



High School of American Studies

HSAS PTA GENERAL MEETING OCTOBER 20TH, 2020

Meeting held on Zoom, online, 6-7pm

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6.02 PM BY PRESIDENT NICOLE ROTHSCHILD

Executive Board members present: Nicole Rothschild, president; Joanna Brody, vice-president; Dan Jacob, co-treasurers; Eric Weinberg and Niki Singh, fundraising; Stephen Friedgood, communications secretary; Nora McCauley and Melanie Perlstein, co-recording secretaries; Maria Kiriakova, member-at-large

Administration members present: Alessandro Weiss, principal, Paula Trebo-Fiore, Parent Coordinator

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT, ALESSANDRO WEISS

At school every day for a month now

A snapshot of what we're thinking about and working on, where we are in the process of running this virtual and in-school

Building is safe, clean and has all the promised PPE

Virtual instruction got up and running

Sorted out all the tech issues with school-provided tech for students

Attendance and participation in virtual classes has been high and strong

Now trying to refine actual experience—workload, how long things take, etc. Student responses have been all over the spectrum. Student government doing a survey—still open. They will do a presentation at the next faculty meeting.

Teachers, too. What they have to do now also takes a lot longer—especially things that were simple in person, like checking work.

Do know that we are thinking about it.

Reinforcing the importance of following the testing and assignment calendar.

There have been a few instances of due dates on a weekend. Different reasons in each case—all good.

When assignments are due and why. Posted at night? Some teachers are working then. That's ok presuming the assignment is due in a reasonable time frame, which it almost always is. I.E. not the next day. If seeing something posted at night makes your student nervous, maybe they shouldn't look.

Some of the kids know that the pressure they feel is coming from themselves. We can reinforce that it's ok not to be perfect, and perfectly in control.

After the focus on the experience, tweaking and improving it, we will post a schedule for office hours and workshops. These are drop-in office hours, opportunities to come in for help or reinforcement. Emphasize to your students that everyone comes from time to time. This is not remedial. It is critical to be able to get help; it is also good for teachers to get to know students.

Then clubs and activities. Hoping for November 1st. Teachers and students have to feel confident with their workloads before making additional time commitments.



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We have had some issues with parents attending virtual classes. Either next to their student, or just in the same room. Coming from a good place, but it is freaking out (other) students as well as the teachers. Please don't do it. Students need class to be a safe place; teachers need it to be a community of rapport. Overhearing, which we can't avoid in small apartments, is different from purposefully attending a class. No-one feels it is being done out of any ill will, but it's making people uncomfortable.

DOE has announced that November 3rd (election day) is fully remote for all schools. (It's a 10th grade day so one group will miss live instruction that week.)

Nov 12-13 is tentative timing for Parent Teacher conferences. Virtual.

PSAT: DOE is not giving it in the fall. We would have to cancel days' worth of classes to hold the test. There's an alternative date in January we are looking into. This is true for all the specialized high schools (except maybe Brooklyn Latin). None are able to offer it in the fall; all are hoping for January. The National Merit has an alternative path to qualifying which we are looking into. This was done before (Hurricane Sandy year) and the same number of students qualified as usually do.

Thank you to all the parents of in-person students for collecting text books and having your students return them. We may set up families' homes in other boroughs as drop-off places to receive text books from fully remote families. About 20% maybe still out. PDFs are working fine, but it is more screen time and some kids just want the paper.

Asynchronous homework due times: will discuss with teachers at the next faculty meeting.

Quizzes during "asynch" time may be pleasing as many kids as it's upsetting—nice to spend class time as discussion, etc. rather than quizzes.

Third complaint: work given during "asynch" periods is longer than a usual class period. Asking students to get a sense of how long assignments are taking—if a teacher assumes 30 min, is it taking 45 or 60? That's the first thing we need to assess.

Kids are being great; erring on the side of caution; haven't had any problems whatsoever with masks, safety protocols, etc.

Half of faculty have remote accommodations. If number of students goes up, we might have to do what other schools have had to do, which is hire substitutes... and we'd rather just have our own teachers as much as possible.

We've tried to keep in-person days very light, not "punish" them with more work... and do the things that are harder to do remotely. Debates, informal discussions... Your kids have told me that they like that approach. Doesn't feel onerous, haven't been burdened with more school.

Occasionally teachers have mixed up dates for a test or assignment—"that's not our week" and so on. If it really seems to be incorrect, bring it up to Paula or Mr. Weiss. Re-publicizing the schedule to both students and teachers to review and refresh will help.

Alternative path to National Merit: coursework, grades, another test like an AP—but I don't remember, and it may have changed. This is why all the specialized school principals wanted to check in and coordinate, to make sure we were all in the same position.

The mayor's office puts a lid on news... no more news after 8pm except for certain situations. Will discuss with teachers when in the evening the lid should be on for HSAS.

For current 11th graders who took the PSAT in the spring, the counselors should be on it (as far as National Merit). Also they get a letter in the mail.



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Encourage kids to give feedback to teachers, us, etc. They usually do and they are often even nice about it.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, NICOLE ROTHSCHILD:

Annual appeal. Asking anyone to give anything they can. Not a lot of uptake yet.

Spirit wear sales on-line: about 40 families have participated.

Logo masks are a new addition! In-person students are being given spirit wear masks.

Need some help with the forms—contact forms, etc.

School will be taking care of the Chromebook purchase

We don't know what's happening with Lehmann College classes in the spring. We may have to pay for a percent of that. Last spring we contributed \$25,000 for the college classes. Usually it's covered by the DOE, CUNY, and other funding sources. We just really don't know this year.

Also, the school is currently paying for licenses for software, etc, but eventually they may come to us for contributions.

MINUTES FROM SEPT 29TH MEETING APPROVED

TREASURERS' REPORT: (DAN JACOB)

We're at around \$40,000, a third of what we hope to have.

On the expense side, we've used just about \$11,000.

Have a balance of \$374,000 right now.

Need to revisit and revise the budget quarterly over the course of the year because it's so different this year

NEW BUSINESS

Text book returns: people in other boroughs? Put your name out there

Tours and open houses are going to be virtual this year and we don't have a good video... if you can help with a video or know someone who can it would be great!

Tomorrow night Joe Latimer, the assistant dean of outreach and diversity at University of Rochester, will be talking about what's happening this year with admissions. It's his zoom, we sent out the info. Please join.

Next week Nick Salinas from Sarah Lawrence will present about financial aid. That's our zoom so we will be giving out the link and you just log in.

SHSAT? Registration and everything has been extended. No dates are on the calendar yet.

Our next meeting is Tuesday November 24th at 6pm. Week of Thanksgiving.