

## **School Council Meeting #4 Minutes: December 14, 2020**

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In attendance: John Smith, Nicole Kepnes, Michael Jaffe, Donna Strouse, John Lin, Anita Lotti, Brendan O'Hagan, Amal Sharfi, Liza Birmingham, Lilly Caplan and Emily Waugh

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### **Start of Meeting Procedure**

1. Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. All members were introduced.
3. The new members were introduced.

### **Hybrid Teaching and Learning Updates**

- The district is closely monitoring the recent rise in Covid-19 cases. The high school has experienced only a handful of cases and the remote system has helped to prevent exposure.
- The high school nurses, Ms. Chandler and Ms. Fedor, are keeping track of cases and potential exposure to Covid-19 in the high school.
- Around 62 students have chosen to go remote until February 1st, 2021. These remote students are still allowed to participate in school-organized athletic programs.
- The hybrid system has prepared teachers and students to continue remote learning on days when snowstorms make it dangerous to drive to school.
- Following the release of interim grades on Friday, December 18th, the mandatory Wednesday sessions for grades below 80% will become optional, allowing students to attend sessions at their discretion.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force**

- The task force was created to take action as a school district in a movement toward social justice and includes all principals and superintendents.
- Subcommittees include groups based on curriculum, policy, school culture, and supporting and hiring teachers of color.
- DS is partnering with a teaching college to form a relationship that could encourage candidates of color to consider DS as a career option. This will help to diversify faculty and supply support to new teachers.
- DS is considering taking part in a teacher exchange program to bring new voices into the community.
- Teacher retirements in the next few years will make it easier to bring in new voices in a short amount of time.

### **Budget update**

- DS is not adding staff this year but may be looking at additions in a year or two. These additions would most likely be partial.
- The regional school committee still has some capital challenges and other pieces of the budget to address.
- Fortunately, there was no need for drastic budget cuts despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Program of Studies Update

- A new, project-based financial literacy semester course open to Juniors and Seniors will be added to the curriculum and taught by a member of the math department. This course can count as either a math or elective credit at the CP or Honors level and will cover areas including credit, loans, budgeting, investment and banking.
- Another business/math semester course is being considered for addition (after the financial literacy course is added) to provide more opportunities for students who wish to pursue this subject.
- These courses will help prepare students for the next steps in job placement and higher education.

### GPA discussion

- Following the principles of Challenge Success, DS is considering making a switch to non-weighted GPAs.
- The Academic Standards Group wants to move toward an unweighted GPA to prevent stigma around GPA and class level.
- Several other local school districts have made the switch to unweighted GPAs.

<b>Pros: Weighted GPA</b>	<b>Cons: Weighted GPA</b>
Students have a greater understanding when using Naviance as to where their grades fall in the admissions process.	Large pressure makes it difficult to have a love for learning.
Pressure may come from so many factors besides weighted GPA (for example, pressure from a college/university itself) that removing it would not make a difference in students' mental health.	Removing weighting could help decrease or remove the pressure/stigma surrounding class level.

### Next Meeting:

Monday, January 25th, 2021