Minutes
Hamilton Central School PTO Meeting
March 6, 2019 at 3:00 pm
Middle School/High School Library

1) Welcome All (3:01)
   Congrats to Mr. Dowsland - will continue to collaborate w/ PTO once he becomes Superintendent

2) Amy Jerome, HCS Library Media Specialist
   Online encyclopedias, magazines, ebooks, audiobooks and videos. Are you really using all the local and state resources available to you and your children? Have you heard of Libby, Sora, and Hoopla? Amy Jerome, our library media specialist, will briefly show you one of these resources.

   Posted on HCS Library webpage: Favorite Databases Tab. Ask Mrs. Jerome for password sheet. Mrs. Jerome strongly encourages library card holders to use HOOPLA at the public library and take advantage of many electronic resources, including Audiobooks.

3) Guest Speakers: Mr. Ellis & Mr. Dowsland
   Over the past couple of years, the NY State Education Department has made several changes to the NYS ELA and Math tests in response to concerns from parents and educators. This year, NYSED has also made changes to the accountability system that measures individual school performance. Districts can now be held accountable if high number of students "Opt Out" of state testing. What does all of this mean for our district and our students?

   PTO State Testing Disclaimer - This presentation is for informational purposes only. The PTO, as an organization, would like to remain neutral on this topic and does not take a stance for or against state testing.

   Slides: Opting In/Opting Out
   Myth Busters - making sure your make an informed decision before Opting Out
   FAQ's Questions (from 2018- very similar to 2019)
   New Accountability measures per ESSA Regulations (Every Student Succeeds Act)

In the past, HCS was labelled a 'focus district' b/c economically disadvantaged groups didn't meet standards. Worked out okay b/c we received $50K, used for SSAE program.

New system, if you aren't meeting your goal b/c of your participation rate, you are not receiving any money, you are required to come up with a plan to get your community to participate more in testing. This will lead to alot of extra work to create the plan, which needs to be state approved.
Graduation rates, success on regents/AP exams, we are a high performing school. This mislabels us as an underperforming school. CFOs in Albany are lobbying to have the methodology changed.

Year 2 of "new exams"

- Shorter exams (2 parts instead of 3) bank of questions is shorter

- Exams no longer timed (can use the entire day) to relieve test anxiety
- Students with IEPS can be eligible (we are required) to provide accommodations (tests read for Math and ELA)
- Students who score a 1 or 2 are NOT automatically placed in RtI (tests are now only 1 point of info)
- Exams are constructed and reviewed by teachers (they can review bank of information in advance)
- Exams are not tied to individual teacher evaluations. (they USED to be...but no more…)
- 3-8 ELA test looks very similar to the 11th grade regents exams students have to pass to graduate. Earlier testing gives them preparation for the 11th grade regents.

Are the questions more age appropriate than previously? Difficult question.
Engage NY has the bank of questions to see old tests
Tests released in December, review, pull information, weave into units of study.

HCS incorporates a Unit of study on “test taking skills” for 2-4 weeks (evidence building throughout the year)
Support your opinions and views to take the test/in general to skill build

What are kids doing that aren’t testing?
Doing ELA and Math during Opt Out in a quietly monitored space.

What if we don’t meet new ESSA requirements?

What is the data measuring (as gathered from these tests?) How is it being used?
Data helps HCS look at programs and practices within the building. About 3 years ago, we noticed kids doing extremely well on Comprehension/Answering questions, but stayed right on the state average for Writing. We added a unit on “Writing/Test answering” based on data from test.
Also started using the word “evidence” and integrated that into daily conversations/curriculum

Reading/Writing in real life isn’t always your choice.

We look at state tests as just another piece of data that we can use w/ other assessments to look at holistic picture/identify gaps in curriculum.

Young learners taking a high stakes test that could have a bad day. It’s one piece of student growth. We look at it holistically/big picture.

Plan to develop a participation rate - clearly not going to withhold federal funding for Title 1. If we end up on a list, there are some measures we can take.

If we end up on a list, it will not reflect in any way on transcripts.

100% graduation rate but a remaining a focus district.

What is the real value for the child for taking the test? It seems like the purpose is largely for the school's self assessment.

- Preparedness for test-taking in the future
- It's geared to look like the regent's exam
- Regents exams start as early as 8th/9th grade
- No opting-out of the Regents Exam (culminating exam at the end of the course)
- Need local credits and need 5 regents to graduate (state exams)
- This information may be helpful to non-native New Yorkers
- HCS was selected to do the NAPE (National State Test) selected to do this. Those results reported to Federal Govt for National Report card. Alot of standardized testing in life.

- How many local schools are in our position of being a focus district?
    - Atleast one in Utica. We are the only one in BOCES. We have a higher opt-out rate than schools around us
- Testing is now really about collecting data for the schools

"Education Community"- what's the view of this kind of assessment? Is this the best way of measuring?

- Conferring is the best way (teachers talking to students individually, strength/weaknesses identified, suggestions for improvement). Real time, to the minute, differentiated.
- Alot of conversations about that, alot of different philosophies. At the Secondary State Ed required HCS to go to student learning outcomes (pre-test, then post-test) which was really about growth throughout the year. Really measuring what have your students learned throughout the year. That ultimately should be the measure - GROWTH overall.

Myth Buster - mid-level 2 is where a student should be (not failing)

The more you can look holistically at a student's growth, the better. The test is one data point.

Thank you for letting us speak, looking forward to Striving for 95 (% participation rate)!

Reports

a) Interim Superintendent: Peter Punzo
b) PTO President: Jennifer Jones
    i) JUULing February Meeting (more from Melissa next meeting)
    ii) Thanks to Administrators, BRIDGES, etc.
    iii) Same BRIDGES presentation will be for Faculty on March 8th ½ day
    iv) Colgate students volunteering to help (COVE)
        (1) Reaching out with Sheila
c) PTO Treasurer: Jen Chouinard (see attached)
d) PTO Coordinators (reports vary based on current initiatives)
    i) Literacy: Sheila Catania

One School/One Book initiative

(1) In May, One School/One Book, need to buy the program.
(2) COVE will help out.
(3) Elementary Pilot
(4) Elementary Literacy Night in May 30? (meeting on Friday)
(a) Different Activities/around the 3rd book

ii) Garden/Playground: Amy Sommers
(1) 1 or 2 work days before people leave for the summer
iii) Box Tops: Jackie Cleary and Jen Briggs
(1) March 1st Deadline ($262.50 check pending)
(2) Adding request for dimes to complete sheets
iv) Hospitality: Melissa Cassulis and Julie Hengst
(1) March 29th - Youth Summit - All Madison County Schools sending 1 representatives presenting about Building Healthy Communities (100 kids participated). In HCS Auditorium. Findings of the projects will presented to elected-officials, local, state, Congressman Brindisi. Give them a platform to use their voices! Networking reception afterwards (what's that going to look like/where it's going to be.) PTO would have to fund refreshments. Display for all the county projects for all 7-12 graders to attend.

4) New Business
a) Approve Minutes from January Meeting. Approved.
b) Volunteer Opportunities
i) PTO elections will be held this Spring. Consider a bigger role for yourself (existing or new position)! Let us know you're interested.
ii) PTO Meeting Childcare:
(1) Staff Advisor needed May 1st at 3:00pm

5) Announcements
i) Board of Education Elections. Petitions are available for volunteers interested in serving in this important role. The District Office will accept petitions thru April 11, 2019 by 4:00pm. There are two Board seats opening at this time.

6) Adjourn (4:03)

Treasurer's Report (Jen Chouinard)

1) Donations/Income
a) Income since January meeting
i) Additional Yankee Candle online sales 'reimbursements' = $202 (Residual from online January sales)
ii) November Box Tops reimbursement =$420
b) In-Kind Donations

i) JUULing presentation by Hamilton Area Community Coalition, BRIDGES and to the HCS administration for allowing it to take place and finalizing the logistics
ii) Thank you to Sue Lehmann for again supervising childcare for this meeting and to Mercedes Hayes for coordinating student babysitters

c) Current Requests

Requests since January meeting	
Activity	**Amount**
Cookie Grams for Senior Class/Junior Class - Made an impact	30
Dinner for Addams Family cast/crew - Heavily made-up	300