

NOTES FROM 1st PTO MEETING FOR SOPHOMORE CLASS OF 2012

September 21, 2009
(7:00 PM in MLK Room)

WELCOME TO SOPHOMORE YEAR:
MEETING WITH HEADMASTER WEINTRAUB AND DEAN LANDE

-- Nancy Wagman (a Sophomore PTO rep) gives opening remark/introductions

-- Karen Campbell (Sophomore parent/ FoPA rep) describes Friends of the Performing Arts (FoPA)

- a PTO committee dedicated to supporting performing arts activities at BHS
- FoPA will support more than 50 performances this year
- Variety of ways parents can support FoPA and the arts: donations, Program Book ads, volunteer, etc.
- FoPA's first group meeting – Oct. 13, 7PM in the Teacher's Lounge next to MLK Room
- For more information, contact Karen (karencampbell4@rcn.com)

-- Adelaide Ketchum & Karen Hirsch, PTO Co-Presidents, give welcome

- Thank you for past support; keep it coming!
- Funds support monthly news letter, senior college writing workshop, so much more
- Freshman BBQ a success – thank you to organizers and workers
- To contact PTO via email (esp. if you are not getting PTO emails): www.bhs-pto.org

-- Headmaster Weintraub gives welcome

- BHS remains a great place, esp. thanks to all supportive/involved parents
 - Very complex, diverse place
 - For 1/3rd of students, English is 2nd language; 10-13% in free/reduced fee lunch program
 - Environment is good laboratory/preparation for future world
 - Safe, peaceful, productive for full spectrum of students
- Data continues to highlight BHS excellence (e.g., edged out Newton North at MCAS)
- MCAS (given in March) is good, rigorous test with very public metrics
 - Helps measure system's operation
 - Keeps students accountable for competence in "3 R's"
 - Good to encourage your child to take it seriously
- Students should aim for National Honor Society (3.3 GPA or better)
 - Last year 43% made it
 - National Merit Scholarship also excellent goal, but much more selective
 - only 10 students last year
 - based on particular test score and only 1% from state's student population can be semi-finalist
- Key message: Work hard and steadily, and achievement will come over time
- Please support the great work of the PTO!

-- Dean Diane Lande gives welcome

- We measure not only by scores and data, but also our supportive culture

- Gave reading from 2007 graduation speech (speaker selected from submissions given in Public Speaking course)
 - Central lesson: “Never give up”
- Noted presentation given to students by Dr. Michael Fallon: “You don’t know me until you know me.”
 - 70 minute presentation, about masks we wear
 - Portrayed different personalities/characteristics; highlighting common humanity
- Effort at BHS is to bridge differences;
 - “tell your story” advisory groups
 - Faculty also engaged in “telling our stories”
- Kids are in advisory program again
 - 3 mantras:
 - Hard work, over time
 - Freedom and responsibility
 - Bring your best self to school every day
 - We also use “unified adult voice”
- In Sophomore year, kids need to step up more, less hand holding, grades officially count (though 9th grade grades count also)
 - Bigger circles of friends; students driving
 - A big growing up year
 - A year to think about involvement in school activities
 - Activities Fair in October
 - See on-line student handbook for list
 - Kids can also easily start new clubs
 - Consider Student Council/Legislature (student-teacher group)
 - meets every X Block
 - Has lots of power to shape school rules (e.g., cell phone use)
- Two new guidance counselors -Jacqueline Browne and [Karen Johnson]
 - If you want guidance counselor to reach out to your student, you can email them
 - Guidance counselors have three “seminar” meetings with their kids during year
- PSATs (October 17 this year)
 - Not required for sophomores; can wait until next year
 - OK to let them take it now (esp. if they don’t get anxious and are good test takers)
 - Sign up by 9th of October in guidance office with check

-- Headmaster Weintraub gives further remarks

- Class size a bit bigger than expected
 - Thought there would be 1720 kids but went to 1760
 - Some classes are a bit larger, e.g. some English, social studies, math classes
 - Target is still 19-20, though some squeezed for now to 25-26
- Re: PSAT
 - Princeton Review offers free PSAT test (no score)
 - If you are anxious, start with guidance counselor
- Headmaster’s secretary – Kelly McDermott

(Q & A Period)

Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

PTO website: www.bhs-pto.org

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BHS Website: www.bhs.brookline.k12.ma.us

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