WL PTA Meeting

Monday, October 17, 2016

Meeting Minutes

WELCOME

UPDATE ON HOMECOMING ACTIVITIES

This week is Homecoming Week for our school. On Monday after school there was a surprise dance-off, where students held an impromptu dance “showcase” on the field after dismissal. There are a large number of activities planned, including:

* + Hall Decorations. Seniors: Monopoly; Juniors: Candyland; Sophomores: Game of Life; Freshmen: Twister
  + Spirit Week. Monday: Class colors; Tuesday: Blast from the Past; Wednesday: Jersey; Thursday: Pink/Breast Cancer Awareness; Friday: Generals Spirit
  + “Penny Challenge” - coins collected for charity and school spirit. The students select the charity to which the money will be donated.
  + Pep Rally. Will happen in Stadium as we’ve outgrown the Gym
  + Dance on Saturday

ONBOARDING NEW STUDENTS

Dr. Robertson, and the directors of both Counseling and Student Activity host small group meetings with all new students to W-L. (Freshmen and upper class(wo)men transfer students). The purpose of the meetings it to give students new to the W-L community an overview of the departments at the school; to help them understand the services and opportunities available to them, and to establish a personal connection between the new students and the administrative leadership. As part of the ongoing program, new students are urged to get connected and get involved. The meetings are conducted in Dr. Robertson’s office, and he underscores an “open door” philosophy, urging students to come back and see him whenever they’d like to. The students receive a “Welcome Gift” as part of this exchange — a W-L pencil, pin, keychain and a full-size Hershey bar. Meetings with almost all the 9th graders have been conducted, though a few remain. There were 115 transfers to 10th-12th grade this year at W-L, and these students will also be invited to one of these small group meetings. And as new students come to W-L throughout the year, they will also be invited. The administrative team will also go into the Freshmen PE classes during their volleyball units to play volleyball with the 9th graders, creating another systemic touch-point to new students. And the Activities Fair at Freshman Orientation is another opportunity to give new students visibility into how to get involved. Based on feedback from the small group meetings, there will be another Activities Fair this year to give students another look at the more than 100 clubs at W-L.

OCT 19: PSAT / Parent/Teacher Conferences (9th grade) / Senior College Prep Seminar

Oct. 19 is an early release day. PSAT will be for 10th and 11th graders. Parent/Teacher Conferences for 9th graders will be held this day. And for the 12th graders, there will be Senior Seminar focused on supporting them with College Apps and preparing for what’s ahead. There will be a guest speaker from the Common App.

WINTER SPORTS

Winter Sports begin on November 7. Kids need to have their physicals/permission packets in. As the school population gets larger and larger, it’s more difficult to make the team on some of the sports. Reminder: There are no-cut sports in every season including Cross Country (Fall), Swimming (Winter) and Track/Crew (Spring).

ELECTION DAY

No school on Election day. Staff will be at School, but no school for students.

SURVEY RESULTS

There is a school-based survey every year that goes out to all graduating 12th grade students and their parents. We have very good participation. The results of this survey were presented.

The state of Virginia does a survey as well where they randomly select students and parents across the state. We had about 900 students surveyed. The results for W-L as well as benchmark data for the region and state-wide data was presented.

Please see the separate slide deck for more information.

WELCOME BACK ASSEMBLIES

These have been conducted with all the grade levels. The staff goes over expectations for the school year with students. As the students progress in grade level, expectations, responsibilities and freedoms change. These are all reviewed. The students also get an overview of the resources available.

COLLEGE FAIR / COLLEGE PREP

This year we’ll have the largest number of participating colleges/universities with more than 150 schools represented. It will be hosted on Tuesday, October 18, 6-8 p.m. at W-L. Students are encouraged to go and talk to the different reps. A lot of the regional reps man the tables, and these are the same people who will be reading our students’ college applications. All grade levels are urged to attend this county-wide event. College application support sessions are already under way. More are scheduled for November 19 and Dec. 10. Watch the calendar for updated dates/times. They are generally Saturday sessions.

COUNSELING UPDATE

Counselors are trained to support students w/personal/social issues and students are urged to use their counselors for more than just college planning. There is crisis counseling available and counselors are trained to help support students in navigating the stress/anxiety they may be experiencing. The goal is to get the students in a good place so that they can get back to class. In terms of department-wide priorities: the first part of the school year is focused on helping the Seniors get their college apps out and prepare for the college/career transition they will be making in the spring. As we move into the winter, academic planning for underclassmen becomes the focus, helping them get ready for what they want to do as they graduate High School. Scheduling begins in February. We want 100% of students to get to AP or IB course. (We’re very close to that target). Counselors do classroom lessons throughout the year, and there are class meetings as well. (examples: Seniors: going off to college; Juniors: being ready for the college process; Sophomores: diversity and embracing each other; Freshmen: academic planning). In addition, there are several small groups every year and get kids that are struggling with different areas. (e.g. testing strategy; study help; managing stress/anxiety). And there are school-wide events in the Spring (example: “Laugh more, Stress Less” - a week-long event to get kids to relax about things and bringing awareness to anxiety). Work is under way for another

school-wide event on diversity and accepting each other. Eric Hill on the team is the College and Career specialist; he helps with Financial Aid as well. He also brings in college reps. Stay updated with developments and what colleges are coming into the school via Naviance.

There’s a minority achievement coordinator that works with students. We have two social workers and two school psychologists to support our students.

The Whole Child programs take the kids by grade levels to help them acquire skills they need. Examples: 9th: build positive relationships; 10th: balance, stress; 11th: drive to stay alive; making good choices; being responsible young adult; 12th grade: making good decisions; thinking things through; continue the responsible behavior to keep you successful in college/career as well.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

We’re doing well against our goals in terms of contributions and membership

A small change was made to the budget and it was approved.

FINAL UPDATES:

* Please sign up for Harris Teeter and Giant. We have 160 signed up; if we can get 250 signed up we get $250.
* There’s an election on November 8; there is a bond issue for the School Board. There is no money for W-L but there is $22M for high school capacity; $12M for the Career Center and $10M to start planning a new high school; pls vote for the bond issue; new high school capacity online in 2020 and 2022.
* Join the PTA Listserv to stay updated
* We need PTA members to help staff the concessions stand.
* Theater Department is already preparing for performances - One Acts in late October. Pippin will be the play this year and will be performed the first week in February. There will be a [tix.com](http://tix.com) site for tickets with advance sales and reserved seating.
* Reflections deadline has been extended.
* The Hispanic Parents meets mostly and reports out at every PTA meeting. Last Friday there was a huge conference for the Hispanic community in the County. Washington Lee was well represented; This October 28 will be Hispanic celebration at W-L in the Cafeteria. It’s Pot Luck and all are welcoming for great food and dancing performances. Please come and bring something to share (10 people). Hispanic Parents Meetings are the 2nd Thursday of each month at W-L. All are welcome!

NEXT MEETING: November 14, 2016