

Town Meeting

5-17-12

TOWN MEETING

5/17/12

Precursors:

- SAB - no
- Staff Meeting - no

Announcements:

- HVAC work has begun. Lowest parking lot is now closed for duration of the school year. Plan ahead, you may need to park on neighboring streets, increasing time to get to school. (Or walk or bike) This summer, the entire school save the music wing will be closed. The lot will be closed until December.
- Scholarship Nominations forms now available, see Liz. Nominate a senior soon.
- Library Shut-Down dates: No Interlibrary Loans after May 25th, all books due back June 8th, all equipment due back June 11th. No laptop/iPad loans after that date. Plan ahead!
- Room Committee meets today @ lunch in the library.
- Update on four hiring committees: Chemistry, we should hear next week. Special Ed, Drama and Business in process. Meetings next week for Drama, see Mary McBride. Business on calendar but interviews/meetings not yet scheduled.
- TA choice forms in the office.

Motions:

- Motions by Cora and Peter in regard to High School Computer Lab/Computer Use. All tabled last week.
Cora's Motion: Ban games completely in the lab.
The TM has already banned gaming. It didn't work. Use of unmonitored computers is a similar privilege to leaving campus. We should make this an age-based privilege, and have a permission slip for the right to use an unmonitored lab. This issue goes deeper than the stated motion. It deals with the concept of student privilege. We've banned games before. It was ineffective. As for the idea of treating gaming as a right, I believe that technology should be separate from HBW philosophy. We made a good-faith effort to improve conditions in the lab. Right now, the rule-set is complicated. As a teacher I have lost authority due this new rule-set the committee created. We should ban gaming for the SOLs. I think that gaming should be done on personal devices. Next year we will have a log-in system: we can use that to enforce a no-gaming policy. Maybe we should tolerate gaming, but if gaming is disruptive, students can request the gaming cease. Gaming is not the only problem here in the lab. Computers are vandalized, mice get stolen, the entire system gets screwed up. People are doing everything in their power to mess with the school firewall. HBW respects the rights of others, but the right to swing my arm ends at my face. The only two solutions are to close this lab, or to self-enforce the lab. The big question is whether we need a lab in the first place. We're in the lab for a reason. It's to send a message. If you're a gamer, pass along this message: if we don't fix the problems in the lab, it will be closed. We can ban games, but what happens if we do and nothing gets fixed? We'll have to close the lab. (Question called) Motion PASSED.
- Peter's motion: recreate committee to come up with a set of rules governing gaming in the lab. The idea is to legislate gaming. Discussion can and should continue, but note that gaming is banned by the county and we must adhere to county guidelines. Motion PASSED. Committee will meet during TM in the middle school lab, and lunchtime next Friday same place.
- Senior Scholarship Committee - Liz. This committee happens without student participation. We will decide which Seniors are deserving of the scholarship. Motion PASSED unanimously.
- Allocation TM next Thursday 5/24. Last Allocation TM, we decided to wait for a budget increase to avoid cuts. We needed about .4 more to keep the proposed budget. WE GOT IT! Where should we hold the meeting? Maybe the library would be good? There is not going to be a lot of controversy. We could hold this in the library. We could hold it in the auditorium. Last time we assumed little controversy, there was a ton. Chorus is meeting in the auditorium, so that's closed off. Meet in the library. Motion PASSED.

Discussion:

- Ending the school-year the 2nd week of May - Elly Kluge. After APs are over, the school basically ends. It's frustrating as a history teacher to have these students disappear. We should acknowledge this lack of engagement, and declare classes are over after the last AP test. This idea is kinda out there, so I'd like to ask students why they aren't engaged in learning after the AP. Why is the test an endgame for so many students? Direct Question: Would this motion be limited to APs? No. Some of us are still looking for knowledge. If the class was interesting, I'll show up. Otherwise, I'll probably disappear. Some people check out in some classes, and I'm one of those people. APs should mark the end of a curriculum class. I like Senior projects. Maybe we could expand this hands-on approach to other grades? Could we find a way to teach this uncovered material in an engaging way? We had this problem with Seniors. We solved it with the Senior project. It's hard to maintain interest if the staff themselves cancel classes. Both sides need to put effort in: students to show interest, and teachers need to create interesting classwork. The grading period isn't over. Students should be going to class for learning, not grades. Maybe we should have a mini-elective based class. Change the classes to a single-focus class. Presentations are important. They display knowledge. We should have a big exhibition of presentations by students. We all hate these big exams, but once they end, students stop caring. I think we need to dial down the obsession of these tests. The goal is to learn, not perform well on a test. The question is NOT one of mindset. It's also all of these trips that take students away from my classes. I think it's romanticized to think that all students love all of their classes. Students complain that curriculum doesn't cover the AP material. This is part of the mindset that the only thing that matters in a class is the test. Classes CAN be interesting after APs. We need to rethink the curriculum. While it's frustrating that students aren't showing up, that is their right. They will get a bad grade, but it IS their right. We need to make classes interesting, but we shouldn't cancel them. Homework should continue. Maybe each student could find one topic that interests them, and pursue that interest. I think that might take up this period. Outside teacher money could be spent to make these classes interesting. We should take advantage of this time: let people do what interests them. The responsibility should be on the students. HBW is about student responsibility: students should have the motivation to come to class.

Chair: Stephen Moran

Co-Chair: Robi Rahman

Secretary: Will Hubbert