Minutes of the Classical High School Community Association

Meeting on May 1, 2019
Prepared by John Landry

          Co-chair Marybel Martinez ran the meeting, and secretary John Landry was present.  Five other parents attended, as well as Jennifer DiBiasio, the school alumni association’s liaison to our association.
            We had no speaker at this meeting; instead we went over a variety of items.
            Marybel reported on the annual teacher appreciation luncheon, which ran that day.  It went smoothly, with plenty of food, and cost us about $900 separate from donations. Most of the teachers and staff attended. The alumni association provided gift cards to all the women teachers for spa treatments.  For next year’s luncheon, we’d like to start putting the word out for volunteers sooner.  We’d also like to have a different cuisine from Italian, and also more protein, less carb.
            Marybel and co-chair Gloria Hartman met with Principal Barr today to talk about two big issues: the building and next year’s class schedule.  Thanks to the municipal bond issue, the city’s schools will be receiving $27 million for renovation and repair.  Aramark is managing the process and visited our school today to assess various projects. The priority is to fix the building’s plumbing; replacing the lockers is also on the list.  (Bigger jobs such as replacing the roof will have to wait for more funding.)  It may take several months to fix the plumbing, so we asked about the cafeteria workers refilling the drinking water tanks at midday so kids with the third lunch could get some water.
            Mainly because of the bond proceeds, the school has revived its School Improvement Team (SIT).  The next meeting is June 5th, at 7:45am.  Gloria has attended those meetings in the past.  (We hope to report on this meeting at our June parents association meeting that evening.)  This team is separate from the city-wide SIT formed to work with the state department of education, which recently announced a “deep dive” into assessing why the city’s schools continue to underperform.
            About class schedules, here is the plan: No more late start Wednesday; instead, every day will begin at the same time, around 8:15am. We’ll have a rotating schedule by week, so one week the student’s first class will run in the first period, the next week the day will start with the second class, and so on for six weeks, and then start again with the first class in the first period.  There will be no more daily advisory; instead there will be a single day with a long advisory period, similar to what happens on Thursday now.  The teachers’ common planning time will be broken up in smaller chunks throughout the week, probably before school starts.
            A parent asked about block schedules, where not every class meets every day, and each class lasts longer.  So instead of six classes at 50 minutes, you might have, say, four classes of 75 minutes each.  It’s similar to a college schedule, and would enable labs and other extended experiences not currently possible.  A number of local high schools have recently switched to it.  At least some teachers seem to be in favor of it as well.  The only downside that came up was that some subjects, such as math and foreign language, benefit from daily practice.  Block scheduling sounded good to all the parents present, so we will follow up with the administration about it, in hopes of considering it for the following year.  Note that the June SIT meeting will discuss class schedules as well as the building.  (For more information on block schedules, see this helpful website: [https://www.edglossary.org/block-schedule/](https://classicalhighschool.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0929024bf56fb0cd226f29d5b&id=a306b2ac99&e=eefd7e97c3))
            Marybel said our certification for running concessions at Gillette Stadium is nearly set.  That’s going to replace the apparel sales we’ve relied on for fundraising up to now.  Marybel will be the captain for the volunteer teams at the stadium events, so please hit reply to this email to learn more or volunteer.
            A parent asked about fundraising through concession sales at school sporting events.  The problem is that some of the bigger sports have booster clubs that often offer concessions there, so we would be competing with them.
          A number of parents praised the sale of apparel at the summer orientation for incoming students.  It is good to give the new students a tangible takeaway of their connection to the school.  We still have a small leftover inventory of clothes, and Marybel will ask Gloria about the possibilities of selling apparel there and online.
          From there we talked about where the association spends its money.  Besides the teacher luncheon, we provide a winter breakfast for teachers on a late-start day – but will that continue next year?  As for the discretionary giving for needy students for gowns and other special expenses, a parent asked about reusing gowns from graduation.  We’ll look into that.  There was mixed support for helping kids buy yearbooks.
           We ended with a parent asking to spread the word on an outside event: Infosys, which opened a design center downtown, will be running a hackathon on June 1st.  High-schoolers with coding or musical talent are welcome.
           Our next meeting, and the final one for the school year, is Wednesday June 5that 6:30pm in the library.
            Any thoughts, opinions or concerns, please reply to this email.
            As always, for more information on anything, go to the Parents page of [www.providenceschools.org/Classical](https://classicalhighschool.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0929024bf56fb0cd226f29d5b&id=23e15eedae&e=eefd7e97c3), or email ClassicalParents@gmail.com.