

CHMS General Board Meeting

November 14, 2019

Executive Board Members

Co-Presidents

Kathie Cihlar and Jill Conley

Co-Vice Presidents

Jennifer Driscoll and Michele Schubkegel

Executive Board Members Present Stephanie Stern - Treasurer Courtney Stach - Secretary

Meeting was called to order at 9am.

1. Welcome & Call to Order (Jill Conley and Kathie Cihlar)

There was a motion to approve the September General Board Meeting minutes. Motion was approved.

2. Turnabout Fundraiser (Kathie Cihlar)

- a. Monies Raised from Fundraiser -We raised nearly \$26,017.50.
- b. Long Range Planning -The teachers were asking for air bikes, rowing machines and TRX equipment and bio boxes. This will benefit all of the kids in the P.E. classes.
- c. We've been talking about purchasing sound panels in the cafeteria; sound dampening to create comfort for the students and teachers in this space.
- d. We will present what we are buying in February.

3. Fundraising, Activities & Miscellaneous (Kathy Cihlar and Jill Conley)

- a. The print directories were delivered to their advisors last week. Theresa Gannon did a beautiful job, and many thank yous!
- b. There was a little adjustment with membership tool kit. If you need help; please email the Board and we are happy to respond!

Fundraising and Activities

CHMS Holiday Gift Drive - (Stephanie Hamman)

- Gift of the Season Gift Drive for CHMS benefits Hinsdale Community Services supporting 20 local families in our area. Students can pick from the wish list tree during lunch November 20-22, 2019.
- Gifts are due back with tags stating item and recipient (attached) by December 4 and 5 Families are so grateful and come to pick up the gifts: December 9th, 2019.
- They spend about \$30 per gift and gifts are delivered to the school.

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CHMS Book Fair

- Book Fair began week of 11/20-11/22 and runs through Monday and Tuesday of Parent Teacher conferences.
- Students will be attending the Book Fair during their LA classes. It runs 8am-3pm. The 11/25 and 11/26 dates will coincide with parent and teacher conferences.

Local Restaurant Fundraising - (Jill Conley & Kathie Cihlar)

- CHMS is partnering with local restaurants for fundraisers.
- Today, 11/14 is Corner Bakery! 15% of the sales go to us!

The Stock the Lounge, the 6th grade parents donated (Jill Conley & Kathie Cihlar)

- We deliver special items to the teachers' lounge: some of the items include: K-cups, candy, tea/pop & chips.
- The teachers went bananas over these deliveries! They loved the food and snacks and treats.

Volunteers Needed (Kathie Cihlar)

- There are still volunteers needed for the book fair and for the 7th graders' Cow Eye Dissection project. See P.T.O. website for sign-ups.

Treasurer's Report (Stephanie Stern)

- As of 10/31, the PTO had collected just over \$72K, including \$25,500 of Turnabout donations.
- \$11,500 of the total that was collected in advance for Spirit Lunches will be spent as those lunches occur throughout the year.
- Provided our remaining fundraisers generate the \$5K budgeted, we would expect an \$8K positive variance in total income at year-end due primarily to 1) unbudgeted PTO donations totaling \$2,350, and 2) Turnabout donations in excess of the \$20K budgeted.
- Expenses totaled \$7,650 through 10/31. Back-to-School Day and Welcome Committee spending is complete and came in \$1,300 under budget.
- Other spending categories are tracking to budget, so we anticipate an additional \$48K in expenses throughout the year.
- Additionally, once presented for approval, Strategic Planning expenditures (which are budgeted at \$0) are expected to equal the positive variance in Turnabout donations.

Parent Teacher Conferences (Levi Brown)

- Conferences begin the week of Thanksgiving 11/25 and 11/26.
- The way the conferences work is the teachers are set in cafeteria and gym. You can check in with whomever you want to.
- We are thoughtful of the number of people per time slot. We don't want it too crowded.
- We've actually added more time-slots from feedback from last year.
- Skyward is where you sign-up.

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- If you have problems signing up, we can help you on the back-end.
- There is an app you can download. The staff will not have the schedules printed.
 - Conferences are held Monday 2pm-8pm
 - Conferences are held Tuesday 8am-2pm

Matt Wilhelm Assembly (Levi Brown)

- It was a huge success, and the kids enjoyed his presentation very much!
- He had them in the palm of his hand 30-seconds into it! The 8th graders even loved it!
- We have a follow-up session with each advisory.
- They have a debrief time and go over the messages.
- Thank you P.T.O. for this wonderful assembly for our students.

Veterans Day Assembly (Levi Brown)

- Thank you all those who helped coordinate the visiting veterans and thank you P.T.O. for the breakfast for the vets post assembly. We had a total of 14 vets and a wide-variety of officers and legion men. Levi Brown also mentioned his Dad was a fighter pilot in the air force. Thank you to all the Veterans for their service, and those who made a special visit to CHMS, 11/7/19.

Real World Days for 8th Graders (Levi Brown)

- This is an excellent way for our 8th graders to get a gauge on living in the real world.
- The Social Studies team lead by Mrs. Carey invited professionals in to share their life/work experiences and help the kids craft their real world living plans and budgets.
- They get a job and pick housing and get a car, and get insurance, and play the game of Fortune or Misfortune.
- It is a great learning day for all of the kids and a way to get a good glimpse of the "Real World".

Hinsdale Central School Parents' Panel (Marie Strimatis)

- This panel of guests were brought in by Marie Strimatis and it was a variety of parents whose kids currently attend CHMS.

Here are the general areas that we covered today

- Introductions (your name, your children, including the grades and schools they attend)
- Describe the course selection process for freshman year.
- What activities or athletics do your HC students participate in?
- Are there any tips you can give to new freshman parents?

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Parent Panel

- Lisa Romberger
- Lori Thompson
- Kari Galassi
- Polly Ascher
- Shelly McMillin

Academic Takeaways

- Do your research before the 8th grade night in January; ask friends; there is not a lot of time with our child's counselor (around 7 minutes) so you need to have an idea of the best fit for your child prior to your individual meeting.
- Parents are not spoon fed. They need to do their own research and your time with your child's counselor goes quickly and it is NOT a counseling session. You can reach out to the child's counselors and counseling department heads ahead of time via email or phone to ask individual questions about placement.
- Please make time to talk to your children about how big of a course load they want freshmen year. You must consider the whole student with activities and club participation. There are over 99 clubs at Hinsdale Central for kids to participate in! They can join all year long but they are strongly encouraged to get involved as soon as possible Freshmen year to be a 'part of something' and familiarize with the school and make friends.
- Doing homework and studying are two different things. Kids need balance and sleep so doing home work until 1am is not a good thing.
- It's important to consider your child's mastery of time management and organizational skills. If you are deciding on how many Honors/AP courses to add into your student's day, you must take into consideration time management and their ability to carry certain course load.
- AP classes begin sophomore year. It is recommended to try Honors classes before AP Classes. AP classes give college credit to students depending on the grade and score at the end of the exam (and the college which they choose to attend; some colleges do not accept these classes as core curriculum). AP classes are more self study in nature and have an intense reading level. There is often more pressure from students' peers versus the parents. Students need to enjoy freshmen year and sophomore years. Regular level classes are not easy. Many kids find themselves stressed out in high school.
- GPA (Grade Point Average is Cumulative).
- Honors and AP classes are weighted by a full point (6.0 for an A in AP/Honors; 5.0 for an A in an on-level class).

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- Honors World History and Honors Biology are more difficult and time consuming classes with a lot of reading.
- The science courses are often self-study in nature. Student sometimes access a video to support their studies on You Tube.
- Honors band students are able to opt out of PE at this point. (Checking on this one).
- Freshmen can take one elective per semester. Look at future classes that your child may be interested in and choose an elective that may be a prerequisite for this class, i.e. pre-engineering).
- There are a lot of fun and interesting electives, like learning to fix computers, pre-engineering, graphic communications (which leads to Honors Video Game Design). Intro to Business (great class but a ton of work); teaches students to manage money; balance a check book), investment planning. Some electives are mixed grade levels. Band/orchestra/chorus could be the freshmen's elective (there is an honors level). Use the electives to explore more interests.
- Students take PE/Health (including RULER curriculum) every day for four years. Varsity athletes can have a study hall instead during season. Sophomore through senior year, students can choose the type of gym class (i.e. weight lifting).
- There are two different types of study halls. Make sure to do your research as to which one might be better for your kids so they are effective and productive.
- Kids get 1:1 Chromebooks.
- It's easy for students who are not organized or who procrastinate to get behind in classes. Stress the importance of not digging a hole at the beginning of the semester so that finals aren't as stressful. Often times, first quarter is 40% of grade, second quarter is 40% of grade, and the final is 20% of the grade. This may vary by teacher, so make sure you clarify.
- If your student is struggling, a tutor might be a good option. There is a tutor expo and you can gather a few options in case your child needs extra support. Another option is using an NHS student (who needs volunteer hours) at around \$10-\$15 an hour. The Guidance Department also provides options.
- There are websites for homework management. Teachers have used different formats, but they are moving towards Canvas for all classes.
- The average class size is around 25-30 students.

Extracurricular Takeaways

- Many clubs take up as much time as a class (like Model UN and Forensics)
- Encourage your child to try at least one club and/or sport (for social and academic reasons). Students can try new things. Some kids need to be forced to be involved their freshman year.
- Kids should try many clubs and activities freshman year, as they will want to specialize in the activities that they are most passionate about in the later years.

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- Many families notice that their child's grades are better in season than out of season because they are forced to be more focused in a smaller window of time.
- There are some no-cut sports. i.e. cross country and football. Some fall sports start as early as August 12, 2019. You have to register and sign a waiver and have a sports physical loaded up on the website. Most sports will have a summer camp to get your foot in the door. Color Guard will take walk-on members.
- Sports are a great outlet to meet new people and feel connected.
- The parent panel recommended the kids do summer camps, before freshman year and even earlier. The athletic department has summer camps for athletes 8-18 years old.
- Tryouts for Poms, Cheer, and Color Guard are in the spring, so start looking at tryout information before the fall of freshman year. CHMS will let families know of club and athletic opportunities. Parents can also sign up to receive HCHS newsletters earlier.
- Band is also a built-in friend group and kicks in over the summer.
- Student Government is another option. Students in Student Government are responsible for planning the assemblies and dances. CHMS is the largest feeder school, which helps with winning class officer elections freshman year.
- Peer leadership, Ambassadors, and Habitat for Humanity are other activities.
- Clubs often meet before school and sometimes only meet one time a month.

Personal Development

- Students need to become self-advocates. They need to be the primary communicators with their teachers about questions and concerns. They also need to advocate for themselves when they need extra support.
- Kids need to figure out an organizational system that works for them. One family reported that each child had a file storage box and put old tests and assignments in class folders to use to study for finals.
- Keep pushing kids to get involved and to be social.
- Kids need to learn soft skills and have the ability to work in groups.

High School Choices Impacting College Options

- Don't always look at college as an end game. You need to balance school work with other high school experiences. Even students with all A's in all honors classes do not always get into their "dream schools."
- Colleges like to see students build year to year with a more challenging course load. Pick and choose more difficult classes based on child's interests and ability in freshman year. You can choose more difficult levels in subsequent years.
- Students need a minimum of 18 credits and 26 is the maximum. Some competitive colleges require more credits and certain classes (world languages, LA, math, etc).

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- Many colleges require four years of the same language. Some parents recommend that freshmen redo Spanish 1 and get a stronger foundation and to have an easier class. Other students start out in Spanish 2 or 3 (or choose to start a new language).
- Regardless of which math class your child starts freshman year, students need four years of math. After calculus, there is AP Stats and Seminar class options. The SAT/ACT tests only up through Algebra and Geometry so there is no rush to get through the math curriculum for standardized test purposes.
- Students should develop a relationship with their guidance counselor, as the counselor will be able to better recommend classes and help with college choices if they know your child better. Guidance counselors are assigned by alphabet, so families often have the same counselor for all children.
- Coding classes are important for Engineering Schools.

Advice for Parents

- Go to Curriculum Night. It is super helpful to learn teachers' expectations, get on email lists from teachers, learn about the syllabus/course expectations, etc.
- You can buy HCHS spirit wear through the boosters in the first week in December. They make great Christmas presents. There will be another opportunity to purchase HCHS items in the spring when eighth grade parents are invited to a coffee.
- Get involved as a parent by selling spirit wear (allows you to be around the kids and to observe lunches).
- Parents can join both the PTO (parent education, with speakers) and the Boosters (fundraising arm to help support clubs, musicals, athletics). Last year, the Boosters raised \$80,000 and used this money to support extracurriculars through funding grant requests. As a member of the PTO, you have access to the online family directory.
- Don't plan vacations or take days off at the high school level.
- Definitely sign up for parent/teacher conferences. You may not get all of your child's teachers, but they are very helpful.
- Parents can read the daily announcements online. This is often the best way to know what is going on at the school. You can then encourage your child to get involved before the deadline expires.
- Kids activities and construction will impact school drop off and pick up times. Erase the fact that your children will be taking the bus daily and you won't be needed. The 2020 construction wall will be where the 21 buses are currently held. There is a meeting on construction. You might want to familiarize yourself with the time line. There are some big changes over the next couple of years. You must realize it will be a different pick up and drop off plan than last year. You may want to choose a drop spot for your child and may use that also for pick-ups. If you drive, you have to try to get a spot to rent and park as there is limited parking in the lot.

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Other Advice

- All grade levels are in lunches together. Lunch schedules/times may change midyear, depending on their classes. Lunches are like the buses. There is a pecking order (seniors sit in a certain place; freshmen sit in a certain area).
- Kids need to push outside their comfort zone and talk to other kids in their classes. They need to reach out to many students and get to know as many people as they can right from the start, as they may not be in class or lunch with many of their close friends from middle school.
- Textbooks are expensive (around \$500 per student per year). Look on Amazon or on book swap sites.
- Some Parents Use the Clarendon Hills Mom's List to Buy/Sell books.
- Wait to buy school supplies until the first day of classes because teachers will tell the students what to buy for their classes.
- Many students carry over the color system from middle school for organizational purposes.
- Summer school in D86 is not to get ahead. Instead, it is used to retake a class when a student didn't do well or to take a math class to jump sequence (when recommended by a counselor).
- There is only a five minute passing period. Students use backpacks in lieu of lockers. Walk the halls with your child a few times in the summer, so that the incoming freshman is comfortable navigating his/her schedule. Then suggest that they go back and walk their schedules again with friends.
- If you think that your child would benefit from a 504 plan, get one established at the middle school level because it is a lot easier than getting one established at the high school level.

Describe on Class Selection

- One item to highlight is that Hinsdale Central has changed the sequencing for science. There are a lot of FAQs on the website. Also reference the website once you get your recommendations for Science.
- There is a college entrance tool called NAVIANCE, you can see with this tool that there is a graph for what test score they need and GPA.
- You can help your kids to back into the 5.7/5.8 if they are shooting for top ranked schools.
- You won't get there without nearly all honors courses.

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Suggested Classes Come Out the Week of Thanksgiving

- You will receive your student's suggested classes before Thanksgiving. For class options, you can look at the online Program Studies guide on Hinsdale Central's website. It's located under drop down labeled 'Counseling.' The new Program Studies Guide comes out shortly.
- The Program of Studies Book is thick and can be a little overwhelming.
- Again, use your older friends as a sounding board to figure out the course load questions before your meeting.
- They are your biggest help and can advise you on classes.
- It is a natural process and occurs so don't freak out.
- For example one panelist had a friend who told a friend's daughter to take 2 honors courses instead of 5 honors courses.
- Honors English between Freshmen Year and Junior Year are different.
- Please focus on Middle School; take the time now to understand your child and their needs/study habits/stress management.
- There are two types of study halls. Regular study hall allows students to work independently and can be super social. Students with 504 thrive in the Excel Study Hall. It is a smaller environment; and there are three teachers in the study hall to help. They proof work, advocate, and follow-up and they check to see that work is being turned in and your child can take extra time here for tests. It is a touch-point and advocate and extra set of eyes for your child.
- Science and social studies are the biggest step up from middle school.
- AP Euro is a shock to the system.
- Honors World History is also very rigorous.
- You have to know your child's reading level in order to know if they can get through these classes as they are heavy reading.
- There is a huge schism between Honors World History and World Cultures.

College Application Evaluations

- The essays are critical.
- The score of the GPA is critical.
- The growth and trajectory is most important to the colleges.
- Please plan ahead and talk about what senior year can look like with your counselor.
- Sometimes parents back into freshmen year, looking at each year ahead in succession.

Back to the AP History Discussion

- My daughter signed up for AP Euro History and her teacher is the guy who wrote the study guide for the AP exam. He is like a college professor.
- The teacher talked her into staying in the course when she struggled and she got great confidence out of it and became a better writer. She got a strong B+ with lots of

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perseverance and that often is better than getting an A and not struggling. She got so much more out for the course than just the grade.

Course Rigor & Improvement

- Course rigor is hugely important to colleges.
- Daughter got one C on her report card and that's why she didn't get into her top two schools.
- Another thing to consider: STEM students - One panelist has a friend whose son is a freshmen at Purdue. Coding is huge, and he highly regretted not taking AP Computer Science at Hinsdale Central. If you have someone who wants to do engineering, this is highly recommended. The schools look more closely at the grades for your future major than at your school.

Beauty of Electives: Marketing Class and Investments Class and Business Law Honors

- They find a passion and connection to the thing they want to study in college.
- The rigor and homework is not the same.
- There are some great teachers.
- AP Economics recommendation came from an instructor from one of the panelists. He loves what he's learning and spurred her child's interest to further study economics.

Intro to Business

- This is a freshmen or sophomore level class.
- For electives your freshmen year, choose one without a lot of homework.
- Intro to Engineering has been an easy Honors option.
- This is equivalent to taking an Honors Course. Please take it eyes wide open and lever down other courses.

Yearbook

- This is a class. One panelist's daughter edited almost half of one of the sections of the yearbook.
- She would not have done this if her advisor did not lead her on this path. Advisors sometimes know your student better than you do!

Honors Choir

- You can do either regular Choir or Honors; with Honors you have to take a private lesson every week at school or outside the school.
- They have to write a paper.
- Regular Choirs or Audition Choirs - the Christmas one is coming up in December.
- If you child is interested in singing, they take field trips.

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- The band went to Rome this year!

Peer Leaders

- Juniors can become a Peer Leader and you try out for it sophomore year.
- It's an Orientation Group.
- Encourage your kids to show up and be present; don't just join and not show up.
- There are benefits to being active and a participant.
- Gym class will educate them on the clubs and activities and this makes the kids feel connected.

Clubs Kids Try Out For: Forensics (Speech):

- Forensics is a speech team.
- They have meets on Saturdays.
- They are in bed early Friday nights and it's a great activity.

Sports & School Balance

- Most of the sports have parent organizations.
- There are social events and pasta parties.
- Some do community service and it becomes more than a sport.
- You get a lot of Spirit Wear for sports.
- Sports are a lot of time; pick your activities wisely.
- Trying to manage a school sport, club sport and all classes will be a challenge, but most sports seasons go quicker than you think.
- If you are a junior or senior, you don't have PE and you have study hall if you are in a sport.

Practice Times Before and After School

- 6am Practices begin in the summer for Basketball.
- Kids will take their work out bag, three sandwiches and three fruits for 1st lunch and 3rd lunch - and then are starving when they come home!
- For Boys' Swimming, Monday and Tuesday are the try outs and the boys get to have their first meet the Friday after Thanksgiving.
- Varsity swims twice a day so you have to factor into scheduling.
- One panelist mentioned that this taught her son that he is a morning person. He goes and gets to school early, takes care of everything himself, and manages his time around his sport. If you can find consistency, your kid can figure out how they work best.
- Kids are better when they are busy.

Meeting New Kids & School is Always Open/Active

- There are very few classes with their CHMS friends.
- Students expand your groups of friends immediately.
- The kids find their friends before school.

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- The library is open before school.
- The building is never not in use; it may be closed the hours between 12am to 4am.

Walking Your Schedule in August/Knowing The Scoop

- Both parents should go to curriculum night.
- The science wing is in the basement.
- You should have your student's schedule on your phone or printed too, ***as they DO NOT give you a printed schedule.***
- You can pay your ID fee and your schedule early.
- The students will get lost the first week and the teachers help and they are nice.
- Everything is on line for payments.
- You order your books ahead of time in the summer.
- There is no supply list; send them with a pen and a folder and teachers will tell them what to get for supplies.
- The Orientation Day will take the anxiety away.

Building Teacher Relationships/Rules that Are Different/Own Advocate

- They can have ear buds; they can eat all day; there is no allergy guidelines.
- The teachers aren't chasing them for homework assignments.
- They are their own advocate; this really happens with the student and the teacher in high school.
- As you work toward college it's nice to build a relationship with a core teacher. You have to work toward these relationships for college recommendations.
- There are a ton of group projects; there are always complaints about kids not doing the work. One panelist had her son talk with the teacher so that he could be in a different group, maybe not with best friend.
- The communication with the teacher should be from the student's email account, not the parent's account.
- Parents can help them craft the email, but the child should open that line of communication.
- The teachers truly want the kids to succeed.
- Chemistry teachers can sometimes help with a physics issue if you have a good relationship with that teacher.
- There is no homework website. Teachers just verbally say the homework assignments in high school.
- A lot students; are getting tutored or helped and in high school it's much more the norm to need more help. There is a list of tutors and student tutors.

Transition Process 504

- The regular counseling appointment person will help you select the right level for your student.
- You want to make sure your child is going to have the best freshmen year.

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- One panelist said she met with Tammy Prentiss, Superintendent, and did things differently. Now her daughter is blooming like crazy as a Junior.
- Make an appointment with Brad Vertheim, Assistant Superintendent, if you need more answers or help.
- One panelist had a child with a high-performing disability. The conversation didn't go well K-8 but it has been great in high school and extraordinarily helpful path for the child.
- The 504-8 dramatically impacted one of the panelist's PSAT and SAT levels.
- You have children with all different situations.
- In one instance, a teacher had a hearing problem and the student had a speaking problem. The teacher wore two head-sets and that child could hear with a different frequency from the rest of the class.
- They break down accommodations versus modifications.

Attendance/Lunches/Connecting with your Student

- You call the child out of attendance.
- If you need to pick your student up for an appointment, call the attendance line in advance. You can pull up and text your child and they will come out.
- The food or lunch drop offs do not occur. Your kids can bring their lunch or buy it.
- Breakfast is served in the school cafeteria. Your child can literally eat all day.

Boosters

- You purchase your activity pass and spirit wear through the booster club.
- Go to the P.T.O. and committees and see what you want to participate in as a parent.
- Experiencing the Freshmen Year Homecoming Pep Rally is the beginning of a great four years.

Spirit Wear

- All of the bigger clubs and sports have more spirit wear.
- They like to represent their school and their little piece of the school too with their sport/club gear.
- They do have an 8th grade parent coffee in May and they sell Spirit Wear there.
- It's so fun to have Hinsdale Central swag going into Freshmen year.
- If your kid is an athlete, you can get on the board and help with swag and most have Parent Committees.
- You can still stay involved in high school.

Reiterating Importance of the Parent Teacher Conferences

- The panelists encourage you to go.
- You should go to the conferences and it really helps you know what your child is doing in class.
- It's 8 minutes of speed dating; and if you don't get one and they work to set you up.
- Friday in the classrooms and Thursday you are in the Field House.

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- They are in October.
- Some parents do two days of conferences for multiple students.
- Meeting with the gym teacher too was beneficial, if your child has any physical challenges.

If Your Student is feeling overwhelmed and Other Final Tips

- Your counselor is who you go and make the schedule with in the Spring.
- You typically get the counselor for each child.
- Your counselor will be your point of contact for everything.
- The reality of choosing courses in January can be tricky, but you can email your counselor to make changes.
- Sign up for the elective of your choice as placements go fast.
- You can always get into a study hall.
- You can take a Fall elective and drop it for a Study Hall if needed.
- Please don't have anxiety of your kid dropping down to a regular level class. Nobody knows or can see that your student has adjusted down.
- Don't let the chatter from other families change your child's path.

Panel Adjourned 11am.