

**Date: Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

**Time: 8:00am**

**Location: HS Cafeteria**

*(Notes were taken by Melissa. Therefore, any ‘I’ found below refers to her.)*

* November Meeting Follow-Up
  + We used the input from parents in November along with other stakeholder feedback to make a board recommendation for red commencement gowns with white trim for all students to wear this year. The board approved that recommendation in November 2016.
* Career Development
  + We received great feedback last meeting about ways in which we can offer more career development to our high school students. Those comments, coupled with feedback from career fair visits, meetings with community leaders, and administrative meetings are guiding our plans for the remainder of this year and next year. We will provide an update at our next meeting in March.
* Course Scheduling Process, 2017-2018 School Year
  + Our 2017-2018 Program of Studies is now available online for parent and student review. My administrative website has been updated to include the tentative scheduling timeline found below:
    - Board Approval of 2017-2018 Program of Studies on January 16, 2017.
    - Updated Program of Studies available on school website on January 18, 2017.
    - Discussion of scheduling timeline and process at the Parent Advisory Meeting on January 18, 2017 from 8:00am-9:30am in the high school.
    - Online course requests accepted from February 1-13, 2017.
    - Scheduling process discussion for parents of eighth grade students on February 8, 2017 followed by time for parents of current high school students.
    - Course request tallies shared with department chairpersons on February 14, 2017.
    - Departmental review of course requests on February 15, 2017.
    - Manual building of master schedule mid-February through end of March 2017.
    - Student/parent review of course requests from March 13-20, 2017.
    - Faculty review of draft master schedule from March 27-March 30, 2017.
    - Multiple scheduling runs and revisions from April through May 2017.
    - Anticipated schedule review for students in mid-May 2017.
  + We discussed the scheduling process in the past and how that has changed. Some shared that they did not like having to view the posted master schedule in order to determine the changes necessary to their children’s schedules, while others prefer to see it. I explained that there are two common types of scheduling:
    - One is the model that most post-secondary institutions use, which is to create a schedule based on anticipated student needs with a focus on staffing availability. The institution creates the schedule without course requests from students; builds a master schedule; and then allows students to schedule themselves within those confines.
    - The other model is common at the high school level, which is to ask students to select their top choices for classes and then build a schedule that maximizes those requests within staffing limitations.
  + I shared that we use the latter of these two models. As such, we do not post the master schedule for students/parents to suggest schedule changes. All students/parents have the ability to meet with guidance counselors and administrators if necessary to discuss schedule changes. They are welcome to see the courses available at that time. One drawback to using course requests to create the schedules and then allowing students to see the master schedule to make changes is that they can then request different courses based on time of day, teacher, and/or classmates.
  + Our fill rate last school year was 88% (3,306 requests filled in the master schedule out of 3,769 total requests made). All students who did not get all requests were scheduled to meet with their guidance counselors for manual changes.
* Improving Communication
  + Attendees were asked to use the chart paper provided in order to write ideas for:
    - What they would like to know more about as parents and
    - How we can communicate that better.
  + These ideas, which generated further discussion, are listed below:
    - More organized information on website
    - Standardize faculty directory with links to e-mail addresses
    - Calendar should include more than sports (include all extra-curricular activities)
    - Link for “Who Do I Ask?” for commonly asked questions
    - Link for STEM, ACE, internships, and cooperative education opportunities
    - Include notes from parent meetings
    - Specific photos approved by students in the pictures and represent more student activities than sports
    - Meeting discussing the format of the SAT and registration
    - SAT notifications
    - SAT preparation locations, dates, etc…
    - Scholarship information
    - FAFSA & PHEAA updates
    - Open house for colleges
    - More specific class descriptions
    - Updated school calendar with all activities
    - Communicate weekly or biweekly with important information
    - Communicate how the parents and kids want you to communicate
    - Take the time to teach the parents where to find all of the information and help them sign up
    - Use a step-by-step process
    - Pretend we are all in kindergarten and start from that spot
    - Move morning announcements to third period when kids are more alert and listening
    - Utilize social media for messages (Facebook, Twitter)
    - Incentivize students to communicate and relay information to parents (extra credit for attending expos, for example)
    - More advanced notice on events such as the BU Future Career Expo

* Additional Concerns
  + Senior Magnets
    - I shared a new option for us when communicating important dates for our seniors. These personalized magnets included dates such as the prom, honors banquet, awards night, and commencement. They also included important contact information for the school, guidance counselors, and administration. They were viewed favorably by those in attendance.
  + Mission Statement
    - Spirited conversation occurred regarding our district’s current mission statement. As part of that discussion, there were comments regarding what items are most often discussed at board meetings and in the public. Consideration for academics as well as extracurricular activities was stressed.
  + Better Marketing of the District
    - In addition to academic standards, some shared that we need to market our district better in the region. When people move into our area, for example, they need to have an understanding of our school district when compared to others.