

## **The Bromfield School**

**School Council Minutes - Wednesday, January 9, 2019  
Faculty Lounge 3PM**

**Members Present: Robin Benoit (for Scott Hoffman), Chris Jones, Jessica Finnegan, Ellen Sachs-Leicher, Sharon Cronin, Colleen Nigzus, Deb Barton, Karen Strickland, Katy Covino, Ben Myers, Elena Franklin, Kate Selig, Vivian Liu, Tiana Jiang**

### **Vision Statement:**

The Harvard Public Schools community, dedicated to educational excellence, guides all students to realize their highest potential by balancing academic achievement with personal well-being in the pursuit of individual dreams. The students engage in learning how to access and apply knowledge, think critically and creatively, and communicate effectively. They develop the confidence and ability to understand diverse perspectives, collaborate, and contribute to their local, national and global communities.

### **Principal's Report:** Happy New Year!

Geography Bee Moment – Won by Sixth Grader Cole Dobbie.

Brain Break on December 21

Giving Tree/Project 351 - more than 600 presents; over 500 pounds of food.

Middle School Volleyball - Staff vs. Students

Great concerts

Faculty Meeting - Vaping Discussion; To Be Continued-Student Forum? Overview for faculty done by Health & Wellness & School Nurse; current trends; changes to handbook; how address issues with students; concern about treatment.

Tri-M Induction Ceremony - tomorrow night, January 10

Snow Flake - Friday night, January 11

### **School Committee Report: None provided**

### **Subcommittee Updates:**

Balance – The subcommittee has not met since the last Council meeting, will schedule its meeting before next full council meeting.

The council discussed balance at great length during the meeting.

- Quarterly grading creates pressure points toward the end of the quarter. Though there has been some success in reducing work over holidays/vacations, the side effect is to condense the pressure to the end of the quarter, many times after a long break. However, it is impossible to have a perfectly smooth workload.

- Achieving balance in the high school has been an ongoing concern for at least ten years.

Although several positive actions have been taken, It is clear from student members and survey results that additional changes are needed.

- What we have accomplished to improve balance:

- Art and health class requirements, added to the curriculum, impact the number of overall academic classes a student can take, particularly AP courses.

- The deadline to petition to take a higher level course than recommended is tighter.
- Currently, there is no limit on the number of AP classes a student can take.

Other opinions offered during the discussion:

Additional consideration is needed about the amount of homework and projects necessary to meet course requirements.

Prepare parents and students, beginning in middle school, for high school curriculum choices.

Proposal from Balance Committee: Set a very firm limit on number of AP courses per year, with very few or no exceptions. Note that AP course content must be geared almost entirely to teaching for the test, with little latitude for lab work and projects to improve critical thinking skills.

The school can enhance the content of honors courses, over which it has control, to include hands-on science activities and other opportunities to enrich critical thinking. What can be done with honors courses, and what effect would it have on increasingly competitive college admissions?

Other ideas considered: Provide wider exposure of parents, faculty and council members to “At What Cost” by David Gleason, the book that the Balance Committee has read and referenced, with discussion on how to address the issues described therein. The school administration expects to meet during January to consider the most recent recommendations from the Balance Committee.

- Balance Committee will meet to continue discussion and recommendations based on the full Council discussion.

- Career - Date for reality fair? Second year of fair will have fewer surprises, re-use and minor edits to materials. 10<sup>th</sup> grade-only or both 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>? Subcommittee to meet after date for fair is set. Having program for both 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades required more volunteers to cover additional sessions.
- Career #2 - Set up informal program for recent graduates to mentor current students re. College choice, career choice, personal experiences. Structure around class reunions, school sports events; provide on-line contact via social media, podcasts or other; incentivize with a gathering.
- Climate - need timely mechanisms to publish information from both climate surveys and the 2018 Youth Risk survey; date for subcommittee to meet is not set.
- Handbook – needs review.

**New Business** – None identified

**Meetings for 2018-19**

February 13, **March 20 (revised date)**, April 10, May 15, June 12

Ben Myers

Secretary, Bromfield School Council