

Student Services Board Meeting 5/18/06 Minutes

The meeting began with a goodbye and thank you to Tina Powell, who unfortunately was not able to make the meeting. She has done a terrific job as secretary. The Student Services Board will need a new secretary for next year. If interested, please contact Karen O'Connor.

There was discussion about the process of choosing a replacement for Mrs. Lodal. Parents, faculty members and student representatives will be chosen for the panel interviewing candidates - four parents, four faculty members and one or two students. Hopefully, a choice will be made by June 12. The position has been nationally advertised. Mrs. Lodal's last day will be July 31. She has requested a low-key celebration. The PTA will be hosting a small reception prior to the PTA meeting on June 12.

In addition, several other valuable staff members are leaving: Trixi Bicknell, Eric Richardson, Sheri Maeda, David Kobrin, Jan Vallone, Vicky Andrews, Jerry Berenty, Ron Anderson, Sandy Clement, Cindy Denick, Karen Duke, Chris Charnitski, Joanne Becker, Rich Deivert, Anne Little, Chiaki Rochkind, Gregory Williams, Marina Astudillo.

There will be an new assessment coach position for next year. Growth in the student population will probably result in a couple of new teaching positions, as well. The counselors should be stable as far as Ms. Pitkin knows.

Dummy schedules were sent home on Monday, May 15. Any changes must be submitted by June 16. There will not be any chance to make further schedule changes until August and at that time will be on a space available basis only.

Mr. Strong and Mr. Pierce are taking over the mentorship program. Students doing summer mentorships this year will receive one academic credit for summer school with the majority of students needing an additional ½ credit in technical writing to finish writing up research.

Letters for those admitted to summer school Chemistry have gone out. There is a chance that another teacher will be hired in which case there will be another Chemistry section. The decision this year to require an "A" in Biology and Math to register for Chemistry in summer school was made by Mr. Strong for the protection of the students. Taking Chemistry in summer school is significantly more difficult.

The TJ seniors were very successful this year in both academic competitions and in their college applications. A person has been hired to collect the senior surveys on college acceptances. Information should be available in August. This information was not able to be released for last year due to some problems in processing and insufficient manpower in the Student Services Department. There are 411 students in the graduating class.

Ms. Pitkin reported that there has been some discussion by the School Board about stopping the growth of TJ's student population. In addition, discussions have resumed with George Mason University about moving TJ to their property. There are currently expected to be 470 in the incoming freshman class.

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There was a sustained discussion about the problem of excessive homework for students. A particular concern is homework assigned over student holidays such as winter and spring break. There was strong parental concern about students not having breaks in their studying. A concern was also voiced about sports coaches exceeding stated practice times.

Other concerns voiced by parents included the reliance on students teaching themselves material rather than direct instruction by teachers and peer grading. Although most of the instruction is outstanding at TJ, some parents feel a mechanism is needed to provide for feedback about teacher performance.

A discussion followed about cheating at TJ. Ms. Pitkin reported that most teachers feel that incidents are not rampant.

No final word about parking next year can be given until a decision is made about the number and placement of trailers. Parking on the gravel lot may be expanded. Information and forms will be posted on the website.

There will be modified schedules for the next two weeks due to SOL testing. There is a good explanation on the web site under daily announcements.

Help is needed by the Student Services Board for the Freshman Parent Networking event which will be held on September 26. Please contact Karen O'Connor if you can help.

Back to School night next year has been scheduled for Wednesday, September 20.

The All Night Grad Party still needs underclassman parents, particularly Junior parents to help. Interested parents should look at the ANGP website.

Packets for Juniors and their parents concerning college recommendations have already gone home and need to be returned before the end of the school year.

Nina Pitkin thanked Karen O'Connor for all her work with the Student Services Board this year and announced that Karen will continue to lead the Board next year.