

MINUTES OF NOV. 18 HHS PTSA PARENT MEETING

Much of the meeting was devoted to discussion of initiatives arising from Challenge Success: the possible pilot of a late start, limits on portal hours, and a parent survey.

[Challenge Success](#) is a Stanford-based program that HHS is using as a guide to implement programs to reduce student stress and enhance student well-being and engagement with learning. The Challenge Success Committee at HHS consists of teachers, parents, students and administrators. [The committee gave a presentation to the Board of Ed on Nov. 18; it begins at 37.17 minutes on the [video of the meeting](#) on the district website.]

Later Start Update: The impetus for a later start time was a student survey conducted in 2018 that showed that HHS students were getting an average of 6.8 hours of sleep a night instead of the optimal 9 hours. The administration had hoped to do a 3-week late start pilot in November, but several issues had not been worked out. Now the goal is a pilot in March.

School hours under the pilot would be from 8:40 am to 2:58 pm. Extra help would be available for 30 minutes before school and 15 minutes afterward. The school building would be open for early arrivals. Lou said that with the current hours, 50 to 70 kids are late every day. He hopes a later start time would reduce those numbers. To accommodate the new schedule, time between classes and for morning announcements would be reduced (both are longer than needed, Lou said).

Some parents expressed reservations about the change, asked what data it was based on and said it had not been publicized enough. Lou and Jacquie Weitzman, a parent who is a member of the school's Challenge Success team, said that there have been extensive studies showing the benefits of later school starts, and noted that other nearby school districts, such as Scarsdale, Ardsley and Irvington, have either adopted a later start or are considering it. California just passed a law to go into effect in the 2022-23 school year that middle and high schools cannot start before 8:30 am to improve educational outcomes.

If the pilot does take place, afterward the school will ask for feedback from parents, students and teachers before deciding whether to put the late start in place for the next school year.

Portal Hours and Issues: Another recommendation from Challenge Success was to close the portal during school hours so students don't constantly check on grades during the schoolday

and parents don't call their kids at school to discuss a grade. The portal is now open from 4 p.m. to 7:30 a.m.

Lou acknowledged that there have been problems with the portal not reopening on time. Most often that's because eSchool Data is doing maintenance. He said he would try to get them to post a notification when the portal will be down temporarily. The portal is also down at the end of marking periods so teachers can post grades. Lou said he would announce in advance when the portal will be closed for entering grades.

There was discussion of whether the portal could be reopened at 2:45 pm so kids can check it before leaving school in case they need to see a teacher about a grade or assignment.

Homework/Assessments: As part of Challenge Success, HHS is also reviewing the amount of homework given and its efficacy, as well as the stress from having multiple tests on the same day.

Parent Survey: Parents who have not yet done so were encouraged to fill out a brief, confidential Challenge Success parent survey: <http://bit.ly/CSParentHastingsHS>. The parent survey is similar to one taken by the students last fall. The survey is only open till the end of the month.

Family University: Lou reported that about 160 parents and roughly the same number of students attended this year's Family University, which offered more workshops than last year on topics related to student health and well-being. He said he had received good feedback from students and is seeking ideas for speakers for next year.

School Climate Survey: Students will be taking an anonymous survey, spearheaded by the superintendent, about how they feel about the school. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes and will most likely be administered in early December.

PTSA News:

The PTSA has awarded several grants recently, including for a Jan. 7 student assembly with the former NBA player Chris Herren, who will speak about his addiction and recovery, and a Jan. 9 screening for parents of "The First Day," a film about Mr. Herren's journey. Other grants include: teacher professional development through Windward School; funds for Family University; line dancing at FMS; DJ for winter dances at FMS.

There will be an online spirit wear sale from Dec. 2-6 through the PTSA website at ptsahastings.org. All orders will be available for local pickup the following week.

HHS parents are encouraged to volunteer with the PTSA to help with hospitality, fundraising, communications or spirit wear sales.

If you wish to volunteer, have any suggestions for the agenda for future parent meetings, or have any other ideas or concerns, please reach out to one of the PTSA vice presidents for HHS:

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