PTS0 Board Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2016

Attendees: Dory Albert, Cynthia Chang, Susan Chin, Janet Chyan, Jayshree Desai Shanbhag, Sheeba Garg, Vansong Hong, Sarah Hung, Yuli Lin, Yufan Lu, Darrell Miller, Sandy Miller, Anu Minocha, Mary Moriarty, James Oberhauser, Karen Poelmann, Jean Poo, Nancy Rafati, Monica Rhee, Ranjana Sivaram, Fan Steinke, Revathi Vasan, Heidi Vu, Susan Vukovatz, Frank Wang, Sandy Wu, Annie Ying, and Emile Zhang

Dory Albert, VP Programs reminded us that tonight there is a Parent Education event at the LGHS library on the Quality of Connection with Jared Finkelstein, about having a conversation with your kids, especially boys.

- Julie Lythcott Haines, author of “How to Raise an Adult” has many YouTube talks to view. She talks about the challenges at Gunn high school.
- Next one coming up is College 102 for Freshmen, Sophomore, and Junior parents by Jerrold Shapiro. Brian Safine will present profile of Saratoga High School. Online there are 65 college alumni videos, very good. March 2 in Library at 6:30 PM, need to sign up, hold to 100 and more events planned in the Spring.
- Community Service Day February 27th, organized by PTSO.

Audit Report: Sandy Miller conducted PTSO audit for 2014-2015 school year. Started year with check # 64109 ending with # 72495, examined all books, areas found differences 13-14 audit, deposit of $1,307 versus $1,317, 6 input errors for 2013-2014 which were generally a few dollars or cents, 8 check requests without supporting documents which should be attached to all check requests, most through budgetary restraints, 2 checks older than 6 months should be researched, transferred in 14-15 monies for Hyde scholarship for 13-14 school year and State and Federal forms were filed in a timely manner.

Approval of January 13, 2016 Meeting Minutes: Susan Vukovatz handed out January minutes. Darrell Miller motioned to approve and Susan Chin seconded. All approved.

Nominating Committee has been formed. Laura Tillett is out of town for personal reasons.
Nominating committee names are Usha Rau, Sheeba Garb, Annie Ying, Mary Eschen, and Ranjana Sivaram. Dory Albert motioned to approve slate and Ranjana seconded. All approved.

LGSUHSD Board Member, Katherine Tseng spoke about the current parcel tax of $49, the plan to continue current programs, the importance of steady income of $955K/year for the district since Prop 30 is expiring and sales tax is exiting, lowest parcel tax in county, Palo Alto’s school parcel tax is $500, will have a May election instead of June because of graduation and other things, will be mail in only, and the Parcel Tax Committee is looking for volunteers. A request for more information about how the parcel tax money would be spent was made, and it was noted that property tax revenues have increased a lot in the last several years. No motion was made for PTSO to endorse the Parcel tax flyer.

Principal’s Report: Paul Robinson reported on the history of SHS Bell Schedule. In 2004-2005 all 7 periods met every day with 2 tutorials set in during the week at beginning of school day. In 2005-2006 changed the schedule to 7 periods totaling 480 minutes teaching academic courses. In 2007-2008 changed it again to our current schedule, so that 7th period was treated the same way, 2 tutorials set in middle of day, one set in PM, where some go home early or take advantage of tutorial, and found it very successful, especially for 24 classes offered in the 7th period.
Keeping it the same offers a very structured class schedule.

Why go to a block schedule? Depth, our students benefit greatly because they are very hardworking, and it is important to go deeper into subjects. Many schools have taken a look at us and want to
get into some of that depth. Milpitas High School has been on the same schedule for at least 30 years, and they are hoping to change to some type of block schedule, but they could not muster enough support to do that to get deeper into subject matter, however, they keep trying and we have invited them to speak to our staff about the tremendous advantages. Back a year ago, the Falcon newspaper came up with an article about changing the schedule as Sunday, Monday and Tuesday were becoming unbearable, idea of trying to reduce some homework load, ROTC program, someone in other districts have that, can be opportunities like that, fantastic digital electronics program making robotic fingers, etc.

Did you ever survey population for students flexing between schools? Last night this came up twice at Parent night on the notion of sharing teachers and/or students.

If this were offered would you go to another high school? Transportation and scheduling are an issue. Survey data shows positives for late start, shortening lunch did not poll well, and alignment is nice to have. Looked at homework loads, collected data from student surveys and had to do something. Facilitator Ken Yale, didn't want to work with 26 people, 12-14 people he wanted to work with, we wanted 30 people on board, time commitment totaled 1,000 hours research, meetings, aligning both schools, are some advantages for alignment, alignment did not matter that much for Paul but now see some prime advantages. Lost 2 of our French teachers, struggled to get enough numbers for French, now have big whole to fill, found substitute that lived in France for a while, extremely difficult to find a qualified teacher to teach 3 periods, while LG had 2 periods to fill, had we been able to combine those two could have brought in a highly qualified teacher to teach at both schools. The second advantage is if a student wishes to take woodshop, can go to Los Gatos to take it.

Will lunch time be extended? Will talk about that.

On January 12, 2016 SAC recommended an 8:40 AM start time with an 8 period day allowing flexibility in scheduling. Los Gatos has 7 period block scheduling. This proposal went away from alignment between the two schools, but we could still share staff and have teachers at different schools on different days. Currently, we share one teacher with LG, but only 6th period here. The late start recommendation entailed 425 minutes of instructional minutes and 250 minutes tutorial time. Then Superintendent changed Saratoga to Los Gatos’ schedule with tutorials meeting daily for 35 minutes, each period will be 90 minutes totaling 450 minutes and 350 minutes tutorial time. The amount of contact time greatly increased. It is all about contact time with students. Red = odd day periods and blue will be even day periods.

8:15 is the same time Redwood starts? Starting 25 minutes later gives students 25 more minutes to sleep in. Parents will need to somehow work it out in the mornings. Many kids are here early in the morning waiting for class to start, particularly on our Wednesday late start days. Saratoga has more bikes on bike racks than any school I know. Currently, we are talking with city on traffic patterns and we will be impacted with some of the school construction happening. We will all adapt and make choices. A SHS Senior is all upset because she is graduating and will not benefit from the new bell schedule.

Community outreach was done, but not well attended. There were two for students and two for parents. First parent event had about forty folks in the evening, then did an afternoon event with eight people present. The intent of the meeting was never to say here is what the schedule would be. It was to prioritize daily tutorial, late start, etc. No one liked the Sunday and Monday crunch. Still felt did not have enough data, went back to survey students, 400 replies reassuring temperature check students, 65-85% supportive of lever changes and last bit of polling really helped.

Why change? Saratoga has phenomenal metrics of student achievement, 98% go to college, 1980 is
average on SAT reasoning test, 50% families felt like level of stress was at inappropriate level, and one thing school can do is look at bell schedule and later start. Access to teachers during tutorial should be consistent; having 5 daily tutorials will really help, 70% of our students seek outside resources, i.e. tutoring

Instructional Minutes? We meet this with excess, has been lots of questions on how computed, answers are on district’s website, and this schedule far exceeds instructional minutes required by the state.

Cynthia Chang from LGSUHSD asked if a pros and cons analysis can be done for SHS comparing the current with the new schedule? The SAC no longer exists and getting 26 members together is difficult, there is no perfect schedule, want to benefit all students but there are tradeoffs.

Darrell Miller, on the SAC, responds that the SAC group had to deal with many tradeoffs. Bigger blocks do indeed give you more depth, but teachers have to adjust to utilize the time. How to get kids into the increased tutorial time is a question to be answered too. There are some nice benefits enabled by the new schedule, but the details need to be worked out. How, for instance, is a SHS student wanting to take Woodshop at LG going to really work in practice?

Teachers are planning for next year on what it is going to look like, what will the homework be, English dept taken this on very strongly, what novels will be pushed in certain areas, frees up time for more depth, now the biggest advantage is the Monday start and Friday end. Will be different when roll over to following week, the current schedule never developed just for athletics, what means for football for band, after living with schedule for one year will find out what works well and what does not, and can continue to adapt as move along.

The 40 minute lunch really important, either take it away from the front or back? This impacts every student on campus. Either start 5 minutes sooner or end day later? Took parent poll during meeting, was 50/50. Need to ask what students would say? Right now this is the schedule with 35 minute lunches. It is the decision of our superintendent ultimately. We are in discussion about it, this minor tweak not a huge thing. A lot for staff to prepare for and looking at opening up a tutoring center to enhance some of tutorials for kids to have a place to go.

Katherine Tseng LGSUHSD mentioned that the staff at Saratoga likes to collaborate in the morning and the first schedule accommodated that? Now Saratoga teachers will collaborate at end of day, taking a look in leadership today, where do we come together to collaborate? Need to set up what will it look like, will be hard to do that early in morning, and there are some contractual issues, etc.

Cynthia Chang LGSUHSD said that at the end of the first semester will evaluate how it is going from all the stakeholders.

How will we see results of the schedule change? Reduce student stress and no homework being done at midnight.

How will we accommodate sports? 7th period is typically when the sports are scheduled. There are 24 classes currently scheduled on 7th period.

Katherine Tseng LGSUHSD recommended sending a message to entire community about the schedule change and should be mentioned at counseling nights.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Susan Vukovatz
PTSO Secretary