



Westlake High School

General PTO Meeting

November 18, 2016 Minutes – Draft pending January 2017 approval

- I. **Call Meeting to Order**— Kristin Paull called meeting to order at 12:04
- II. **Approval of October 14, 2016 Minutes**— Liza Richardson made a motion to approve minutes, Reesa Thorne 2nd. Minutes approved as posted on the WHS PTO website, now final.
- III. **Guest Speaker – Katie Bryant (WHS Student Support Counselor) on Challenge Success** Katie provided an update on Challenge Success effort (first reported on last year when PTO paid 50% of the cost to run this process for WHS, more info can be found here <http://healthychaps.weebly.com/challenge-success.html>). In short, Challenge Success encourages educators to create school programs that value and foster interpersonal and collaborative skills, adaptability and resilience, and the critical thinking and creativity needed to solve complex problems. Katie reviewed a presentation which can be found [CHALLENGE SUCCESS HERE](#). Key items shared were:
 - **Survey Data:** The process started with a survey which ~45% of WHS participated in. The data showed views on academic engagement (how engaged they feel, stress levels, schoolwork levels, sleep), homework, extracurricular activities, teacher care/support, student health/well being, perception of effective school changes.
 - **Challenge Success Conference:** The Social Emotional Learning (SEL) group from WHS went to this conference in the fall at Stanford University. This SEL group is made up of WHS administrators, teachers, parents and students. During this time they had time and support to understand survey data, hear from others and discuss WHS and what actions could support WHS.
 - **Action planning:** The SEL group looked at stress to understand what are symptoms of stress vs. root causes so they could make choices to work on root cause. Below are the key themes they chose to work on currently:
 - i. **Communication**
 - ii. **Teacher to Student relationship and care**
 - iii. **GPA**
 - iv. **Student involvement** (There is a Challenge Success club meeting every other Monday in room 368 after school. Net meeting is December 5th. They encouraged all parents to get their student to participate as the group want to hear from students to make sure actions reflect student views.)
 - **Work underway:** Below is a list of the items underway:
 - i. **Time mgt:** Better communication at course selection time on what anticipated hours a week a course needs outside of school time. This includes extracurricular as well. For January the Course Selection sheet will include this and a Time Mgt Form will also be used to see the big picture of choices before they are final.
 - ii. **Student for a day:** To help teachers and admin understand the load of students many will shadow a student for before, during and after school activities.

- iii. **Ongoing book groups:** There are book groups for both faculty and parents. If you are interested in joining a parent led book study on *How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of Overparenting Trap* and *Prepare your Kid for Success*, please email kbryant@eanesisd.net or lrawings@eanesisd.net
- iv. **Fishbowl:** On November 21st will be hosting a Fishbowl. A fishbowl offers a unique opportunity for adults to “listen in” as a small group of thoughtful current and former students share their experiences and feelings on particular topics related to stress. We will be in the Recital Hall during 4th and 5th lunch. All parents and WHS staff are invited to listen in.
- v. **Professional Development and Parent Education:** There will be an evening event on Feb 28, 2017 on “The Well Balanced Student”. More will be shared on this in the future.
- vi. **Sleep “Campaign”:** More communication will be coming out to students and parents on the importance of sleep. Our WHS survey data showed this to be one of the lowest scoring areas relative to other Challenge Success input.
- vii. **District Level SEL activities:** There are also several items being considered by the district: “quiet week/days” before finals, school wide calendar, considering block scheduling, how homework is assigned and extracurricular time commitments. The GPA update is actively being discussed and the Eanes Board is expected to vote on it December 13th.
- viii. **Healthy Chaps Website:** many helpful resources here, make yourself aware of them. For example if you search “suicide” you can find helpful information to better understand signs, conversations, etc. (there is an app called “A friend asks” which can be downloaded on students iPads.)

IV. **Principal Report, Steve Ramsey:** Steve is meeting EACH month for ‘brown bag’ conversations from 11-12 before each PTO meeting to discuss any topics on interest. The session immediately prior to this PTO meeting had key topics such as parking, drugs on campus (e.g. a safety dog will be on campus full time starting in January), homework levels. High recommendation to take two hours out of your month to attend this meeting and the PTO meeting to be more informed and involved.

V. **Counseling Department – Heidi Sauer** – Heidi (or delegate) will attend all PTO meetings to answer questions and share key events. Key items shared were:

- PSATs: Scores will go to students on December 12th. Counselors will come to Junior classrooms on Dec 9th to help them understand what to expect. For sophomores a review of this information will be included in the Sophomore parent meeting in January.
- College Essay Helpdesk: this was funded by PTO and is available for all seniors. Does your senior needs help with your college essays before your November, December, or January deadlines? <http://whsmdupre.weebly.com/college-essay-helpdesk.html> can be accessed to schedule an appointment for essay help no matter where you are in the process. If you have questions, please email Melissa Dupre at mdupre@eanesisd.net.

- Size of counseling department: a question was raised about the growth of student body relative to reduced size of counseling department. This is being looked at and if any changes made it won't be until next year. Counselors are available during both lunches and open until 4:30 in addition to being able to pull a student out of class if the student requests an appointment.
- 8th graders: Course selection will move back to February 8th (vs. January as in the past) to make the start of 2nd semester not so hectic for all.
- Freshman: A new Freshman parent meeting was held and was very well received, a recording of it will be on the counseling website. For course selection there will be one meeting during Biology class and then small 1:1 sessions during English to help students get to know their counselor face to face.
- Sophomores: The counselors will be going to history classes to help get them introduced to Naviance.
- Seniors: Stay aware of deadlines for college applications and give plenty of advance notice to counseling if they are needed.

VI. **Student Council Report**— none this meeting.

VII. **Treasurer's Report** – Gayle Yenawine: See separate document.

VIII. **PTO Presidents report** – Kristin Paull.

- Language lab is now up and running. They are also looking to use it for tutoring time next year.
- Still looking for President Co-elect, let Kristin know if you are interested.

IX. **Committee Reports:** time was limited so only two key updates:

Allocations:

- We had a round of allocations this Fall, and voted to approve the requests. We will report on actual allocations that were completed, during our January meeting. At that time, we will also be able to report regarding a Spring round of allocations.
- Chap Connection: December issue coming out right after Thanksgiving, deadline for input November 20th.

Next PTO meeting: There is no December meeting; next PTO meeting is January 20, 2017.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.