

PTSA Parent Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 26th, 2020

Welcome from Hillside VPs Tanya Rynders and Stacey Merchant

- Halloween
 - Students are invited to wear costumes, but there will be no parade
 - Students should not wear costume masks or full face makeup
- PTSA weekly email
 - The PTSA sends a weekly email to members with all of our current flyers
- Used book fair - find more information [here](#)
 - The used book fair is one day on October, 31st
 - You must reserve a spot, buy a bag for \$10 to fill up
- New book fair - more information to come soon.
 - The new book fair will be online only from November 9th-15th
- Pizza Friday - find more information [here](#)
 - We now have a way to have pizza friday at home for the whole family
- BLT - Building Leadership Team - find more information [here](#)
 - There is a vacancy for a Hillside parent

Amy Cazes and John DeKams address the meeting with updates and news

- AM/PM model
 - This model works for most students, parents and teachers.
 - Offers strong social emotional learning and allows teacher and staff to check in
 - Provides strong consistency for students and teachers
 - Allows for more consistent and focused core instruction
 - Teachers can work with small groups affording more attention to teach, address and assess individual student needs
 - Enhances special areas to 2 specials a day
 - High needs students attend full day and transition times allow for special area instruction
- AM/PM model is not perfect, and while all in would be great, there is not enough physical space to allow for this while maintaining COVID protocols. Hillside is already using every bit of space available to them. Many schools in our area continue to close and these constant schedule changes can cause added stress. Hillside administration and staff is dedicated to trying to keep consistency for our students and this model helps to provide that. Mrs. Cazes has reached out to schools such as Bronxville and Chappaqua to ask about their all in model. They have more physical space available along with additional staffing options to allow for that in their district.
- Teachers have reportedly demonstrated great collaboration throughout this process.
- Participant questions
 - Q. Can 1st graders be added to the all in model along with kindergarten, as they missed half of the their kindergarten year?
 - A. Unfortunately there is not sufficient space to allow for this at this time.
 - Q. Can specials be taught in the middle of the day to lengthen the day?
 - A. No, as special teachers already teach the full day students at this time.
 - Q. Which specials are required by the state?
 - A. PE is required for a minimum of 120 minutes a week. The arts are required, but there is no specification of what type of art or for how many minutes. We are fortunate to have specifically trained special content teachers to provide this instruction.
- Mask breaks
 - The administration has re-evaluated mask breaks in reference to the AM/PM model

- There will be no scheduled mask breaks for half day students. They will take mask breaks as needed and while socially distanced.
 - Full day students will have mask breaks when they eat snack and lunch and as needed while socially distanced.
- Attendance - you can find the district notice [here](#)
 - Families can choose remote or hybrid models but they must make a commitment to that choice. A student who chooses to be hybrid, must attend class in person at their assigned time/day. They cannot decide to be remote for a day. Students who do not attend class as assigned (hybrid or remote) will be marked absent.
 - If an in person child calls out absent, they may attend class remotely if they feel up to it. They are still considered absent though.
 - Following these guidelines help the district to maintain proper data and records.
- Participant Questions
 - Q. With more absences likely this year, should we be concerned about truancy issues?
 - If a student is absent for illness they can bring a note from their doctor and it will be marked as an excused absence.
 - Q. If a child has to quarantine can they switch to the remote option?
 - A. Yes, please reach out to Mrs. Cazes and Mr. DeKams in regards to this.
- Dismissal procedures
 - Hillside has researched and tried many solutions to this problem, but continues to run into trouble.
 - Some concerns are as follows: families do not fill out the google forms on time, there is no wifi on the field to allow caregivers to fill out online forms on location, using paper and pen creates more contact and exposure.
 - Currently families and caregivers must hold a sign, similar to circle pick up, with their child's name
 - Mrs. Cazes has invited any parents who are concerned or who have ideas on the subject, to reach out to the PTSA to partner and create a committee on this topic.

Gina Kowalski addresses the meeting on COVID procedures and concerns

- Student protocols
 - Mrs. Kowalski has created a resource document to help you navigate common questions regarding COVID and illness. You can find that document [here](#)
 - We should err on the side of caution regarding symptoms and illnesses, even with "small" illness as it could affect so many moving parts
 - While you can check the resource document above, please feel free to call the nurses office with any questions or concerns. They are here to discuss our specific cases and help us navigate this.
 - Health providers (our school nurses) have the right to send a child home if they present any concerning symptoms
 - There is a health form to fill in if your child is sent home from school. You can find that form [here](#).
 - If you are asked to quarantine, you will be contacted by both the school and the Department of Health.
 - Siblings may continue to attend school unless the exposed student tests positive.
 - Students must share their quarantine clearance with the nurses office.
 - If a student develops symptoms during quarantine please alert both the Department of Health as well as the school.
- Participant Questions
 - Q. Why is the rapid test (antigen) not acceptable for clearance?
 - A. While this form of rapid test can be acceptable if it is positive, a negative result is not reliable/accurate enough at this time. If rapid molecular testing becomes available in the area, the health team will re-evaluate.