Minutes of the Classical High School Community Association

Meeting on Sept. 4, 2019

Prepared by John Landry

Chair Marybel Martinez ran the meeting, secretary John Landry was present, and eight other parents attended.

We had no speaker at this meeting; instead we went over a variety of items.

**Welcoming new parents and guardians**

We explained the three purposes of the association:

1) Show the parents’ appreciation of teachers through the annual luncheon and other activities

2) Fund specific activities and programs as suggested by teachers and administrators, especially for students with limited resources

3) Boost communication between parents and the administration and provide some accountability to developments at the school

The description of the association now on the school’s parent webpage is out of date, and we’ll work to change it.

**Schedule changes**

No concerns expressed so far. One parent noted that Bishop Middle School rotates the class periods daily, and said Classical’s decision to rotate them weekly makes more sense.

**State takeover**

Little to say other than to encourage parents to attend the next meeting, Oct. 2, where Principal Barr will discuss the takeover.

**Update on plumbing and other improvements**

The boys’ and girls’ bathroom got extensive cleaning and repairs over the summer, and so far are working much better than last year. About the concerns over lead in the water fountains, we’re still getting details from the administration; stay tuned. The cafeteria has expanded its drinking water supplies so there should be plenty for students at lunchtime.

**Update on fundraising**

The tax certificate has arrived, so we can now bring teams to Gillette Stadium events. Marybel will be sending out a link to an online sign-up for parents, with full details. We hope to do that soon, because the association has only a little money left over from last year.

We also discussed resuming sales of apparel, which we stopped last year because it had become a time sink. We think there’s a way to sell the apparel, certainly online and also in person, without a big time commitment. And we’d like to do that because no other school groups have come forward to sell general Classical apparel in volume. Providing the apparel helps to build school spirit. Marybel is looking into this as well.

We’d like to do more to support students in various ways, while still showing appreciation to teachers, so we’re hoping to raise more money over time. Maybe we could even ask parents for direct donations.

**New issues**

We talked about getting more parents involved and attending meetings. How about a robocall from the school to get parents to join the email list? We have only about 600 parent email addresses for a school with about a thousand students, and some of those addresses are for parents whose kids have graduated. We’re also hoping to have at least an assistant principal at most meetings.

People asked about the association’s Facebook page, which has been dormant. Facebook and other social media may not be good ways for us to communicate because we don’t want these channels highjacked.

We also talked about the association doing more to publicize school events to parents. From theater to athletics and debates, students put on a great many shows that could interest parents beyond those with kids directly involved. The online school calendar lists only events for the entire school community, such as International Night and the Japanese/Sakura Festival. Maybe we can work with the school newspaper, the Purple Post. One idea is to have a paragraph mentioning a few noteworthy events go out in the monthly meeting agenda.

In a related issue, we’d like to get the FAQ for new parents, which we passed out at the first-year orientation in August, translated into Spanish. We’ll find out how the school translates its materials into Spanish to see if we can use that resource. From there, we can see about translating the meeting minutes into Spanish. The school website has a menu option to automatically translate its pages, including the parents page, into Spanish and dozens of other languages.

Separately, we talked about the yearbook photos. Seniors must now travel to Warwick and pay $30 to have their formal photo taken. If seniors want to have a special pose, they must pay extra, and that’s separate from any photos printed for parents. Is there a way to make these photos less expensive and more convenient? Maybe the school photography club could take this on? How important is it to have professional, formal photos in the yearbook?

A couple of parents noted that their kids had substitute teachers in some classes because the school district hasn’t filled all the vacancies. One parent pointed to the contract with the teachers’ union, which apparently prevents the district from advertising openings until late in the summer. Another parent said that the vacancy rate in Providence, 90 openings district-wide, is pretty normal for urban districts.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, October 2, 6:30-7:30pm in the school library. Our November meeting will likely be a social gathering on Wednesday the 13th, not the 6; details to come.

The Open House for parents will be Tuesday Sept. 17th, and we encouraged all parents to attend, not just those with first-year students.