

# Briarcliff PAC Meeting Minutes

## Wednesday, February 19, 2020

### **Attendees:**

- *Erik Carlson, Briarcliff Principal.*
- *8th Grade Representatives: Karen Brennfleck.*
- *7th Grade Representatives: Mary Adams and Lorraine Lalin.*
- *6th Grade Representatives: Margo Gillespie and Jeanne Squeglia.*
- *HSA Representatives: Catalina Maione and Amy Schadt.*

### **1. Briarcliff Science Fair Update:**

The Briarcliff Science Fair has been put on hold for now. There was limited interest among students who were polled during classes and PEPs. The plan is to hold a science fair next school year to coincide with the 8th grade simple machines segment (January). This will also allow more time for better planning.

### **2. Math Sequence Follow-up:**

- The district-wide math curriculum changes next year allow for an additional math offering in both 7th and 8th grades. Next year's 8th graders will not be affected as they are mid-sequence and will complete the current math sequence in Algebra 1. Current 6th graders will have an additional math offering in 7th grade.
- Parents noted a lack of preparation when the students move on to Algebra in high school and asked how we can better address this gap in learning between middle and high school. Parents are asking how they can assess their own student's learning to determine what class selection is best for their students.
- A parent question re: NJSLA: when does exam review begin as students need to be familiar with questions/testing in light of some low scores in past years. Mr. Carlson mentioned that NJSLA review/prep is ongoing; teachers build in preparation throughout the year. NJSLA will take place during the first week of May.

### **3. Honor Code Changes:**

Parents have asked what the impact will be on BC students of a revised Honor Code. Dr. Azar is retooling the Honor Code throughout the district. Mr. Carlson noted that changes at BC would be minimal. Incidents are dealt with by consequence, parent contact and discipline. Mr. Carlson did see the need to implement some athletic monitoring over the winter. If a student's grades are a D or lower, a student is given two weeks to show improvement or they will be benched. This differs from NJSIAA athletic monitoring in the high school where classes are credit-based.

**Briarcliff PAC Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 2020**

**4. Upcoming School Presentations:**

- On Monday 2/24, “New Hope” will present in the 8th grade science classes regarding substance abuse from the perspective of young people. Cara Pagan will present to the younger students. Mrs. Pagan will also present the “Lifeline” mental health awareness course to 7th graders.
- Montclair State University is scheduled in March for a student wellness presentation focused on managing student stress.
- Tim Shoemaker might return to the district for another vaping presentation.
- Karen Brennfleck mentioned that there could be county funds that could be used to reimburse some of the mental health/substance abuse training.
- Mr. Carlson and Mrs. Ludwig have been and are still going into 7th and 8th grade classes & teaching digital citizenship.

**5. Time Capsule:**

Students will work on their individual time capsules during NJSLA. All grades will participate this year to “catch up.” Beginning next year, time capsules will be done annually in 6th grade. HSA will continue to work on viable storage options.

**6. Students & Social Media/Internet:**

Mr. Carlson has seen some troubling social media behavior among students. He has found that parents often have no idea what their children are doing on social media and might not be taking advantage of parental controls or limiting screens in student bedrooms. Mrs. Ludwig works with 8th grade students now on these issues. Mr. Carlson will be discussing with all students too. He welcomes concerns/suggestions from parents.

**7. Cafeteria Food & Flag Raising Committees:**

Pomptonian will meet with students in March to get feedback and suggestions. There will also be a new flag raising committee.

**8. Canvas Usage:**

A parent noted that there seems to be inconsistencies among 6th grade teachers’ utilization of Canvas. There has been some frustration during student illnesses/absences, as assignments are not consistently posted. Some students could also benefit from checking Canvas for clarity on assignments. Mr. Carlson noted that there is no mandate for teachers to post; some teachers use it more than others. He will discuss this concern with teachers.

**Briarcliff PAC Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 2020**

**9. PowerSchool Access Limits:**

Most feedback on limited PowerSchool access has been positive but some parents have been frustrated when blocked. The portal is currently closed approximately Monday through Thursday.

**10. Miscellaneous:**

There was some feedback on Mr. Carlson's latest Friday Flash, an article about disciplining boys at home. Some parents felt that boys are unfairly singled out. Mr. Carlson noted that the School Climate Committee reviewed all types of incident data and almost all involved boys. Parents raised the concern that there could be some inherent bias at school against boys and their behavior that could be leading to more strict disciplinary action toward them. Mr. Carlson has not seen any of that but will monitor for it.