

Tamalpais High School Site Council Minutes
Wednesday, April 15th, 2020 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. via zoom

Members in Attendance: Suzanne Alpert, Scott Birkestrand, Luc Chamberlin, Ben Cleaveland, Laura Erickson*, J.C. Farr, Theo Koffman, Laura Keaton, Kaki McLachlan, Elaine Wilkinson, Matt Wulfstat.

*arrived late due to conflicting meeting

Call to Order: 3:00pm by Matt Wulfstat who expressed appreciation for each person's attendance and the THS staff and administration during this unprecedented time.

Approval of the Agenda: Scott Birkestrand motions, Luc Chamberlin seconds. All in favor.

Approval of the previous meeting minutes: Matt Wulfstat asked that the minutes be changed to reflect that he was not present at the March 2020 meeting. Theo Koffman motions, Luc Chamberlin seconds. All in favor.

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 20th, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Public Comment (2 mins per guest):

Elaine Wilkinson reports: Tam High Foundation (THF) granted THS \$50,000 for lower resourced students. The money was given by donors to THF for THS students and it is staying with THS students. A meeting next week will look at the funds being spent, those remaining because of school closing, and issues arising from the parcel tax not passing.

Principal's Report – Distance Learning/Plan Update from J.C. Farr

- Much has changed since March 13th and continues to change everyday. Every time Governor Gavin Newsom speaks there are new thoughts or recommendations which trigger and determine our district's (TUHSD) next moves.
- At first it sounded like school would be closed for two weeks. March 13th was the only day to prepare for distance learning which started on March 16th.
- J.C. applauds the teachers' efforts transitioning to distance learning.
- From the first day of shelter in place, the administration was concerned about all students accessing technology. Two weeks later, Governor Newsom said that school may be closed until May and then it became clear that was not a two week stop gap.
- This changed working conditions for teachers which needed to be negotiated. Teachers are working far longer days than in a regular setting. For example, teachers are spending a lot of time emailing answers to questions from THS's very engaged parents.
- There were many parents comparing THS online learning to independent and Catholic schools but it is different. Public schools have a wide range of socio-economic situations and THS must ensure that all students have what they need to succeed online.
- Today, April 15th, some students arrived on campus to pick up hot spots and chromebooks. THS was curious why those students had not picked up these essentials many weeks ago.

- The Success Network is focused on 105 vulnerable students, checking that each student has essential tech tools and food. There are likely students not on this list who have similar needs. For example, teachers reported 140 additional students who have not engaged at all with any online learning. Administration has called every student on the list to check in.

Kaki McLachlen:

- There are many factors at play with distance learning. Students need parental support, a quiet place to work, and necessary technology. It is more difficult to mitigate the equity/learning gap which is wider with distance learning than regular school.
- Questions that administration are considering include: are we continuing learning and can we expect students to learn when there is so much anxiety. THS' guiding principle is do not do harm or widen the gap.

J.C. Farr

- Grading for online learning: Credit must mean C- or higher in order for seniors to qualify for the UC system. If credit is increased from D to C- then it would increase the number of students who would qualify. If THS gives credit for C- or better and incompletes for D and below, the students have a longer time to complete the work. If schools cannot open in the fall then there is a problem.
- 2020-2012 schedule: in a regular calendar year, admin would be working on a master schedule now. They will work on an alternate plan due to COVID-19 advisories for CA, with reduced classes sizes or staggered schedule.
- Seniors: J.C. is focused on getting the seniors graduated. 98% of seniors are on track to graduate and admin is thankful that a large percentage of students are on track to graduate. Later, they will work with moving grades 9 -11 forward.
- Distance Learning: On Friday March 17, they will reassess how the new online learning schedule went and strategize about interventions. Admin will continue to take feedback from teachers and families. The focus will be on staying together, working through this, and being flexible.

Questions:

- From Luc Chamberlin: He has 24 out of 95 seniors who are not engaging. J.C. would like to know their names and contact the families to explain the guidelines.
- Attendance: April 14 represented a reset of distance learning. There is hope that students will be more responsive.
- Grading: Students cannot be adversely affected by grading. Potentially if a grade goes down, then they have the chance to make up the work in the future.
- From Ben Cleaveland: At first, 80% of CTE students who were not engaging were suffering from emotional issues and 20% had technology/financial issues.
- How do we know if students are not doing the work because they will not or cannot?
Answer: Teachers will have to dig deeper into each situation.

- Could there be an incentive for students to work harder and raise grades but not do harm? Answer: It would judge a student's learning situation at home. THUSD will opt for the least harmful policy for students.

Support for teachers: There is a google classroom for staff with videos and resources for online learning. There is an exit ticket so teachers can report how comfortable they are with online learning. Every Monday is for professional development, differentiating for teachers to get what they need to move forward, and some teachers have volunteered to train others. Some time will be used to create a new curriculum and reach out to students who are not participating. THS will reflect and get better.

Principal's report:

- Kaki McLachlen: Graduating seniors deserve a celebration and support. There will be a virtual piece. THS is getting caps and gowns to all seniors and hoping to create a slideshow/movie. Potentially there could be a parade through Mill Valley. Diplomas will likely be mailed.
- J.C. Farr: There is a new bell schedule for 2020-2021 with an 8:30 am start time. School will end later in the day and tutorial will be at the end of Wednesday and Friday. Athletes miss less class and the old tutorial time, mid-morning, is prime learning time so teachers prefer it as class time

Counselor Report:

Scott Birkestrand: Sheltering in place is a difficult time for everyone. All students who aren't engaging online are receiving personal phone calls from counseling. The barriers to learning are overwhelming. Concise assignments, one per week per class, are working better for students than many small assignments which are harder to track on their own.

Teacher Report:

- Luc Chamberlin: it is very difficult to know which students need support and which are doing just fine. Some students who were doing work before are not now, Students that are doing fine need consistency to feel productive.
- Ben Cleaveland: CTE used zoom very quickly. The older students are mentoring the young students and peer connectivity is important right now. Since CTE is not bringing in revenue from the box office, TUHSD's budget office is allowing CTE to carry their deficit forward.
- Laura Erikson: Teachers are spending more time on lessons than in person lessons. Laura is very concerned about a small group of students who she supported after school. Teachers are probably having many of the same feelings as the students.

Student Report-

Theo Koffman: Within student groups, the topic of conversations is the new grading system. Please communicate if grades can be lowered. Seniors should not celebrate next steps because many students will not be able to go to college. Students are concerned that tutorial is at the end of Wednesday and Friday, especially for students who have 7th period free. They are

concerned that lunch has been shortened. Leadership elections for 2020-2021 will be in August/September because students may not have access to technology to run for office while sheltering in place. Leadership has \$10,000 in prom refunds and they intend to donate the funds for COVID-19 relief and will work within the district's guidelines.

Classified Report-

Laura Keaton: most classified staff are not working right now. Laura is at THS three times per week (M/W/F) to distribute hotspots and chromebooks to students in need. Mail will be checked weekly. Jane Shapiro goes to THS to process with transcripts. The budget secretary has been processing purchases for graduation. Robert Amaral checks in the physical plant once or twice a week.

Parent Report-

- Luc Chamberlin: It is confusing to get a lot of information in different formats from lots of teachers. It would be good to have one location for students and parents to see everything.
- Suzanne Alpert: she is concerned about student's mental health with the pressure of AP tests being given at home in a new format. AP teachers have never taught to these tests so it must be stressful for the teachers as well. Please let parents know how we can support teachers.
- Matt Wulfstat: it would be great to post assignments at 8:30 am rather than waiting until class time so that students do not have gaps in their day when they could get work done more efficiently.
- Elaine: Please let us know how we can support teachers.

Final announcements:

- The Site Council will not complete a SIPSA for 2019-2020 since the LCAPS are incomplete.
- Matt asks for topics for the next agenda when we will address budget issues. He cannot express enough appreciation for everything that administration and teachers are doing.