

WHS School Council Minutes
April 11, 2023 2:40pm
Main Office, Faculty Conference Room

Members in Attendance

Jamie Chisum	WHS Principal, Co-Moderator
Zachary Biedermann	Faculty Representative
Melissa Gray	Faculty Representative
Michael Krieger	Faculty Representative
Shayla Vines	Faculty Representative
Lisa Fico	Parent Representative
Marisa Gandler	Parent Representative
Ellen Subramaniam	Parent Representative
Olivia Frank	Student Representative
Evelyn Harrison	Student Representative
Vaani Kapoor	Student Representative
Dauida Fox-Melanson	Community Representative

Guest

Sarah Matloff	Faculty Representative
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Absent

Tarah Hirschey	Parent Representative
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J. Chisum called the meeting to order at 2:42pm
A quorum was present

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve Minutes from 3/28/2023 by J. Chisum
 - 1st Z. Biedermann
 - 2nd M. Gray

Constituency Reports

Community

- No updates

Students

- No updates

Faculty

- No updates

Parents

- National Honor Society data analysis
 - Questions regarding the impact with the change of criteria
- Recent survey related to schedule changes
 - Needs to include details and graphs, etc.
- AP data included within WHS School Profile
 - Inaccurate information listed that needs to be fixed
- Concerns over the removal of course numbers from transcripts and Program of Studies
- Public record request (Open Records Request) submitted for all Strategic Planning Survey responses and comments
 - Community raised funds quickly to pay for the request
- Parents recently questioning why student emails were required for a distracted driving survey (Arbella Insurance)

Principal

- J. Chisum reported that he wasn't selected for the Lincoln-Sudbury principal/superintendent position
- Process of working with teachers on Standards Based Grading follow-up:
 - Staff currently isn't in a place to be working outside of school hours
 - Adjustments being made to continue this work under current agreement terms
 - Goal is to return to a more traditional grading system while keeping the best elements of SBG that were successful

Student Handbook changes

Major Projects

- M. Gray shared feedback from Faculty Senate regarding Handbook language on major projects and the balance of assigned work. [As a reminder to everyone reading these minutes, issues have come up where students have provided feedback they can sometimes have both a major test and major project due in the same week in the same class and they are not given at least one week advance notice of the major project.]
 - Faculty concerned with vague language of "major projects"
 - Teachers have often been asked to pivot over the last 4 years, and "major projects" is a fuzzy definition
 - Teachers question if this is a supervision issue rather than a need for a Handbook change
 - *"Is paving the way to make it easier for students the way to go?"*
 - Teachers suggest that if students struggle with heavy workload, they can go to their teacher or to their guidance counselor for support

- E. Subramaniam clarified this is not the same issue as the pile-up of work at the end of a quarter. Rather, there seem to be recurring issues involving substantial projects assigned without proper advance notice. We can't always put the pressure on the students to advocate for themselves when teachers should not be overloading students and/or not providing proper advance notice. It feels like an unfair burden on students.
- O. Frank stated that a quiz and a test in the same week wouldn't necessarily need to be a change in the Student Handbook
- E. Harrison offered that if something takes less than half the class time it's not considered a major assessment
- J. Chisum suggested adding language that could give advice to students and/or encourage families to advocate
- E. Subramaniam shared that we need to stop making students and families shoulder all the burden on issues like this by preventing it from happening to begin with and by having something documented in the Student Handbook
- L. Fico concerned that stating that a project which "lasts more than half a class" is confusing and that it should be more specific
- School Council reread language directly from Student Handbook
 - J. Chisum offered to add "projects" to cover everything and remove "in-class" and "essay"
 - Edited to read as "Major projects and major out-of-class essays as defined by the teacher"
 - Removed second reference to "in class" from current language
 - M. Gray motioned to confirm language in Student Handbook
 - 2nd E. Harrison
 - All in Favor
 - Final proposed Student Handbook language is as follows: "Teachers will announce in class all major assessments at least one week in advance. ("In class" can mean orally, on the board, etc., but prohibits solely announcing on the class Canvas page.) These assessments include tests, in-class essays, "quests," etc., which are expected to last more than half a period. Major projects and major out-of-class essays as defined by the teacher are also included."

AI/ChatGPT

- E. Subramaniam made a motion to approve language stating that content generating artificial intelligence shall be prohibited under the Academic Integrity section of the Student Handbook
 - 2nd D. Fox-Melanson
 - All in Favor

Auditing Classes at WHS

- S. Matloff shared that attendance of auditors can be variable, and therefore disruptive to the class, and that there's no uniformity with how this is handled
- Z. Biedermann questions the need to specify regular attendance
- S. Matloff states that she would want a teacher to bring this to her attention for a warning. She's hesitant to be too specific in case of student illness
- S. Vines inquired how to track attendance if not in PowerSchool
 - J. Chisum specified that attendance would be a separate system kept by each teacher
- L. Fico suggested that students sign an attendance agreement upon auditing a class
 - E. Subramanian made a motion to bring this topic of auditing classes back to constituencies
 - 2nd L. Fico
 - All in Favor

Unexcused In-House Absences

- S. Matloff reports the recent increase of parents calling students out as absent for a specific class while they are still in the WHS building (i.e. student cutting class to go get help in a lab, etc.)
- These types of absences will not be approved
- E. Harrison questioned students who leave for a medical appointment, and O. Frank cited students who attend a virtual medical appointment
 - J. Chisum stated these types of absences will be approved
 - D. Fox-Melanson made a motion to include language about not excusing students in the building as absent
 - 2nd S. Vines
 - All in Favor

PA Concert Schedule during AP Testing

- E. Subramaniam requests the careful consideration of not scheduling PA concerts (wind ensemble and concert band) during the 2 weeks of AP testing
 - M. Gray reported that faculty didn't think it felt fair to focus on one department (PA) when there are also sports and other events
 - Z. Biedermann expressed concerns that Performing Arts Department would feel targeted
 - M. Gray spoke with Mike LaCava and he reported that it's hard to work around the senior spring schedule. Mike is able to consider these schedule concerns, but he can't guarantee it in the Handbook
 - J. Chisum offered that these concerts could be earlier, but not enough time to plan for this academic year
- J. Chisum requested to table this discussion to the next School Council meeting

Motion to adjourn by L. Fico

2nd M. Gandler
All in Favor

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marisa Gandler