

Darien High School Parents Association
February 6, 2017

Welcome/Call to order by Sue Hayes.

Sue thanked the hospitality committee, the Staff Holiday Luncheon team and everyone at DHS involved in the Budget Process, particularly Anne Dixon, Peter Orphanos and the seven high school students who spoke at the budget meeting.

Approval of the Minutes of the November 22 meeting by Joanna Garrett.

Committee Reports and Announcements

Treasurer – Stacey Smith
Nothing to report.

College/Career Center – Terrie Van de Graaf and Tammy Sload
Nothing to report.

Communications – Pam Ha-Stevenson and Theresa Vogt
Theresa announced the new Facebook page for DHS and community news.

Fundraising – Amy Howe and Wanda Forlivio
They thanked everyone who donated this year.

Nominating – Allegra Erikson and Shelley Skogland
Please reach out to them if you are interested in a volunteer position for next year.

Programs – Margot Congdon and Susan Vogel
There was a panel on February 7th called “Truth and Consequences”; which will focus on the cognitive, social, emotional, legal and academic ramifications of underage drinking. A panel of experts will present: Dr. Aaron Krasner, Silver Hill's Adolescent TLP Service Chief, Attorney Matthew Maddox, Nancy Herling of Post 53, Detective James Palmieri and DHS Principal Ellen Dunn. Sue Hayes mentioned that all meetings are filmed and available on the DHS website. Parents should go to the Parents Tab and then click on DHSPA.

Report by Ellen Dunn

She expressed her appreciation for the support of the DHS community. Ellen shared some of the advice from graduates that have come back to visit the school. Many graduates recommended that students explore their interests and not just focus on building a transcript for college.

Report by Paul Ribiero

There are resources for course selection on the DHS website under the Guidance tab-Course Catalog. At the present time, teachers are having conversations with students regarding course selection. Some classes have grade thresholds that students have to meet in order to get approval for a class. That decision can change during the 3rd and 4th marking periods when additional grades are given. The portal will be open on Aspen for students to select electives. After February break and until mid-March, students can make appointments and meet with guidance counselors to discuss courses. At that point, most decisions should be final since a master calendar needs to be finalized.

Electives Discussion

Teachers from different academic departments reported on some electives offered to DHS students. For a complete list of courses and descriptions, please refer to the DHS Course Catalog.

Science Department

Dave Lewis-Department Chair

ASR: Authentic Science Research Project: Independent science project with a mentor.

Full Year: There are many full year science classes such as: **Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth Science, Environmental Science and AP classes.**

There are many half year classes which were introduced by some science teachers in the department.

Forensic Investigation

Neuroscience and Biopsychology

Botany

Marine Science

Modern Physics

These classes are offered to juniors and seniors.

English Department

Matt Pavia-English Department Chair

Half Year Electives:

Writers Workshop: 10, 11, 12 grade students. The students will have more exposure to expository and creative writing.

Advanced Writing Seminar: This class is for students who have been informally recommended and have academic focus and skill to further develop their writing. These students will also have the opportunity to tutor younger DHS students.

Drama 1 and 2: 9 -12 grade students. Fundamentals of acting and scene study. Students can take Drama 2 multiple times.

Intro to Journalism: 9, 10, 11 grade students. Students work on different journalism genres.

Advanced Journalism: 10, 11 and 12 grade students. Students can take this class multiple times and work on the school newspaper.

Critical Approaches to Film: 11 and 12 grade students. This class studies different film genres.

Intro to Creative Writing and Creative Writing Advanced.

For juniors and seniors: **British Literature, Shakespeare, Modern Poetry, Literature and Philosophy, Contemporary Fiction.**

Change in the English Department: The 11 grade Honors Literature class is now AP Language and Composition. There will be more of a focus on non-fiction and rhetoric and how writers make decisions regarding the tone in their writing. AP Language will remain for the 12 grade. There will be two separate classes of the 12th grade AP Language class: one class for the students that took AP Language and Composition in 11th grade and another class for students that took the 300 class in junior year that want to progress into an AP class in their senior year.

History Department

Keith Keeler-History Department

Psychology: Exposure to the main theorists in psychology and the sub-fields within.

Philosophy: Focuses on western civilization.

Humanities: This class is really an urban studies class and it teaches students how to thrive in an urban environment. Students will study many architectural styles and the organization of urban space. This class has three field trips.

Economics: This class focuses on the theory of Micro and Macro Economics.

Contemporary Issues: Open to 11 and 12 grade students. This class is a debate of modern issues with Time magazine as the textbook. The class examines the role of bias. Students are evaluated based on class participation and discussion. They work on writing revision, time management and scheduling. Students who take this class have an option to do the class Introduction to Human Rights: ECE: Early College Experience UCONN component. In this class, they are in the same classroom as the Contemporary Issues class but they get a Darien High School grade and a University of Connecticut transcript grade. These grades may differ as University of Connecticut does not count homework and writing rewrites in the final grade.

America Since 1945: This class focuses on the end of World War 2 until the present day and is a study of the social and political history of modern America taught through popular culture. The class, open to 11 and 12 students, is a seminar discussion modeled around a college class.

AP Economics: Micro-Economics: the theoretical underpinnings of a market economy. This class is not just theory but involves the application of microeconomic concepts.

AP Macro Economics: Students have to first take Microeconomics or be concurrently enrolled.

AP Geography: Open to seniors.

AP European History : Full year. A very academic elective for students who like Western Civilization. The class is modeled after a typical college course.

China Exchange: Open to 10, 11 and 12 grade students. The class prepares for the China delegation.

Kerry McKay: Reading Specialist

Reading and Study Skills: Small class (16 students): 9-12 grade students. Students are in the class for many different reasons. Some want to prepare for the ACT and SAT. Some practice Fiction and Non-Fiction book reading. Students create Smart goals with regards to writing and organization. Independent study option for 11 and 12 graders. Students can repeat the class. This class also provides extra time for students who need it for test taking, homework etc.

Tech Ed, Business, Computer Department: Jeremy Nelson:

DIY: Automotive, Home Based. Open to 9-12 grade students.

Intro to Computer Science

Web Design

Computer Animation

AP Computer Science: 1st AP class that students can take at DHS.

Marketing

Pre-Law

Woodworking

Advanced Engineering

2 year Independent project in Engineering

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Stevenson Garrett
DHSPA Secretary