

Town Meeting

12-11-14

TOWN MEETING

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Precursors

- SAB - This week's meeting concerned budget issues, and the FLES and immersion programs were discussed, among other items.
- Staff meeting: none

Announcements

- Casey spoke about our custodian, Earnest, whose house burned about 10 days ago. Earnest was hurt but is okay; his wife suffered more severe burns and is in the Washington Hospital Center. Their children were not home and are fine, but the house was badly damaged and needs many thousands of dollars' worth of work. Staff has donated money to help them, but donations from the larger HB community would be welcome. Money should be sent in to Kathy with "Earnest" in the memo line of checks. Casey said they are hoping that Earnest will be back at school in time to participate in the volleyball tournament - one of his favorite events.

Consent Items - none

Motions

- Mark Dodge presented a joint science/music department request for outside teacher money (\$200) to fund a visit from Jamey Turner, a glass harp player, on Thursday, February 26. Jamey is a marvelous musician who plays wine glasses, saws, wrenches, etc. and has performed at the White House. His visit would coincide with a physics' department study of unusual musical instruments. A question was asked about a special schedule for that day, but Mark said that although no time had been finalized, he anticipates the presentation will be in the afternoon. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- Casey proposed a special schedule for the Volleyball Tournament on Tuesday, December 23rd: A,C,&D would meet in the morning (no TA), followed by E, and then the tournament. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- 6th grader Amir proposed allowing 6th and 7th graders off-campus privileges with their guardians' consent (tabled from last meeting). His argument was that if parents/guardians considered their children responsible enough, HB should respect that trust. A lengthy discussion followed:
 - o Emma (12th) said that part of being a student at HB is learning about rights and privileges over time. She also believes that part of a class having privileges while the others don't would lead to feelings of unfairness and inequality.
 - o Liza (11th) said that having to stay on campus helped reinforce a sense of community in the 6th and 7th grade, and that the extra time high schoolers have in their schedules makes going off campus more reasonable.
 - o Daniel (12th) spoke about how big the HB campus is, which gives 6th and 7th graders greater freedom than other kids at other schools have right from the start. He also talked about how when he was in 6th or 7th grade, 8th graders had been so stupid as to play chicken in the road, making the point that at any age, privileges can't be taken for granted.
 - o Liz questioned Casey about the history of the grade divide: Casey said that a compromise had been reached with the School Board in 1989 when the 6th grade was first added to HB.
 - o Lizzie (12th) spoke about off campus privileges being a rite of passage that should have some meaning and should be a result of a certain level of maturity.
 - o Amir countered that many 6th graders ARE responsible and mature and that their parents should have the right to decide. He also said that current 6th and 7th graders shouldn't be penalized for bad things kids did back in the 80s because kids are different now (!!).
 - o Dan Paris said that current regulations probably aren't completely in line with HB philosophy, and that calling things a "rite of passage" was not a good reason for anything.
 - o Kendall (12th) said that 6th and 7th grade is a time for team and community building, and that students already have many privileges, including the ice cream truck, which wasn't around when the seniors were

young.

o Tom Mallan agreed with Dan, but said that dividing the grades between those with privileges and those without would lead to the need for more enforcement and undoubtedly, more attention from the School Board. Enforcement would have to be taken seriously, and staff would have to be assigned to police who came and went.

o Bill P. said how much he liked driving a car and how he was sure there were young students who would no doubt drive well, if they were so allowed, but that society chooses to make rules concerning when certain privileges become available.

o Caleb (9th) reiterated how important 6th and 7th grade is for getting to know classmates - something that is diminished when kids spend time off campus.

o Margaret S. spoke about how some kids act very mature and responsible at a young age as individuals, but that they don't always behave as well in a group.

o Amir said he thought people at Town Meeting spend too much time worrying about the School Board.

o Hannah (9th) said that in upper grades it was often hard sometimes to spend time with people with different schedules. By having to stay on campus, 6th and 7th graders had better chances to bond with each other.

(Motion made and passed to close speakers' list)

o Margaret (12th) asked if we had the authority to allow 6th and 7th graders off campus. Casey answered . . . perhaps not.

o Dave Soles asked if the School Board would even notice, and said that the motion was indeed in line with HB philosophy. He, himself, was not at all convinced that 8th graders were more responsible than 6th or 7th graders, and if we were going to make a decision based on maturity and responsibility, we should only allow girls off campus. Perhaps we should try allowing 7th graders off and see what would happen.

o Emma (12th) wondered if level of responsible behavior would change if kids had more privileges, but said we shouldn't make decisions based on fear of the School Board. She added, though, that the idea would probably alarm many parents and lead to severe penalties for the school as a whole if kids left who weren't supposed to.

o Lizzie (12th) mentioned the huge difference between the overall atmosphere here and at many elementary schools, and said that kids learned to handle the extra freedoms at HB by watching and learning from older students.

o Jennifer Goen spoke about how big the campus is and how students already have so many privileges: the hills to sled on in the snow, the ice cream truck, etc., and that if younger kids wanted to spend more time off campus, they should ask for it in their TAs as a way to stay active and build community. She added that off-campus privileges for 6th and 7th graders might add a whole new level of concern for 5th grade parents considering HB. Seen in that light, there might be a benefit to parents truly understanding the HB philosophy before their kids start 6th grade.

o Evan (6th) disagreed with Dave Soles about levels of immaturity and the need for more bonding.

o Ilene (6th) said that her TA had only left campus once, and that it had been a lot of fun, but if they got to leave more often, the novelty would wear off.

As the speaker list had been closed, the motion was repeated, voted on, and it did not pass.

Chair: Amanda Hayes

Co-Chair: Adam Sherinian

Secretary: Margaret Gorman