

Westhill High School School Governance Council
Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2015

In attendance:

- Faculty Members: Camille Figliuzzi, Richard Ceroni, Maria DeAngelis, Mark Magisani, Chase Dunlap, new faculty SGC member Teresa Telesco
- Parents Members: Sue Boria; Jenny Fuchs, David Greenberg, Sandy Menendez-Aponte, Richard Nohe, Rick Smeriglio, Patty Denham Travaglino, Alyssa Wallen
- Student members Sam Greenberg, Nicole Somerstein, and Samuel Joseph

Prior business: Grant writing for LandCrew

- Patty and Sandy contacted Karen Cammerota, grant writer for the City of Stamford, who agreed to meet with Westhill administrators to explore how her expertise might be used with LanD Crew.

New business

- Camille has added two Westhill faculty members to the Governance Council: Teresa Telesco and Ruth Walden.
- Chase drafted a brief document about the monthly LandD Crew and the speaking opportunities to provide to potential speakers.
- Richard contacted the UConn AD; Chase drafted a letter to request speakers.
- Potential speakers have been suggested (including Linda McMahon; a Stamford neurosurgeon / SHS grad who focused on concussion research at University of Pittsburgh; Richard Blumenthal; Randy Skigen).
- The aim is to balance the speaker series so it develops the leadership skills of the students on LanD Crew; it may serve to draw in more students to participate in future years.
- The Board of Directors for LanD Crew is currently working on a re-launch for the second semester.
- Recruiting for LanD Crew for next year has begun, with application deadline of April 1. There will be an interview process and perhaps an induction ceremony to formalize participation and elevate the sense of responsibility associated with participating.
- Both Nicole and Samuel endorsed this idea: having a diverse set of speakers will help students to be exposed to different career paths and interests.
- Seeking an introduction to AmeriCares to draw speakers in philanthropy.
- Richard C. may have a speaker from Stratford – young man with outstanding academic and athletic background.
- Dates proposed for speaking engagements. Feb 26, around March 25 (which is Good Friday – no school), etc. throughout the end of the year.
- Action: Sue has offered to call Randy Skigen to determine availability

- Last meeting, we discussed creating a parent mentor program for incoming freshmen parents. Seeking help building infrastructure from the SGC. Help encourage attendance, address myths, give freshmen parents a point of contact, etc.
- Incoming parent meeting / orientation scheduled for February 9 – Jenny suggests assessing interest in parent mentor program at that meeting. Camille hopes that the engagement would then broaden to include parents who don't attend the orientation.
- David suggests also doing a parent welcome meeting in August with both parents and teachers. This SGC group would assume responsibility for organizing and holding this meeting. Assess interest at the Feb. 9 parent orientation meeting.
- Critical to get an accurate email address from Feb. 9 attendees.
- In fall, Parent University was launched – launching a spring edition at Cloonan. Request to find course offerings that will engage parents (there is one suggested for the spring session on Executive Functioning “How to organize your teen for success”). If necessary, we can divide the parents into high school and middle school groups.
- Chase will engage with the group in the future seeking input and sessions.
- One idea is to make Parent University a 6 week series with a weekly meeting to cover topics such as refreshers on high school level math.
- Chase requesting assistance with promotion, putting up flyers around town at markets and civic organizations, etc. for Parent University.
- Nicole: Kahn Academy offers free SAT tutoring online – an excellent resource for students who may not have the resources to attend a paid session.
- Tutor Me SOS spoke at Parent U about preparing for SAT.
- Question from group: why not partner with SHS on Parent University? It may increase overall participation. Chase: It may be something SHS can replicate from the WHS model. Parent U will return to WHS in the fall. Need to appeal to and engage a more diverse parent population.
- Promotional materials for Parent U should mention that there will be translation into Spanish / dual sessions in Spanish. May look to bring Parent University to Neighbors Link (community agency that's a hub for Latino community in Stamford) in the future. First date is Feb. 2, to do condensed 90 minute session to seek greater engagement.
- Richard: article in paper on Greenwich High School addressing stress. 60-70 people attend seeking assistance. Is there an opportunity to do something similar at WHS that includes the Stamford medical community?
- Teresa: doing mindfulness exercises for a few minutes using dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) increases achievement. Some teachers are seeking to integrate this practice into their classrooms. The goal would be to have mindfulness skills become second hand.
- Camille: not a lot done with Stamford Hospital at WHS. David and Alyssa are both involved at Stamford Hospital if there is a specific ask.
- Recent segment on CBS Sunday Morning or 60 Minutes on the power of meditation in schools (Jenny)
- Teresa volunteers to look into healing touch work at Stamford Hospital.
- Jenny: Dew Yoga may also be a resource, along with corporations. Teresa mentioned there is a faculty member who has experience with DBT, yoga and a number of other mindfulness approaches.

Action items

- Sue will contact Randy Skigen about speaking with LanD Crew
- Jenny will contact AmeriCares to look for speakers for LanD Crew
- Chase will come back to this group for input to determine courses for spring edition of Parent University at Cloonan as well as the fall edition at Westhill
- Camille will take lead on getting accurate email addresses from the parent orientation attendees
- Teresa will look into the healing touch resources that may be available through Stamford Hospital.

Next meeting

Monday, March 7 at 6:15 pm in the Westhill media center

All welcome to attend