PAC Meeting 2/15/19

In Attendance: Principal - Vicki Puckett, MIHS Teacher - Toby Swanson, MISD School Board Director - Brian Giannini Upton, Jackie Brown, Debbie Hanson, Catheryne Nguyen, Alice Finch, Megan Hand, Kelly Sim, Susan Szafir, Nancy Waiss

Vicki Puckett introduced Toby Swanson, MIHS Leadership Teacher. Toby teaches leadership class, which has 33 students and oversees leadership clubs. Each leadership student chooses a partner project each year (examples have been a Food Drive supporting the MIYFS food pantry, A night of free Babysitting for MIHS Staff, etc).

Two leadership students have chosen to implement the Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) program, No Place for Hate program at MIHS and they presented an outline of their program to the PAC (MIHS Sophomore Treasurer and Sophomore Vice President):

These two MIHS leaders are working with Hilary Bernstein (Seattle Chapter of ADL) and 25 students at MIHS are now involved in the project. They reached out to a diverse group of MIHS students to get involved in their project and received 200 responses to a survey, which is helping to shape the direction for this program at MIHS. They received an ADL grant to support the funding of a training course for the students involved with this project. They also had a guest speaker: Dr. Alex Sigmon, holocaust survivor. 100 kids came to hear speech. Next step - would like the students to adopt several resolutions for respect to make our school community a non-hate environment:

- I will seek to gain understanding from people different from me
- I will speak out against discrimination and hate
- I will stand up to people who discriminate and hate.
- And more…

Projects will happen throughout the year to support the work of the resolutions. Will continue to work with Dr. Sigmon. The projects will have pre-lessons that may occur via Bridges and there may be post-lessons after projects occur. This will allow access to the whole student body.

Parent question: How can more students become involved in leadership at MIHS? Puckett and Toby Swanson mentioned that there are 2 periods of leadership class and there are many leadership clubs.

Vicki mentioned: Some may be concerned that the ADL has a narrow focus politically. MIHS and this student leadership group is not involved in promoting the ADL’s politically viewpoint, but rather the ADL’s viewpoint on hate. Toby Swanson mentioned it’s a good lesson for students - that we can learn to value aspects of an
organization or a person even when we disagree or feel neutral about other aspects. Again, MIHS is focusing **only** on the ADL’s viewpoints re: No Place for Hate. This program is separate from the ADL’s political viewpoints.

Parent point: MIHS assemblies- they are narrow-focused. Too much focus on athletics. Parent feels that many students leave assemblies because they don’t relate to them. Can musicians, student actors, etc be celebrated too? Wonders if assemblies would be a good forum for leadership to take No Place for Hate messaging.

Puckett responded that we have different assemblies- Some have a serious focus (Veteran’s Day, MLK Day) and some are spirit oriented- recognition based. Toby Swanson mentions that there is talk about changing focus of some assemblies, working with Associate Principal, Nick Wold. Talking about where does sports recognition fit in best.

Puckett mentions that for MIHS graduation, our admin team is looking at changing where and when different senior populations are recognized with the breakfast focused on celebrating all seniors and not just select groups.

Brian Giannini Upton from MISD School Board mentions that the Board is working on a New Mission, revamping and restating who we are as a district. This will be unveiled soon.

Parent- Mentions that it’s unclear if and when parents are invited to attend assemblies. Toby Swanson mentions that assemblies are now being live-streamed this year (some kids don’t like crowds, etc) and so the assemblies can be viewed in the MIHS library. He mentions that we could possibly share the link with parents to watch live or view later. There may be confidentiality issues with this. Vicki will check with MISD legal counsel.

Conversation switching again to making sure that all groups at MIHS are recognized and not bullied- sometimes even popular athletes can be bullied. Puckett mentions that our school community is great at coming to the table together to work together to solve problems- example working to solve the Mosh Pit problem (how to preserve the tradition but first and foremost keep everything safe).

Next Topic:

**MIHS Vestibule:**

Puckett- MIHS will be increasing security by adding a new vestibule near the main office/entrance, not because there are new concerns, but because we have so many visitors everyday. Have you seen Northwood’s main entrance? It will look much like the main entrance there. So, MIHS will soon have a glassed-in vestibule near the
main office and the main office will be reconfigured in positive ways. The start of this project may begin this May. Most of the work will occur over the summer and it should be concluded by August 1st. There is money left in MISD capital projects to fund this work. Puckett is currently working with the architect team.

Puckett spoke about the importance of everyone in the community speaking up if something seems wrong with a student. MIHS has a good track record of students & parents speaking up.

A parent mentions that our students have had good training to help them recognize concerning signs.

Puckett mentions that we are first and foremost a learning institution. School safety is always on the admin team’s mind, but the team and school board does not feel that it’s important to make drastic changes to our schools structurally. Vicki commented on how amazing community support is- through Parent Edge, MIYFS, PTA’s, etc. These programs can be incredibly powerful!

Brian mentioned that it’s important more to build social and emotional skills, connectedness with students and adults in our community. They feel this will better increase school safety. We are doing some hardening to our buildings -the school vestibules. But it’s better to invest in a stronger community.

New Topic:
Question about Snow Days Make-ups:

Puckett will be working on a plan with our Superintendent in the coming days. Looking at applying for a waiver for some of the snow days. Stay tuned… Looking at creative options that will work for students, families and staff. One parent mentioned that students have activities planned that begin right when school begins (some of them are competitive and have involved applications, etc). One parent hopes that the final exam schedule will remain unchanged. Conversation about creative ways to handle extra days at the end of the year- community service, Saturday School, etc. Stay tuned for final decisions.

Meeting adjourned at 12:32pm.