

NORCROSS HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES
Thursday, April 15, 2004

Members Present:

Mary Anne Charron, Dorothy Lewis, Paula Parris, Harvey Snider, Kevin Case

Members Absent:

Chuck King, Bobby Butler

The motion to approve the agenda was made by Harvey Snider and seconded by Paula Parris.

The motion to approve the minutes was made by Harvey Snider and seconded by Kevin Case.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Mary Anne Charron thanked Harvey Snider and Chuck King for speaking on behalf of Norcross High School at the Area Board Meeting that was held at NHS on April 13. Mr. Snider commented that he thought tone of the meeting was outstanding.

Ms. Charron shared a copy of the Blue Devil Bulletin that was sent via email to NHS parents informing them of the upcoming election on May 10th, 11th and 12th of School Council members. Voting will be from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm in the front office. A number of parents were nominated by others or expressed their own interest in being on the council. She also informed them of changes in the Georgia A+ Education Bill, the bill that outlines the duties of the School Council. One significant change is the number of people that can be on the Council. Originally, the Council consisted of seven members that included the principal, two teacher representatives, two parent representatives and two business partners. Ms. Charron proposed that for the next two-year cycle we elect three parent representatives and also have three business partners and three teacher representatives. Another change is that the principal does not necessarily have to be the chairperson, but the council may elect the principal as chairperson.

There was discussion of the Middle Years International Baccalaureate Program. The county has funded a large part of the IB Program for the middle schools. Next year Summerour will start with 6th graders in its program and Pinckneyville will have the program in place in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

Dorothy Lewis stated she has concerns about the IB Program because of small numbers in the IB classes. Ms. Charron replied that as the program grows, the class sizes will also grow. Last year NHS had 200 students enrolled in IB, this year there are 260, and next year, 300 are enrolled. Another concern regarding IB is funding to pay for training of teachers. Currently, county funds pay for training, but as more teachers are needed, training costs will rise. Harvey Snider suggested that IB parents could be a source of funds. Kevin Case commented that we need to be careful that we don't make the program elitist and deny students whose parents couldn't afford to donate to the program.

Kevin Case questioned whether we had any data on IB graduates. Ms. Charron said that we have IB graduates in such prestigious universities as Yale and MIT. In this year's graduating class, every student in the top 10 ranking is in the IB Program. Of those one has been offered a full scholarship to Purdue and one a full scholarship to Penn State. These two scholarships include undergraduate and graduate school. Literature regarding the successes of IB students has been given to parents of middle school students.

Norcross High School will pilot a program for 9th graders next year. There will be two 9th grade teams, each consisting of 100 college prep and honors students and four core area teachers. Students needing support with higher-level classes were selected to participate in the program. The students were selected by a team of NHS teachers that met with Pinckneyville and Summerour math and language arts teachers for recommendations. The hope is that working with teachers who have high expectations and receiving extra support, the students will begin their high school years on a positive and successful note. Ms. Charron stated that if a parent wants his/her student in the program, we will accommodate the parent's request.

Ms. Charron shared information on one aspect of the "No Child Left Behind" bill, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). To be a passing AYP school, 95 % of the students must be in attendance on testing days for the High School Graduation Test, 88% of the students must pass the Language Arts portion of the High School Graduation Test, 88% must pass the Math portion of the High School Graduation Test, and the graduation rate must meet state requirements. We, as well as all other Gwinnett County high schools, did not pass AYP last year. NHS failed last year because we did not meet the attendance requirements. Prior to this year's testing, administrators went to all homerooms and spoke to the students about the importance of being in attendance on testing days. As a result of this effort, we met the attendance requirements and passed Adequate Yearly Progress.

The Summary of 2003 Adequate Yearly Progress broke students taking the High School Graduation Test into sub-groups by race. In order for a sub-group to be classified as passing, 40 or more students in that sub-group has to pass the math portion or the English language arts portion of the test. This restriction does not apply to schools such as Brookwood or Parkview because they do not have 40 students in some of the sub-groups. For example, the only sub-group that is counted for Brookwood in the instructional piece is the white group because they do not have 40 black, 40 Hispanic, 40 American Indian-

Alaskan, or 40 multi-racial students enrolled. The only sub-group not meeting the criteria from Norcross High School is the Hispanic group.

Harvey Snider suggested targeting some diverse groups to support the various sub-groups. Ms. Charron responded that there are many grants available to work with schools with diverse populations, but because Norcross does not have nearly as much poverty and diversity as other schools and because of our current successes, we don't "look" as needy as other schools. We currently have formed a joint partnership with Georgia Tech Hispanic engineering students to work with NHS Hispanic students and Jose Perez is working with UGA to obtain a grant for Hispanic support in the school. It was also suggested that we identify parents of students in the sub-groups who could give support through their alma maters, business connections, etc.

The March discipline report continued to show a high number of tardies to class. As in past months, this is due to the fact that the administration is stressing the importance of being in class on time to optimize instruction time. Students have been and will continue to be taken to panel for fifteen or more tardies which are documented as "Disregard of Direction".

Ms. Charron informed the council members of a dinner to be hosted by IBM honoring all Technology Teachers of the Month and their spouses at Tomas on May 12. IBM's President of the Educational Division will be in attendance at the dinner.

Meeting adjourned.

The next School Council meeting will be Thursday, May 13 at 7:00 am in the Family and Consumer Science room.