Downingtown West Home & School Association Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2019 - 7pm – Library

Review of Minutes from last meeting – Katherine Archibald

Motion to approve the minutes – 1st – Karen; 2nd - Sharon

Treasurer – Holding Balance: $5,133; Reserve $1,500 for Helping Hands; $500 Scholarships. Staff luncheon is paid for by donations of food & money/gift cards. Received check in the amount of $175 from the Catalyst program.

Updates:

School Store – Whippet Warehouse is open. They sell T-shirts, coffee mugs and are going to add more inventory like sweatpants with logo and plaid lounge pants. Home and school will have spirit wear for sale at the school store. H&S has 24 sweatshirts to sell at course selection night. The amount of profit to split with school store has been suggested to be 60/40; Aramark will partner up with the school store where students/staff purchase the 16 oz. mug from the school store and they can get a refill at the 12 oz. price; Looking into more options for inventory.

Purse Bingo – Planning is moving along nicely; 100 tickets sold to date hope to sell 200-250 total; 30 meals pre-ordered; volunteers needed, there is a sign-up genius that has been emailed out; A member of the audience has 5 to 6 junior members to volunteer.

Post Prom – Prom is May 31st. Post prom is from 12am -5am at the school. Raffles tickets for two parking spaces will be sold for graduation night; Graduation Lawn signs will be for sale. The signs will have the Whippet, name of student along with the year on them. Price is $40. Will have a sample at the purse bingo. Need volunteers for to help make decorations (information on the H&S web site), set up, and dismantling of the decorations. In need volunteers the night of the prom. Always looking for here as whelp with various stations like cash cab. Next meeting is February 12th at 7pm in the West Library.

Home and School Web site - Pia added a new link for easy navigation and access about District pages such as School Board meetings, Committee of the Whole, Health & Wellness page and 2017 Pays Survey Results.

School District/Board meeting highlights – Pia

The School Board meeting attendance was full in response to the recent suicide at DHSE. The highlight was Mental Health Awareness. Parents are asking for more mental health awareness programs that start at the Middle School level. There will be a round table at DHSE (date to be determined shortly). There will be administrators, guidance counselors and principals who will sit at tables with families to discuss topics in regard to mental health. This information will be reviewed and will be presented.

The State is launching a “Safe to Say” anonymous reporting program. Parents and staff members will be trained on January 14th. The program will allow a safe and anonymous way to inform if anyone knows of someone who is a harm to themselves or others. The information will be triaged and looked at the school level. Look for more information.

Home and School future events – February 12, 2019 - Home and School would like to host another Parent 2 Parent information night for the incoming freshman and possibly the current freshman; There will be a panel of junior and senior students who will answer questions from parents & students – concerns on how to juggle sports, music with academics; Honors & A/P courses; strategies on navigating school curriculum, etc.; Was very successful a few years ago and filled the auditorium; Invite the band director to discuss different options with band.

SAT/ACT Bootcamp – Tentative date is February 23rd & 24th. Will have a final date by end of January. It is a boot camp to help prep students for the SAT/ACT’s. Cost will be determined.
Home and School speaker for February – Dr. Troy Podell of DASD – Coordinator of Career Readiness and organizes the Career Cafe community business speakers that students can attend during their lunch periods. Please come out to hear Dr. Podell speak about ways to open up a student’s mind to career options.

Course Selection Night - Home and School will have a table with the DASD 2019-2020 approved calendar; Spirit Wear; Post Prom table; Bingo flyers and College night information.

Principal Report – Kurt Barker

Course Selection - Harrisburg University has been added as Dual Enrollment School – AP Bi0, English/LA; Chemistry; Environmental Science. This is in addition to University of Pittsburgh.

Martin Luther King Day - A day of service in honor of MLK for the students and community members to volunteer to help around the campus. The goal is to eventually branch of into the community. January 18th, 2019 – 9am – 12pm.

Mid-Terms - Continue next week a couple remaining. Great response to the to the study skills sessions. First one there were 20 students; second one had 32 and the third had 50. Due to the positive response, the students were asked if they would like to see more and they said YES! Additional sessions were added to this week’s session in the library.

Aevidum Club – The kids are amazing with their ability to open up, be vulnerable and share their struggles. The feedback is imperative to put strategies into motion. Clear importance of one reminder is the connection to the adults in the building. Sometimes we don’t realize the value of how important it is to the kids to have an adult stop them in the hallway and ask them how they are really doing. It can change a kid’s outlook and perspective.

Cultural Equity Task Force – Teachers volunteer their time during their prep and lunch periods to talk about ways to improve the cultural climate in the building. The task force create questions, place on Schoology; Collect feedback from students; Bring the data back to the CETF to discuss what to do; Put plans into place. One example: Recently a question was placed on Schoology: What are some stressors and needs. Answers were overwhelming over 400 kids responded – MID TERMS, End of marking period and Overworked. One strategy to help those who responded was the creation of the study sessions to prepare for Mid-Terms.

Parent Questions/Statements:

Homework – My child is coming home and has an overwhelming amount of homework. When there is a break and my child has to do projects and they have a question, they can’t reach out to their teacher because they are on a no access time period. Mr. Barker spoke of strategies to remedy the issue.

Guidance Counselor: My child comes home and tells me the guidance counselor is not there to help with a problem or crisis, only to career counsel. Is there is an open door policy? Response: The guidance counselor carves time to spend with each student. If they are in an appointment, the student can meet with another counselor. There is an Intervention Specialist on staff for immediate crises.

Suggestion by parents: Can there be a dedicated space at the school where a student can text the National Text Line in a safe environment if they are having an issue? RESPONSE: We have a Student Assistance Team of eight identified teachers who are trained to seek out kids to touch base and see where they are at. There are a number of students who take advantage of it. This adds another layer of support. Parents: Do the students know who the eight teachers are and how to reach them? Mr. Barker: We are committed to this and we are making a banner for Mental Health in which all of the staff members and guidance will sign with the pertinent information for all students to see.

Presentation – Dr. Brigette Erwin, Founder and Director of the Anxiety and OCD Center

Next Meeting: March 7, 2019 in the Library at 7pm.