Board and General Membership Meeting  
December 4, 2013  
7:30PM, Trailers 1 & 2


Grace Becker called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35PM.

President’s Report: Grace Becker  
- Taping the meeting approved by unanimous consent.  
- Approval of November 2013 minutes: Grace presented the November 2013 minutes for approval. The minutes were approved as written.

Student Government Association report: Joey Valery, SGA President, reported that SGA is discussing a new Senior Research Lab on the web and applications. SGA is also examining the possibility of a new food program; they’re investigating culinary programs at other high schools. I-Nite will take place at George Mason University in late February. Students are also discussing their concern that courses (especially science) are not consistent across instructors.

Treasurer’s Report: Enit Lulushi encouraged everyone to use the Amazon portal for purchases.

Special Presentation: Dr. Danny Lewin, Children’s National Medical Center

Dr. Lewin’s presentation focused on the need for later school start times. He emphasized the importance of sleep timing and duration. Later bedtimes are caused by the demands placed on teens – “and this is probably demand central”.

He reported that an increasing discrepancy between bed and wake times during the week and on the weekend is associated with learning deficits and behavior problems. “The result is a permanent state of jet lag.” For optimal performance, students need to average 9-9.25 hours of sleep per night. Eighty percent of adolescents get less than 9 hours of sleep on school nights.
Sleep loss selectively affects executive function, emotional regulation, and reward-related decision making. He recommended looking at Smartschoolstart.org for additional information.

Q&A included parent questions dealing with the usefulness of naps and ways to help students break the cycle of sleep deprivation.

Dr. Lewin: Long afternoon naps rob kids of ability to sleep at night; 10-15 minute power naps are ideal. To help students sleep well, have routine activities before bedtime, set regular wake times across the course of the week, and preferably eliminate caffeine completely. Don’t change sleep patterns more than one to 1.5 hours on the weekend.

Students from Active Minds said they had carried out a quick survey of sleep habits and received 86 responses:
- 82 percent of students said they were somewhat or very likely to fall asleep during the day
- 72 percent think they need at least 7 hours sleep to function well
- 77 of 86 students said homework is preventing them from getting enough sleep

**Principal's report:** Dr. Evan Glazer

I-Nite will be at the Center for Performing Arts at GMU to have more seats so that more students can attend. They’re also trying to develop a second night performance for parents.

Because of budgetary issues, FCPS has ordered that employees stop traveling overnight for professional development, national conferences, etc. In the past, the PTSA has been helpful particularly in assisting with registration costs, but PTSA's aren’t allowed to pay these costs for the rest of the school year. There is an exemption for chaperone travel for student competitions. There are still questions about some of the specifics of implementing the travel ban.

A few new courses are in the mix. Web and app lab is one possibility. When considering new courses, we have a discussion within the divisions, and student government sponsors have a seat at the table. But we also have to look at what courses students would migrate away from.

Building hours are shifting because there’s much more construction within the building from here on out. The construction team is asking for many more activities to be in the trailers. We’ve asked for permission to have one area of the school that students and parents can access after hours that has access to restrooms.

The new dropoff pattern essentially creates two lanes to let more traffic fit down the access road. Be safer – we’re not running a NASCAR event.
Remember that gifts from students or parents to school system employees are limited to a maximum of $25 per recipient. It’s possible to donate a larger amount to the school in honor of someone. The Partnership Fund has a huge wish list, and the library has also had a wish list.

Question: At this point, a parent asked whether Dr. Glazer was going to address the sleep issues, including work load and what happens if bus schedules change. Dr. Glazer asked Laura McConnaughey, Greg Myers, and Andrea Smith for their perspectives.

Laura McConnaughey said she has spoken with colleagues and is doing studies in learning design and research. There are concerns about electronic textbooks – kids say they’re too distracted when they’re on the computer – and that it’s taking twice as long to do homework.

Greg Myers said the latest research is telling us that the idea of multi-tasking doesn’t exist – it’s really just rapid cycling and shifting of attention. You’re just less efficient. The students think they’re good at it.

He shared the sleep model with parents last year; which was very much in line with what Dr. Lewin recommended. Add the idea of emergency napping – sometimes you can’t fight it and may need to stop and take a nap.

Question: My daughter doesn’t multi-task. But because we push her into bed at 11PM, she’s up at 4:30AM. Have you all exhausted every avenue to lessen the workload? Is there any policy you can change at the school or is it all about the students changing?

Evan Glazer – it’s more about students making choices. But Greg Myers is working with teachers and students to discuss recommendations associated with homework. From my point of view it’s like a candy store of opportunity – we need to help students recognize where their limitations are and how they can cut back. When you have overachievement, you also have behaviors that may be going far beyond what we should be doing in order to achieve. Part of maturity is accepting where we want to accept our limitations. I believe that’s really challenging in our environment.

Question: So the amount of homework being assigned is not an issue?

Evan Glazer: Greg Myers is leading a team of people who are developing ideas for staff. But also need recommendations for students to help them understand that it’s not about getting the A if you’re making a significant sacrifice to have this “perfect” GPA.

Andrea Smith: Sometimes students want to over accelerate. What if they take Calculus AB instead of BC? How do you survey, review, preview, rather than just studying the night before?
Question: I have twins -- One daughter is at our base high school and one is here. The difference in magnitude of work is huge. I expect a different proportion, but the magnitude is staggering.

Student: I'm a froshmore, so I have experience in my home high school and here. The difference in communities is that everyone wants to be here and is willing to put in the extra time. That's what allows us to succeed the way we have.

Another student: I often hear that the parents are demanding the grade.

Evan Glazer: Parents have to be part of the conversation as well. I'm not going to say there aren't problems with work load at TJ – I believe that there are.

Brandon Kosatka: The priority as parents needs to be establishing habits so that their health is a priority. If they're not healthy, they're not productive. Before we talk about classes and decisions, we have to set that as a priority.

Motion to adjourn: Lisa Marcantonio moved to adjourn. Michele Gonzalez seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:10PM.