

September 12, 2019

Report to the Sharon Board of Education

By: Bob Whelan – Region One Board of Education representative from Sharon, Connecticut

At the September 2019 Board Meeting, these initiatives and presentations were the key focus:

- New Teachers!
- Portrait of a Graduate
- Data review – NYP's at the end of June 2019, SAT data and AP data
- Those who Contribute to HVRHS
- The use of the One Eleven Group
- Building needs before winter
- A trip to the Galapagos

The Board welcomed the new teachers in the Vo-Ag department. Audra Leach and Danielle Melino come with great backgrounds, and have hit the ground running. The Vo-Ag department under Dave Moran's guidance is continuing its record of excellence, as was evidenced by a presentation from 2 members of the FFA related to the exchange trip with an Iowa-based chapter.

Ian Strever provided an update on the "Portrait of a Graduate" project. The challenge will be wrapping the goals into the curricula, and facilitating analysis of the level of accomplishment in the 5 identified areas; "Self-Advocacy", "Communicator", "Problem Solver", "Global and Environmental Awareness" and "Confident". Ian Strever put together a great PowerPoint presentation on the topic which can certainly be forwarded.

Since the institution of the NYP grading practice, there has been a marked decline in the number of grades at the end of the year that are less than 70% (a "C"). In 2017, there were +/- 125, and as of June, 2019, there were +/- 75, which is a further decline from 2018's number (+/- 80). It seems clear that encouraging mastery of a subject before moving to a next level course should provide students with the fundamentals they need for continued success. The entire process is still evolving, but the early data is encouraging.

The SAT results are similarly encouraging. Now that the state uses this data to benchmark, it will become more important to, in some cases, "teach to the test". HVRHS average is unchanged from 2018, and up from 2017. Insofar as AP data is concerned, the results there are very encouraging, as students now need to commit to the test earlier. The number of students taking AP courses is up, as is the number taking the tests. There is also a substantial increase in the number of 3+ scores, which is very positive! The presentation is available to anyone interested, as Ian's PowerPoint can be forwarded.

HVRHS is very fortunate to have individuals who go way above and beyond in their service to the Housy community. Jacob Ellington, the son of Laurie and Mike Ellington developed a solution for emergency alerts that saved the taxpayers thousands of dollars versus purchasing off the shelf equipment. Jacob worked at the circuit board level to create a system which should in all likelihood become a viable product! The Board also recognized the multitude of volunteers who helped to bring together HVRHS's first participation in the Special Olympics program. It's a real pleasure to recognize these individuals who take on responsibilities and tasks that bring so much benefit to the community.

The One Eleven Group started their work over the summer. The Board looks forward to hearing their findings and proposals for promoting Housatonic Valley Regional High School! There was some consternation about the use of the One Eleven Group as one of the members of the Region 1 Board is also a principal in the organization. However, Tom Mooney, Region 1 counsel provided guidance which assured the Board that it had properly handled the contracting of the One Eleven Group. The major distinction is that the One Eleven Group is a contractor, not an employee - a basic, but important difference that is crucial to understanding the involved state statutes (10-232).

The Board approved a number of infrastructure projects which will be funded by the surplus from the fiscal 2018/2019 school year. These are major projects that had been deferred previously, but as winter approaches, are all the more critical to accomplish as they are extremely important to the heating system. Also, the IT department was without any backup power (generator) and will be brought on to backup generator circuits.

Lastly the Board heard from Danielle Melino, one of the new Vo-Ag teachers, who sought approval for a once in a lifetime trip to the Galapagos Islands in conjunction with her former school in Massachusetts. The trip has so many opportunities for learning that it's impossible to list them all here. Suffice to say the Board was thoroughly behind this venture, and thanked Ms. Melino for wrapping HVRHS into this possibility!

Please feel free to email or call with any questions or comments.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Whelan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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