

## DHSPA MEETING ~ MINUTES ~ NOVEMBER 29, 2011

Wanda Forlivio called the meeting to order at 9:20am. There were approximately 40 people in attendance. She thanked Jim Plutte, who is our BOE representative, for attending our meetings and providing the liaison between BOE and DHSPA.

To begin the meeting, senior Alex Pear was introduced. Alex is the student responsible for the creation of 7 Core Values & Beliefs posters intended to communicate our school values in a memorable way. Each poster was created with a focus on one of our Core Values & Beliefs and also including one of the 7 NEASC standards of assessment. Each poster has a pithy phrase on the bottom. These posters will be rolled out periodically over seven weeks, revealing a new value each week. The hope is that these posters will make students more aware of our values as well as being alerted to the NEASC visit in April. The audience gave a round of appreciative applause for Alex.

**Co-Chairs Report.** Wanda introduced Lisa Miller, DHSPA parliamentarian. Lisa presented our revised bylaws and called for questions. There were none and the DHSPA approved the adoption of the revised bylaws.

The co-chairs thanked our many DHS volunteers:

- the Fundraising Committee for the very successful non-event fundraiser,
- the Treasurer for keeping track of all the monies,
- all the volunteers from the College and Career Center, who welcomed over 250 colleges and universities this fall,
- the parents who donated to the Turkey Drive organized by the Orchestra. It was a great success with 165 turkeys collected (and one ham) for the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County. A similar drive was held in New Canaan (they collected 75),
- to the Holiday Luncheon Committee for the very appreciated staff holiday luncheon.

Wanda reported that we had sent in a contemplated gift form to the BOE to pay for the cost of copying and framing the 7 core values posters and gave a special thank you to the generosity of the parents, who make this kind of a donation possible.

The Darien Library announced that they are going to increase their hours over midterm week, beginning 1/17. They will remain open until 10:30pm, for small group study or individual study. Food can be delivered. They are asking for 8-10 parent volunteers to help out with supervision.

The freshman parent coffee will be held on 1/5/12 at 8:45am. Midterms will be among the topics discussed.

### **Committee Reports.**

**Programs.** Lynn Koorbusch announced that beginning today we will have Dan's Dish at the DHSPA meetings where Dan Haron will address a topic of interest to the parents. The February meeting will have a panel of administrators and parents discussing how to be successful and happy at DHS. If anyone has any input on that program, let the Programs Committee know.

**Senior Internships.** This year the senior internship program will be increasing the # of internships, the committee is collecting some or students can find an internship by themselves. If anyone knows of any company or organization that might benefit from an intern, please let Leslie Hammer ([lesham@optonline.net](mailto:lesham@optonline.net)) or Kitty Hickey ([hickeyclan236021@aol.com](mailto:hickeyclan236021@aol.com)) know.

**Student Life.** Upcoming dates: Auction to benefit social services on 12/14 (bring checks or cash), "Are You Smarter than a High schooler?" on 2/9, a dance on 3/16 and prom on 5/18.

**Student Wear.** There will be a holiday student wear sale on 12/1 and 12/2 from 9:30a-12:30p in the Welcome Center.

**Principal's Report/Dan's Dish.** Dan Haron reported that when he meets with the Executive Board the conversation is very interactive and interesting. That meeting takes place in a more intimate setting. We have rearranged the auditorium a little to try and recreate that atmosphere. Dan reported that 2012 student enrollment projections would indicate the additions of 2 extra teachers. We currently average 18 students in a class although it varies from 5 to 25.

**DAN'S DISH TOPIC: ASPEN.** Dan acknowledged that there are inconsistencies among teachers and departments when it comes to the frequency and timing of grades being reported and posted to ASPEN. This is to be expected as there is a big difference between an English class vs. a math class. The guideline for ASPEN is that by mid-quarter, every teacher should have something on ASPEN which gives the student an idea of where they stand (akin to a progress report). If a student is not doing well or is sliding down, teachers are advised to place a phone call to the parents. While parents can find this frustrating, part of our role at DHS is to move the students from 9<sup>th</sup> grade toward graduation and college. In college, parents don't have the rights to their grades. The administration sends reminder emails to teachers before the quarter ends.

Q: Is there an ASPEN tutorial?

A: The best thing for parents to do is to just go on to the website and start working with it. There is no possibility that you can cause harm to the site by exploring it.

Q: Are homework assignments on ASPEN?

A: Not usually, unless there is a grade associated with it. Most homework assignments will be posted on the teacher's website. There is an ASPEN portal – apart from the grades section – where homework can be posted.

Dan explained that there are instances where putting grades up on ASPEN is not recommended. For example, suppose the majority of the grade for a class is a semester paper, but a reading quiz is given early in the semester. The student didn't read the book and got an F. To post that grade would just create a frenzy. If quizzes are given regularly, it makes a little more sense to include them on ASPEN.

We need to be concerned always with putting too much unnecessary stress on students. Parents asked if it was possible for teachers to refrain from posting grades for papers until the papers are returned to the students.

**Guidance Director's Report.** Paul Ribeiro reminded seniors that 12/1 is the transcript request deadline for January 1<sup>st</sup> applications. Paul asked parents to encourage students to let your counselor know about your acceptances. PSAT results are going to be available to students by visiting their guidance counselors. There will be a meeting about how to read your PSAT scores. The PLC date in November was very well attended. In February there will be a PLC program for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Registration will be the topic. Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> will be the alumnae program for seniors (panel discussion). It is hoped that there will be a follow up homeroom in January, having 1-2 recent DHS graduates come into each senior homeroom.

**Program:**

This month's program was presented by Rachel Bruno of the Governor's Prevention Partnership and was entitled Current Alcohol & Other Drug Trends – Today's Youth.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50am.

NEXT DHSPA MEETING: Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 9:15am.

Submitted by Lynn Biggart  
1/16/2012