MIHS PAC Meeting
October 10, 2019

Meeting begins at 8:28am

Welcome and introductions

Ms Puckett: This year’s enrollment is approx. 1560. Staff is 154. Discussion of what PAC is. Role of PAC reps is to represent specific class. Share information with other parents in that class. Meetings always open to any parents who want to attend. Also try to have time in meetings for PAC reps to bring up issues they’ve heard in the parent community.

Discussion of School Improvement Plan (SIP)
Jenny Foster – Associate Principle

Received data from various surveys and anecdotal data. Top issues that surfaced are Social Emotional issues – have to make this a priority

Two SIP goals:

1. Homework – proposing teachers to not give homework over breaks (winter, mid-winter, spring break)

   some staff have bought in, others need more convincing

   some teachers feel pressured by parents to give more homework

   however, homework over breaks means students don’t get downtime to rest and recover.

   Administration is striving for a goal of 100% of teachers not assigning homework over break. They recognize this might not be possible, but will work with teachers to mitigate the stress associated with more homework.

2. Trusted adult – many students don’t feel they have a trusted adult at MIHS who cares about them – goal to ensure that all students feels they have a trusted adult here

Have had discussions with the Principal’s cabinet about the issue of homework. What is the value of the homework being assigned? What is really needed for learning? Want homework that is focused on student learning vs. homework that just keeps students busy.

Question - How does this work with AP classes?
Ms Foster – was former AP teacher. Her experience is that with thoughtful approach, being more creative and intentional, her students performed better with less, but better, preparation.

*Question* – why can’t we require teachers not to give HW over breaks?
  Ms Puckett – there are boundaries between Admin and teachers. Don’t feel they can mandate everything teachers are supposed to do in their classrooms.
  Ms Foster – talking about adaptive change. Want teachers and parents to buy in to the idea.

*Question* – how much are parents responsible?
  Believes it varies

Concern that MIHS students struggle to self-regulate, which leads to them doing what they think their parents and teachers want them to do.

*Question* – what can high schools do to combat the pressures and requirements from the college application process?
  Ms Puckett working with HS Principals organization to advocate for ways to manage the issues. Trying to bring in more people to talk about the balance that colleges want to see. Sometimes private college counselors give the impression that students have to do so many AP classes and satisfy other requirements to be considered for a good college.

*Question* – is there data from MI about what it takes to get into certain colleges?

Potential topics for future meetings:
  College Admissions – Data on MI (Naviance)
  Student conversations regarding admissions, SAT/ACT – shifting perspectives/attitudes
  Class rank
  Attendance changes
  Math curriculum

*Question* – how will we measure effectiveness of SIP goals?
  EES Survey and student surveys will be used for feedback

Attendance changes:
  College visits – excused or unexcused? Trying to find a balance because there is educational value in college visit. Problem is that parents sometimes take students out of school for extended periods that might include only one or two days of college visits.

*Comment* – PTSA webpages for each specific class could be better promoted. Has lots of useful information but some parents aren’t aware it’s available. Need to confirm content is up to date and relevant.
Discussion regarding vacation days no longer being excused. There is a range of examples. Missing a day or two around Thanksgiving Break should not be treated the same as missing two full weeks.

*Comment* that Whammo requirements can be very stressful for kids.

*Comment* – PAC Rep relayed concern from parent about effectiveness of Math Department. Lots of parents hire private tutors or enroll students in Privet. Concerns about effectiveness of teachers and that curriculum is behind that of other schools.

Ms Puckett looks at data as much as she can (sometimes rumors persist from prior years, even after changes are made). Works closely with Privet to help students. Data from Privet and MIHS suggest struggling students are struggling across the board, not just with math.

Teacher contracts provide that teachers must be available 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after school. A lot are here longer for students. There are some “clock punchers”.

*Comment* – if student comes to MIHS and is not accelerated, they won’t be able to take Calculus and they won’t have Algebra II when the students take the ACT/SAT.

Ms Puckett will discuss at future meeting. Math committee is in place to work on these issues.