

Highline CHOICE Steering Committee Minutes | January 21, 2015 6:00pm

In Attendance:

Frank Cantwell (principal)
Janice Milliman (parent)
Ann Eng (parent)
Alexa Wayman (counselor)
Justin Trondson (parent)
Linda Elmore (parent)
Hannah Roswell (student)
Mike Sita (principal)

Frank went over the Bond and Levy proposal and would like to remind all parents to vote on February 10, and to ask your friends and neighbors to vote.

Minutes from December meeting were read to the committee and approved.

An Addition to the Handbook

Siblings of current CHOICE students are given priority status, and higher consideration, within the set deadlines and parameters of the application process. **---approved by the committee.**

Graduation Discussion

In the past, our graduation policies were not very standardized, and informally Jennifer and Dolly would pick our graduation speakers and grey gowns (typically two highly recommended junior class students).

We are working on formalizing these processes as we grow as a school.

Frank's Proposed Policy: Highline CHOICE Academy graduation speakers will be the valedictorian and a salutatorian. The valedictorian is be the student with the highest Grade Point Average (GPA). The salutatorian is the student with the second highest GPA. GPA will calculated from all classes recorded on the student's high school transcript. In order to provide enough time for speakers, GPA will be calculated using all grades through first semester senior year and through the winter quarter of Running Start.

“Grey Gowns” are juniors who help with graduation. There are two “Grey Gowns” and they will be the two students with the highest GPA measured at the same time as for the valedictorian and the salutatorian.

Discussion around Valedictorian and Salutatorian

The primary goal in academia is to get a good education. The students who work the hardest often see the best results in their grades.

Traditionally, the school valedictorian becomes the student that gets the first choice on speaking. However, it’s not always the school that selects the speaker, often it is voted on by peers.

Frank would like to propose that the Valedictorian is the student with the highest GPA, and that they should be the speaker at graduation. If this student does not want to speak, it goes to the student with the next highest GPA.

Whether PSSC or Running Start or CHOICE classes are more rigorous than each other is not to be considered, because the programs vary so greatly in nature even within their respective classrooms.

We would like to develop a concrete policy on this selection process so that there is no contention around these privileges between and among parents, staff, and students.

However, Alexa would like to propose that there is more to a successful and honorable student than grades, and this should be considered in the selection of speakers as well as honored students.

If we develop a concrete rubric now that illustrates the whole student that we would like to see at CHOICE (not only strong in academics but also an effective and participatory member of society), then we would...

1. Be providing students with motivation to participate in community and be involved in our school. For example, a 10th grader, given the rubric, would know something they could work towards to achieve valedictorian status or salutatorian status.
2. Providing a student who might have a Learning Disability and struggle with achieving consistently high grades, or anyone who has no chance of being honored solely on the basis of grades but still has a strong presence and positive influence on our student body, with a chance to work for a senior honor in different ways.

Potential Categories to be included in a rubric for honoring a CHOICE senior:

- Community service
- Involvement at the school
- Academic achievements
- Course rigor
- Effort on Senior Culminating Project

Overall, the Steering Committee sees the strength in academics, but would like to take this opportunity to really define our school as alternative, and say to our community that we are committed to educating the whole person, and we recognize the many achievements and characteristics that mark success in a citizen.

For example, what kind of a neighbor are you to your student body? How do you help your class?

Common sentiment among the Steering Committee: I want CHOICE to be committed to cultivating a mature student who cares about the world and is a good citizen.

Frank proposed that we give the Valedictorian award to the student who has the highest GPA, and we have a second award for this standard of citizenship that we are discussing. **---approved by the committee.**

Alexa and Ann will develop a model rubric to bring to the next Steering Committee, with important categories (such as those listed above). All committee members (and the greater school) should email to Alexa potential titles of the award (CHOICE Citizenship Award, for example), and the traits that this student exemplifies and how these could be worded and evaluated on the rubric.

We decided that all CHOICE staff will evaluate all students in the senior class based on the rubric to choose the student. If a staff member is a parent of a student in the senior class, that staff member excuses him or herself from the vote that year.

Advisories

The whole district is looking at Advisory. The leadership in the district and the leadership in our school are both strong advocates of Advisory.

The history was that Advisory classes compromised the teacher contract, requiring teachers to be advisors. When this was challenged, there was a moratorium put on Advisory for a year, but CHOICE (because Mike was such a strong believer in Advisory) was able to keep Advisory going with a staff vote. During that year, the district focused a lot on defining Advisory. We would like to better define the focus and goals of Advisory at CHOICE.

Feedback from Delia (informally offered by Janice): There are very mixed expectations between the different Advisory teachers. It would be great to see some degree of calibration take place.

Frank's perspective: Advisory is an opportunity for a teacher to talk to another student individually, and so some students do work on homework or read during this time. But, this should not be the norm.

Mike's perspective: Advisory is either a reinforcement of the family dinner table talk, or bringing this element to students who may not have the traditional family dinner table talk in their homes. This could include but is not limited to talking about what you learned during the summer and holidays, college plans, what the future holds for you, and important life skills. Advisory came out of the notion that this has been lost in our society, and there is often no casual talk about considering and planning the future. Advisory, in theory, is about a commitment to equity, making sure that all kids are exposed to these important discussions.

Ann's perspective: It would be nice to see goal-setting for each grade, mapped out. (for example, "In 7th grade Advisory, we are working on this..."; "In 8th grade Advisory..."; etc.)

Alexa's perspective: It would be nice to have a structured day once a week that is a morning meeting, to be sure that the classroom community is emphasized and built. Additionally, we will be conducting a Needs Assessment to determine our Advisory focus points for the rest of the year, and we will offer lessons around specific issues students face (for example, career planning, coping with stress/homework/procrastination/test-taking)

This should be communicated to our parents: focus points for the rest of the year in Advisory. ---**approved by the committee.**

Graduation Requirements

Frank presented the changing graduation requirements for the class of 2019.

The most significant changes (*SUBJECT TO CHANGES/REVISIONS*) will be that:

-- Civics will be an additional .5 credit requirement (taken out of the standard elective requirement of 7 credits).

-- Two years of foreign language will be required (also taken out of the standard elective requirement of 7 credits)

Upcoming/Remaining Items on the Agenda (We aim to have 1 or 2 Steering Committee meetings for the rest of this school year).

Electives -- on-site and off-site

Teacher Selection

Special Education

Science

Sixth Graders

Sports (for example, Ultimate Frisbee)

--do we want to draft a document that summarizes all Steering Committee decisions made? We will continue to entertain this idea.

ANNOUNCEMENT: On **January 29, 6:30pm at CHOICE**, Ms. Wayman will offer a **PSSC, Running Start, and Career Start Information Night** for all 10th graders (required), and 9th and 11th graders who would like additional information on these programs.

Next Meeting Date: 6pm on February 11, 2015.