

PENDING APPROVAL AT THE NEXT PTO MEETING, April 16, 2009
VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL/VALLEY SOUTHWOODS PTO MINUTES
February 24, 2009

Welcome/Introductions- Karen Floss & Cathy Guendel

The meeting was called to order by Co-President, Karen Floss at 7:00 p.m. in the Valley High School Forum.

Attendance:

Karen Floss, Cathy Guendel, Joe Burvee, Janet Thompson, Bronya Metzger, Fran Ronnau, Karen Maigaerd, Sherry Thompkins, Mr. Kent Abrahamson, Dr. Vicky Poole, Eric Traynor, Luke Donahe, Jesse Moreno, Doug Shultice, Janene Pollack, Bonnie Campbell, Chrystal Simoneaux, Kim, Robinson, Jan Fry, Heather Martin, Jane Berntson, Geniece Wright, Kiki Curtis, Dave Hennings, Bernice del Valle, Ann Undurty, Marc Harper, Sherrie Harper, Chen Yanag, Sumin Chen, Laura Koch, Karen Marik, Daniela Dobrinov, Mikail Dobrinov, Monica Gordon, Barbara Carson, Chuck Denton, Connie Bever, Nan Hahn, Scott Just, Fenchin Yu, Tina Neustrom, Jean Hixson, Dwayne Hixson, Michele Catellier, Deborah Dunn, Jun Wei, and Dan Duve.

Guest Speaker- Eric Traynor/Counselor at VHS

A large turn out was present to hear Mr. Traynor speak about college planning. Mr. Traynor passed out many hand outs such as, minimum requirements for admission to Iowa Regents Universities, lists of scholarships, the Four Year Plan form, ACT information, prep classes for the ACT, and Kuder Codes, a website for interest inventories. If you desire any of these hand outs, they are available in the Counseling office at VHS.

Mr. Traynor noted that 65% of the graduates from the 2008 class enrolled in a four year college, and 25% of the graduates enrolled in a two year college.

The WDM school district raised the graduation requirements for students in the Junior, Sophomore and Freshman class. This will provide a more rigorous curriculum and standards to prepare them for post secondary success.

The Four Year Plan is a form which will help students and families map out course requirements while attending VSW and VHS. The plan starts in eighth grade to select courses while at VSW. Mr. Traynor said this plan should be given serious consideration for graduation requirements and post secondary requirements.

Mr. Traynor explained that the class of 2011 will require 48 credits to graduate. He suggested that families check transcripts on Infinite Campus after each semester to make sure the classes are aligning to the Four Year Plan. The Class of 2011 will require eight credits in Language

Arts, six credits in Math, six credits in Science, 6 credits in Social Studies, and four credits in P.E. to graduate. Colleges require two credits in the same Foreign Language for admission.

Counselors meet in small groups with all sophomores by October to go over the Four Year Plan. Counselors encourage all classes to be rigorous and relevant in all of the high school years. It is especially important that seniors take a rigorous course their final high school year. The number of core classes each student takes is important. Colleges will look at the core courses taken as part of a formula for admission. Colleges also look at the grade point average and score on the ACT/SAT for admission. This formula is called the Rating Admissions Index.

Data has shown an increase in ACT scores as more core classes are taken.

Mr. Traynor said the state average of for the ACT is 22. VHS score above the state average.

The majority of students take the ACT test. Juniors are expected to take this test. The Writing component of the ACT is not needed for admission for in-state schools.

The SAT is administered at Des Moines Roosevelt High School.

Mr. Traynor discussed the Kuder website. He said it is a great tool for college planning, career assessment, skills inventory and work values. He also encourages families to visit colleges to find a fit between the student and the campus. He also suggested sitting in on a class and talking with the Admissions Office.

College applications are on line. Students are required to send a transcript to the college. You can apply for a transcript in the Counseling Office. Recommendation letters are required in some situations.

The Iowa College Access Network is a great resource to help families complete the FAFSA. This is a free service and is located in West Des Moines. This is a non profit organization provided by the state of Iowa.

A list of scholarships can be found in the Counseling Office. The lists are ever changing so check the scholarship files regularly.

There will be a College Fair held at VHS on March 9th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Financial Aid night will be held in November 2009.

Principal's Report- Dr. Poole and Mr. Abrahamson

Valley High School updates:

Dr. Poole reported that students are currently signing up for courses for the 2009-2010 academic school year. Based on the slots per class, hiring needs will be met. VHS and VSW are both cooperatively working on schedules. Students are currently meeting with their counselor in small groups to go over the proposed schedule to reflect graduation requirements.

Dr. Poole reported that Mr. Duncan, Athletic Director, is retiring and she has been busy interviewing candidates for the position. This position will look different for next Director. The position will oversee both activities and athletics. A half time degreed teacher will assist the new Director to oversee the calendar of both activities and athletics. The announcement naming the new Director will be made very soon.

Dr. Poole is trying to increase the number of students who will be placed in internships throughout the year. VHS is partnering with a computer engineering firm called Hyper String to place students in an internship within the company. Dr. Poole told the parents that teachers and counselors will help students how to find internships.

A discussion was held informing the group how parking is designated at VHS. Dr. Poole stated that every senior is offered a parking spot, followed by the junior then sophomore class.

A Park-n-Ride is offered for sophomores to park at VSW and take a shuttle to VHS before and after school.

There will only be one parking lot granted per family.

VSW- Mr. Abrahamson

Mr. Abrahamson echoed the course selection process which Dr. Poole spoke about. He stated the VHS counselors were present at VSW to help the students with course selection.

Mr. Abrahamson thanked all the parents for volunteering throughout the year.

Mr. Abrahamson thanked the PTO and parents for the meal at conferences.

Mr. Abrahamson informed the parents of a community outreach project held on April 24th.

He informed the group that the Green Up and Blue Up teams will participate with 10 organizations to volunteer during the day. Parents will be asked to volunteer and support the students on this day. He stated more information will be coming about this positive community project.

Secretary's Report/Minutes Approval- Sherry Thompkins

Minutes from the September 16, 2008 meeting were read and approved after a spelling and punctuation error were corrected. PTO minutes and agendas can now be viewed on the Valley and Valley Southwoods web sites, under the heading, Parent Group.

Treasurer's Report- Joe Burvee

Joe distributed a financial statement of receipts and disbursements as of February 24, 2009. He stated the budget looks very healthy at this time. He noted that the big spending items are due towards the end of the year; conference dinners, Teacher Appreciation day, Dollars for Scholars, and the District Staff Recognition dinner.

Joe stated that any monies left over at the end of the year will be donated to VSW/VHS.

Joe asked the members present to brainstorm ideas for a special project to invest this money.

Karen Floss will email Dr. Poole and ask her to solicit ideas from the VHS staff for ways to spend this money.

Tina Nuestrom will contact Mr. Abrahamson to gather ideas from the VSW staff for ideas on how to spend this money as well.

Joe read a card from the Jim Poole family thanking PTO for the memorial contribution to Dollars

for Scholars in his name.

A motion was passed and members voted to approve the Treasurer's report.

Committee Reports:

VHS Volunteer Coordinator- Janet Thompson reported that she has over 300 volunteer names listed on her email spreadsheet. Volunteers are replying quickly via email as need arises. VHS has 11 committee areas for volunteers. Janet added that she always has more names to volunteer than slots needed. Many options to volunteer are during the day.

VSW Volunteer Coordinator- Dee Large submitted a report stating that VSW provided chaperones for the Valentine's dance. Parents are seeking ideas to gather students together for activities. Parents are eager to volunteer whenever asked.

VSW Hospitality- Traci Hellman submitted a report stating food was donated by the Mills Civic Hy-Vee and many Southwoods families for the February 18th conferences. Traci reported that the teachers enjoyed a lunch the following day with the leftovers!

VHS Hospitality- Karen Maiggard reported that she has a large number of volunteers. She emailed volunteers to provide water, side dishes and deserts for fall conferences. Maid-Rite provided sandwiches for fall conferences. She reported that PTO will purchase lasagna from Olive Garden for the February conferences. Olive Garden will donate the salad and bread sticks for the staff dinner as well. Twenty five families are donating water and dessert for the dinner. The dinner starts at 5:00 p.m. and continues until 6:30 p.m.

Community Ed Advisory Council- Fran Ronnau reported that the first Monday of each month will be the Community Ed Advisory meeting. This is a state mandated organization and is made up of the WDM Police, Chamber of Commerce, and local schools. This group has 44 members with 14 new members and 30 returning members. This group coordinates projects between the school and community. The committee is currently working on a flash presentation for the district web site.

School Community Network- Juhree Wendell representative from VSW, and Janet Thompson representative from VHS attend the SCN meeting the third Tuesday of each month from 9:15-11:00 a.m. at the Learning Resource Center.

Discussions from the 10/21/08 meeting included the Café V restaurant at VHS, the VHS Drama Department presenting “West Side Story,” how to help parents learn how to use Infinite Campus, Cultural Proficiency, and a report on the Media Centers in WDMCS.

Walnut Creek has started a food pantry, participated in Light the Night and the Global Society class is sponsoring an orphanage room in Africa.

Discussions from the 11/18/08 meeting included THE WDMCS Education Foundation. This committee is seeking more committee and board members. This committee acts as an umbrella for tax free donations. More information about the Foundation can be found on the district web site. During the meeting Dr. Diebel discussed her role in the Human Resources department; including hiring teachers, nurses, and evaluating the screening process for future applicants. WDM is the first district in Iowa and one of the first in the nation to set up a drug and alcohol screening policy under the school board section #403.4(1) for applicants. Representatives Scott Raecker and Peter Cownie discussed topics to watch for in the next legislative session. A good source of information is the Iowa Association of School Boards (IA-SB.org).

Discussions from the 1/20/09 meeting included the decrease of 1.5% in the state budget. At this time Dr. Narak is not sure what will happen with the upcoming school budget.

The Valley Tiger mascot is available for school functions such as carnivals.

VHS swimming pool will be dedicated in honor of Mark Wagner at a future date.

Learnapalooza will be held May 2, 2009 from 9 a.m. until noon at VSW.

Bryan Grube discussed safety in our schools. He suggested having the SRO officer speak to PTO organizations at each school is a good idea.

Jackie Neuberger spoke on Internet safety. She presented the lesson she gives to students at school. Internet safety is part of the third grade curriculum in WDM. She is available to speak with parent groups to share this valuable information. Two good web sites for parents are: wiredsafety.org and safesites.org

Discussions from the 2/17/09 meeting included the new Core Curriculum expectations passed into law on May 1, 2008. Dr. Staplin said copies of the benchmarks are available at the LRC. DMACC representatives discussed the different classes available for dual credit at both VHS and DMACC. Mike Hoffman, (965-7086), and Corey Kopatich discussed they huge advantage for students to get ahead in their college education while saving money.

Dr. Dahlby discussed the No Child Left Behind policy. Discussions included how the district keeps and tracts data as required by the state and federal governments. Handouts are available at the LRC. The WDM district is always looking at these numbers to make sure they are meeting the needs of every student in the district.

After Prom- Bronya Metzger reported that the After Prom committee has been working very hard. The theme, "Stroll Around China Town: Valley Street Fair," was chosen. Currently the committee has raised \$8,800.00 through corporate donations. Six companies are set to donate \$1,300.00. A postcard was sent to every family of a junior and senior requesting a donation for the event. So far \$1,657.52 has been raised by parent donations. A table will be set up at conferences to encourage more parents to donate money to this alcohol/drug free event. Fourteen grants have been written requesting money for After Prom. Polk County donated money last year and the committee is still awaiting word if they will receive grant money for this event. PTO donated \$100.00 to After Prom.

Entertainment has lined up inflatables, wax hands, miniature golf, a tattoo artist, photo booth, a character artist and a hypnotist.

All junior and seniors are invited. A student does not need to attend Prom to attend After Prom.

Athletic Boosters- Report submitted by Jeff Rose, read by Janet Thompson

Mr. Duncan, Athletic Director will be retiring. He will be honored for his years of service on June 28th at the Des Moines Golf and Country Club. His recognition event will start at 1:00 p.m. The new concession stand is ready for summer activities. The Grand Opening will be June 8, 2009.

Boy's bowling has been sanctioned for the 2009-2010 year.

Band Boosters- No report submitted.

Valley Voices- No report submitted.

New Business- Karen Floss and Cathy Guendel are currently looking for individuals to hold a PTO board position for the 2009-2010 school year. If you are interested in returning to current position, please notify Karen and Cathy as soon as possible. If you desire to hold a new position, please feel free to contact them as soon as possible. Joe Burvee is interested in returning in the capacity of Treasurer, and Patti Splavec wishes to return as PTO Membership Committee Chairperson.

Open Forum- None.

Adjourn- The meeting was adjourned by Karen Floss at approximately 9:30 p.m. Cathy Guendel invited everyone to attend the next PTO meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2009 in the Valley High School Forum

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Thompkins