

PTSA Meeting, Wednesday, September 19, 2012

Around 30 people in attendance.

Dignity for All Students

Amanda Verba (from TST BOCES), speaker

Amanda supports drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention and stress reduction.

These standards are mandates from the state. All kids need a safe learning environment. The code of conduct for IHS needs to be converted into easily accessible language. The law also emphasizes training and booster lessons (continuous effort with lectures and task force, etc. through the year). Conflict just needs mediation. Bullying needs a change of attitude and thought process. "Victims" may need assertiveness support. Link Crew has been trained in methods for stopping bullying and will work with groups of kids going to BOCES, school clubs, and school teams. A record of bullying will be kept and will be accessible to the student's Associate Principal and Samantha Little. So far in this school year, there have been eight Dignity for All Students referrals. All involved parties' families are notified when an incident occurs.

Principal Jarett Powers said that IHS staff is working to establish systems to help kids. The new attendance policy is aimed at trying to lessen the number of cut classes. IHS is no longer a school in need of supervision since ELA regents exams were taken by all students and passed by a higher percentage than in previous years. Mr. Powers spoke about the new safety staff. IHS now has "hall assistants" who can supervise study halls or classes. A school resource officer (who has yet to be hired) will be a first responder. This school year, there has already been one alcohol and one drug suspension. Synthetic marijuana is legal but has weird effects.

Interim Associate Principals are Katz Brown for A - L, and Rutherford for M - Z. New graduation coaches are Micheryl Blake and Mary Grover who will work on linking up community resources with kids to help improve graduation rates. They can help kids with computers, tutors, attendance, jobs, etc. Carlan Gray and Janet Abowd are new master educators. Ms. Gray is in charge of Science, Technology, and Math departments. Ms. Abowd is responsible for Social Studies, Theatre, and Music. They work with both teachers and paraprofessionals. Lynn Reitenbach is the head of social work, helping to provide a safe place for kids. Samantha Little is now Assistant Principal.

A parent mentioned problems with errors in assignments given out by teachers and hoped that better proofreading would remedy that. Ms. Gray suggested that the amount of time for preparation for classes is limited but suggested that parents or students give feedback to teachers and master educators. Ms. Abowd also mentioned that PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) are helpful in decreasing mistakes.

The dress code was discussed, with acknowledgement from IHS staff that it is sometimes enforced. Barbara Katz Brown referred parents to the Student Handbook, page 18. No underwear can be showing. If needed, students are asked to turn t-shirts with inappropriate writing inside out. Skirts should not be

too tight or short. Straps on shirts should be no less than two fingers width. If needed, parents will be called to bring a change of clothing. One parent mentioned uniforms which would help eliminate class biases and would help staff see who belongs on campus.

If students need a late bus, they can get a pass and be outside at 4:30. The late busses leaves at 4:45. The area for parents to pick up students is past the handicap zone in the front parking lot.

The need for change in letter of recommendation writing has been recognized. Most of the demand for letter writing goes to 11th grade teachers, and they need more time to take care of this.

IHS has essay nights with Cornell and Ithaca College lecturers. There is also a class offered at IHS for advanced math students called Math Seminar. This is possible thanks to a partnership with Cornell. IHS has other Cornell contact in languages, sciences, and social studies. AVID gets tutors from Ithaca College and Cornell. New Visions is offered through BOCES in conjunction with Cornell.

Lana Craig will be the new advisor for National Honor Society. This is a club and like every other club at IHS, the advisor gets a \$208 stipend. There was interest in asking Ithaca Teachers Association to allow more than one teacher to be an advisor, especially for National Honor Society which has lots of students and requires much more work than many other clubs.

The popular PTSA program, "Tips on Applying to College", will be on Monday, November 5th, at 6:00 PM and will be led by Sharon Gublo.

Information handout from this program:

Dignity for All Students Act (2012)

It is hereby declared to be policy of the State to afford all students in public schools an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The purpose of this article is to foster civility in public schools and to prevent and prohibit conduct which is inconsistent with the school's educational mission.

No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on school property or at a school function; nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex by school employees or students on school property or at school function.

Some Helpful Reminders:

It is the obligation of anyone who witnesses an act of discrimination and/or harassment on school property or at school functions to discourage, respond, and report the act to school personnel.

- Don't Confuse Conflict and Bullying
- Don't Ignore It
- Don't Get Into A Debate
- Don't Bully The Bully
- Don't Bring The Bully & Target Together

- Don't Punish The Target
- Don't Assume The Problem Is Solved

We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere.

- Elie Wiesel, The Night Trilogy: Night/Dawn/The Accident

GENERAL BUSINESS

Meeting called to order.

Introduction of Executive Board - Jarra Jagne

Jarra Jagne, President; Alice Wu, VP Programs; Debbie Mahoney, VP Communication; Julie Hughes, Treasurer; Vicki Brew, Secretary (not present); Tina Hallock, Membership Chair; PTA Council Liaison, Wendy Bakal

Budget - discussion and voting - Julie Hughes

Family Liaison Barbara Bergman thanked PTSA for continued financial support. A line item named "Family Liaison" will be added to the budget in place of "Other Expenses" and "Sunshine Fund".

A separate line item specifically for membership donations will be added.

Expenses from "Staff Refreshment" will be changed to reflect added donations.

Last year the PTSA funded Senior Awards but unless income exceeds expectations this year, PTSA will not be able to fund these awards.

Membership and membership form distribution for Open House - Tina Hallock and Jarra Jagne

Please join the PTSA! Ask your friends to join also. Donations are always welcome as well. Money received from memberships helps the PTSA fund many things at our school. Membership forms will be available at Open House.

Communication - Debbie Mahoney

Copies of The Word will be available at Open House. The deadline for submitting to The Word is the first Thursday of every month. Costs for printing and folding The Word to be included in with student report cards will be made more affordable by using BOCES printing rather than Word Pro.

Morning Munch - Ann Poe

The Morning Munch program is going strong. Food donations are always welcome. In addition, gift cards and money are welcome. A popular breakfast item during Morning Munch is the yogurt parfait that volunteers assemble. Money donations are most helpful for purchasing the fruit, yogurt, and cups. PTSA

will continue to process checks for Morning Munch and have that money reflected in the budget as extra donations, in addition to the money allotted from PTSA.

Programs - Types of programs and program schedule - Alice Wu

November 5th, 6:00 pm: College Program with Sharon Gublo and possibly Brenda Sullivan

March: Program with DeWitt

Open House Oct. 4 - Madeline Estill

Madeline passed around a signup sheet for helping with student schedule distribution.

Directory and Guide merge or separate? - Jarra Jagne

It was decided that these two publications can be merged, as well as the paid advertising.

Other Business - Nominating committee for new officers? Nomination referral forms?

Possible nominations for committee heads and executive board need to happen soon as many who are now in these positions will be moving on next year.

Adjourn