January 17, 2018 - MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order - Ridge Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

- **Agenda Items**

  1. Academic Planning Night (January 18)
  2. Dr. Michael Bradley
     - January 31st – PAC (HS Parents)
     - February 1 – Bernards PAC (MS Parents)
  3. Rotating Drop Schedule
  4. Freshman Programming
  5. County-wide meeting
  6. FTGOTO

- **Attendee Names**

  - Drew Krause - Principal
  - Scott Thompson – Assistant Principal
  - Christine Ziegler – PTO Co-President
  - Elaine DiDario – BOE Representative
  - Ged Ong – PTO Co-VP Communications
  - Shannon Yu – PTO Co-VP, Volunteers
  - Lisa Laurino – PTO Secretary and 10th Grade Class Parent
  - Yongyong Tang – 10th Grade Class Parent
  - Vandana Mehta – 9th Grade Class Parent

Agenda Items

1. **Academic Planning Night – January 18, 2018**

   Parents of 8th graders are invited from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – This planning night will take place in the PAC, old gym and some classrooms. There is a basketball game that night so the new gym was unavailable. This Planning Night is Curriculum based. Information about classes and programming are the main focus.

2. Dr Michael Bradley Presentation

January 31st – Ridge PAC for High School parents
February 1st – Bernards PAC for Middle School parents

3. Rotating Block Schedule

Rotating Block Schedule is still a main topic being discussed by the Board of Education. If we were to implement block scheduling at Ridge there may be a significant cost involved to renovate the Cafeteria to accommodate 1800+ students during one lunch period. Demographer's report is still pending regarding the student population and whether it will increase or decrease. That needs to be taken into consideration. Some teachers have volunteered to be on an exploration committee. Schools that have transitioned to Rotating Block have found it to be extremely beneficial to students and staff.

4. Freshmen Programming

The idea is to help build connectivity to the school for incoming freshmen. How do you get them involved when they first come to Ridge? Incoming freshman have orientation and an assembly at the start of the year. The administration would like to add more programming for freshmen students to start the year to help foster connectivity. They are exploring options to fit something in on the school calendar to get freshman more involved and better acclimated. An initial thought is a program involving a speaker named Keith Hawkins (http://www.keithhawkins.com/). It would be a half-day session for freshman with the help of teachers and possibly peer leaders. We currently have 70 peer leaders that would have to be trained to effectively help freshman connect and assist with freshman mentoring.

5. County-wide Meeting

A meeting was held at Hillsborough High School on January 9th with many Somerset County schools to address the recent vaping issue. We aren't the only school district encountering this problem. Can we create a county-wide unified front? Information and ideas were shared on how to manage this growing problem. Knowledge is power so we need to educate students, teachers and parents on the hazards of vaping. Information suggests that 1 vape cartridge has a much higher concentration of nicotine than several cigarettes. It is currently an unregulated industry.

Ridge anticipates educating the faculty on vaping at the next faculty meeting through the Municipal Alliance.

Before the Holidays the decision was made to lock two bathrooms that were the biggest concern for vaping to the high school administration and the faculty. Trying to monitor all bathrooms/locker rooms for this problem is a challenge based upon available staff. One suggestion is that the school purchase vape detectors, but they are costly.

The focus of the meeting was initially on vaping but then expanded to mental health and other issues currently being faced at the area high schools. A follow-up meeting is anticipated sometime in the spring.

6. **For the Good of the Order (FTGOTO)**
    a. STEAM program – disbanded. Why?
        i. Program not as inclusive as one would want
        ii. Could be a resource issue not necessarily funding.