



## YORKTOWN PTA MEETING MINUTES

### Monday, December 14, 2020, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

#### I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Dana Milburn, PTA President

Ms. Milburn welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the agenda.

#### II. **Approval of November 9, 2020, Meeting Minutes:** Berrin Ozbilgin, PTA Secretary

Ms. Ozbilgin presented the minutes from the November PTA meeting and asked if there were any questions or concerns. With no comments, Ms. Milburn asked for a motion and vote to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### III. **Sources of Strength Program at YHS:** Austin Hamill, Counselor; Michael Krulfeld, Director of Student Activities; Students: Grace Douglas, Sally Conroy Tess Monticello, and Abigail Guttman-McCabe

Ms. Hamill began by introducing herself; she is a counselor at Yorktown and is the Co-Chair of Yorktown's Social Emotional Learning committee. Along with Mike Krulfeld, she is heading up the Sources of Strength Program at YHS. As Ms. Hamill looked closely at the current programs of the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Committee (Yorktown ROCS), she felt Sources of Strength would be a good incorporation to the already existing programs and it could be done during Patriot Period. YHS started the program last year by training the faculty and then invited some student peer leaders to be trained as well. YHS was able to begin some of the initiatives last year, but with the school year being cut short, they could not complete as many initiatives as they had hoped to. However, they have started the program up again this year, so Ms. Hamill and Mr. Krulfeld wanted to come to the PTA to let parents know what the program is about.

Ms. Hamill explained the history of Sources of Strength. At its core, it is a suicide prevention program, however, she and Mr. Krulfeld agreed that Yorktown would approach it with less of the verbiage on the suicide piece and focus more on “upstream” prevention.” Ms. Hamill explained the meaning of and background on “upstream” prevention. She provided a graphic showing the concept of a woman, out for a walk near a river with a waterfall. On her walk one day, she noticed a person about to go over the waterfall and she jumped into the river and saved the person just before they went over the fall. This happened again on another day that she was out for a walk. Eventually, the woman decides to do her walk further upstream where she can find out why the people are ending up in the river in the first place and where it would be easier to save them as compared to saving them right before the waterfall. This is the main

idea behind Sources of Strength – to help teens further upstream so that they do not end up close to the “waterfall.”

The program focuses on building grit and resilience for the ups and downs of life. It is peer led, emphasizes hope, help, and strength, and is strength focused. The core of the program is a wheel that includes eight different sources of strength that teens can pull upon to help them through challenging times. The eight sources are: Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, Healthy Activities, Generosity, Spirituality, Medical Access, and Mental Health.

At this point, Ms. Hamill asked some of the peer leaders in the program to discuss each of the 8 sources of strength in the program.

Tess Monticello (junior) explained that she joined Sources of Strength because she felt that through her involvement in a variety of activities at school, she could reach peers in a variety of communities at YHS. She discussed Healthy Activities and Family Support explaining that she gets a lot of strength and joy from participating on the YHS basketball and soccer teams. She also relies on her large family for support when she is facing a challenge.

Sally Conroy (senior) joined Sources of Strength because of the peer support program. She is captain of the Swim and Dive Team and a member of National Honor Society . She explained that she found a wonderful mentor in her counselor, Ms. Hamill, and has found that working with Ms. Hamill, she has helped herself to become a better mentor to others. She also does volunteer work as a member of NHS and has found that to be very fulfilling which touches on the generosity aspect of Sources of Strength.

Abigail Guttman-McCabe (senior) discussed Positive Friends and Mental Health. She explained how positive friends are a great source to rely on and she finds this connection through close friends, peers in classes, and participating in the Best Buddies program. As for mental health, Abigail stated that she feels it is especially important to take it seriously and to talk to parents, counselors, etc. when needed. It is immensely helpful to her to have people she can talk to and trust.

Abigail continued to discuss Spirituality and Medical Access. Clearly, it is particularly important that teens and their families have access to medical care (especially during a pandemic). She explained that spirituality could include meditation, spending time outside, attending religious services, etc.

Ms. Hamill indicated that they have been doing “strength check-in” activities during patriot period and she provided an example of one in which students can look at a black

and white version of the wheel and color in aspects of the wheel where they feel they are doing okay.

Normally, Sources of Strength covers six campaigns per year, however, due to the limited time in Patriot Period this year, YHS has chosen to do just two. The first is Trusted Adult – this campaign makes sure that all students have a trusted adult with whom they can talk. The second campaign this year is What Helps Us? – this focuses on figuring out what helps us to get through a challenging situation.

Mr. Krulfeld explained how YHS is using Patriot Period for Sources of Strength. This year, Patriot Period only meets once per week, so, we have not been able to do as much with the program, but, hopefully, once school returns to normal, the students will have a daily opportunity to connect with their Patriot Period teacher and classmates. Also, the Sources of Strength program does not push the teens to pull on all eight sources at any given time, but encourages the students to at least identify a few that could be helpful. This year, the students have gotten through about four parts of the wheel so far.

Questions:

- 1) How is this rolling out – what exactly are the kids doing in Patriot Period with this program? Mr. Krulfeld answered that each lesson introduces a strength on the wheel, the students are given some examples and then they engage in an activity. The school did a poll on Monday asking the students what strength they have been pulling on the most and Family Support was the most common answer.
- 2) Are all teachers trained to teach this? All teachers are familiar with the program in general. YHS had one of the national trainers come to a virtual staff meeting earlier in the school year and that helped the teachers to better understand the program.
- 3) How are the peer leaders selected? Ms. Hamill answered that the students are trained through the Strength in our Voices program and we are limited in the number of students that can be trained. Last year, teachers selected students and Ms. Hamill and Mr. Krulfeld are asking teachers to make recommendations again, but we are also asking the students that are currently peer leaders to make some suggestions. They are looking for a diverse group of students, including gender, race, etc., but also looking for diversity in club/activity interests as well.

**IV. NOVA in APS – Dual Enrollment Opportunities and Pathway to the Baccalaureate for YHS Students:** Tyrone Byrd, Director of Secondary Education and Ana Lily Caballero-Torres, APS/NOVA Partnership Coordinator

Mr. Byrd began the discussion by introducing the Dual Enrollment program in Arlington. He explained that Arlington County students can earn college credit while they are in

high school by taking a Dual Enrollment class. Students can actually graduate high school with an Associate's Degree from NOVA by taking Dual Enrollment courses.

Ms. Caballero-Torres introduced Amy Nearman, Director of Dual Enrollment for NOVA for a presentation on the program.

Ms. Nearman explained that dual enrollment involves a student taking a class in high school and getting credit for it at both the high school and college level. There is a law in Virginia (HB 1184) that requires Virginia public school districts and local community colleges to create pathways for students to earn Career Studies Certificates or Associate's Degrees.

Ms. Nearman then presented the benefits of dual enrollment (DE):

- Allows students to receive high school and college credit.
- Avoids duplication of courses taken in high school and college.
- Guarantees college credit with a C or better (versus taking an AP exam for the college credit).
- Facilitates a seamless transition from high school to college.
- Lowers the cost of post-secondary education.
- Allows students to use campus resources and participate in college events and activities.
- Students who have participated in a dual enrollment program have higher high school graduation and college enrollment rates.
- DE students have higher persistence and retention rates as well as higher GPAs in college.

The dual enrollment classes can be taken on-campus, online or through contract Dual Enrollment within the high school. There are two types of courses generally offered: General Education and Career and Technical Education. The General Education courses are designed specifically to transfer to a four-year college. They are included in NOVA's Associate of Art and Associate of Science Degrees. The Career and Technical Education classes do not transfer as well outside of NOVA, but their purpose is more for applied skills careers.

Eligible students for dual enrollment are:

- High School Juniors and Seniors
- Exceptional 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders (requires individual review, underclass exception packet, test scores, transcripts, and a teacher/counselor recommendation)
- Proof of English and Math college readiness
- VPT Testing (Virginia Placement Test)

In order to register, students should first discuss enrolling with their counselor. They will need to apply to NOVA and complete Form 125-207 as well as provide their high school transcript, all applicable test scores (PSAT, SAT, ACT, SOL, etc.). Student will also need permission from their high school.

Currently YHS offers two dual enrollment courses at Yorktown. APS is trying to offer more dual enrollment courses at Yorktown, however there is a need for more teachers to obtain a master's degree in the subject matter that they are teaching (e.g., a Master's in Math or English versus a Master's in Education). NOVA can only credential a teacher to teach a dual enrollment course if the teacher has a master's degree in the subject matter that they are teaching.

Ms. Caballero-Torres continued the presentation by discussing the ongoing work of the Dual Enrollment program. This includes identifying new courses to be offered (piloted courses offered at ACC/Arlington Career Center) and continue to expand on Arlington Tech offerings. They are also working on increasing the number of transferrable credits and increasing the number of Dual Enrollment certified teachers.

Parents asked the following questions:

- How do sophomores and juniors ask for these classes and how do they know they even exist? The Course Request Form has a code that says (DE) next to any dual enrollment courses.
- Can a YHS student take a dual enrollment course at Wakefield or Washington & Liberty if it's not offered at YHS? Mr. Byrd responded that they are working on looking into that, especially now that the schools have had significant experience with distance learning.

#### **V. Principal's Report/Q&A: Dr. Kevin Clark, Principal**

Dr. Clark reported that Virtual YHS is going all right and asked that parents provide any feedback they would like to the school including both good and bad feedback. The school shares this feedback with the faculty and makes adjustments as needed. He emphasized that the administrative teams are there for any families that need any support in any way. Mid-quarter reports will be issued tomorrow, December 15, and winter break begins this Friday, December 18. No homework will be assigned over winter break. January 20<sup>th</sup> will now be a school holiday for Inauguration Day; therefore, the school is planning for Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup> to be an asynchronous day (that Monday is the MLK holiday).

YHS currently has about 20 students back at school; the school is continuing to prepare for the return of Level 3 students. The current plan is for a January return, however, that

could change. We hope to have more information either just before winter break or immediately after.

The CRF(Course Request Form)process is coming up in January. This year, students will be making their course selections through Naviance. Dr. Clark asked that families start thinking about what courses their students might want to take next year so that they are ready in late January/early February to make their course selections.

There will be food distribution continuing into next week. On Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 3 days of meals will be distributed and on Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, there will be 5 days of meals distributed at Yorktown, Key, Swanson, and Washington-Liberty.

Winter sports have begun and so far, all seems to be going well with that.

Dr. Clark answered the following questions:

- How can families offer thank you notes and gifts to teachers at this time of year? Dr. Clark reminded families that teachers are not allowed to receive any gifts above \$100.00. He also suggested that electronic distribution is probably the best approach for this year.
- Are there any plans for an in-person graduation this year? Dr. Clark said that YHS is working extremely hard to do an in-person graduation. They currently have our date reserved at Constitution Hall, but, if indoor events are still not an option, YHS is looking into outdoor possibilities.
- How can students ensure that they are marked present? Dr. Clark explained that the teachers are trying to ensure that students are not only turning on their computer and signing into their classes and then doing other things. Some teachers may have an exit ticket at the end of class for students to complete, others require some random participation during class, so, in general, teachers have their own approaches to ensure students are present and participating in class. If a student cannot attend a class for any reason, please contact the attendance office as you have in previous years.
- Has the school given any thought to how students that participate in clubs but are non-athletes could hold activities at school? Dr. Clark responded that APS has a process with strict guidelines to allow for the clubs to make a request for an in-person event at school. He has not had many requests yet, but he will be working with the various clubs to determine if they would like to do an in-person event.

## **VI. Financial Report: Dan Sennott, PTA Treasurer**

Mr. Sennott reported that the current balance of the budget is \$79,000. The current month we paid out approximately \$3500 for teachers' grants reimbursements. Now that we are almost half-way through the school year, the

PTA Board took a close look at the budget in terms of fundraising and membership. Based on amounts that have come in year-to-date, we determined it would be appropriate to reduce the anticipated income from those accounts slightly.

However, we do still have a fairly high amount of funds in the budget because we are not holding as many events and there was a significant amount of funds left over in the budget from last year. Mr. Sennott explained that there is a need to carry over some funds from this year to next, however, in reviewing the PTA finances, it seems that we would have an extra \$15,000 that had not been budgeted into this year's budget which should be spent within this school year.

**VII. Budget Amendment Discussion and Vote:** PTA Board; Rabia Oubenadi and Lori Stutz, Staff Appreciation Co-Chairs

Ms. Milburn discussed the fact that the role of the PTA is to support its students, parents, and teachers. Given that and given that this year is so unusual in terms of not being able to do much in person, Ms. Milburn and the PTA Board decided to present two changes to this school year's budget:

- Create a new "Student Events/Gifts" line item – this would provide funding for the possibility of a small gift that PTA would like to distribute to the students, if one is found. A potential gift might be a YHS mask, sharing cost with YHS, if affordable, and/or another item or small treats to be distributed in January or February. We are also looking into hosting some virtual trivia nights and other events like movie nights; and chats with a professional sports figure, media figure our Congressman, etc., as non-academic social activities for students. The Board asked the PTA to dedicate \$10,000 to this line item.
- Increase the "Staff Appreciation" line item from \$3,700 to \$7,000. The PTA Board would like to do this in recognition of the challenges faced by our teachers and staff this year and the fact that we are unable to hold staff appreciation events in person this year. We are planning to give each teacher a \$25 gift certificate this month, in which the PTA splits the cost of this with YHS. The total cost of this to the PTA will be about \$3,200.

Ms. Milburn surveyed the parents at the PTA meeting for approval of these two changes to the budget and the changes were approved unanimously.

**V. Committee Report:**

**a. Grants Committee:** Meg Sharp and Jennifer Gold, Co-Chairs

Ms. Gold reported that the Grants Committee awarded a second round of fall request for grants. They awarded a total of \$5,800 (totally \$10,600 year-to-date).

The funds went to the Art, Band, Math and Economics Classes/Departments. The committee will be holding a third round of request for grants in February.

## **VI. Announcements: Ms. Milburn**

Ms. Milburn made the following announcements:

- **Website**

Ms. Milburn encouraged all parents to periodically check the PTA website as we have many announcements of upcoming activities on the front page of the website. She also emphasized a new page on the website: "Family Resources." This page has all the available webinars that the Family Network has recommended. It also has parent support group information, as well as helpful links on mental health, family activities, coping with Covid, etc. If anyone would like to see anything else in that section of the website, please let Ms. Milburn know.

- **PTA/Senior Class Food Collection**

The Senior Class is holding their holiday food drive which begins this week and will go through December 30<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to contribute some food to the drive, please see the December 14<sup>th</sup> PTA newsletter for drop off locations.

- **Student/Parent Activities Survey**

The December 14th PTA newsletter included a survey for parents and students to take which asks for input on various student and parent needs/activities that they would like to see sponsored by the PTA. Ms. Milburn encouraged all parents and their students to take the surveys.

- **Trivia Night**

Ms. Milburn reported that she knows of a vendor, thanks to one of our Chairs, Susan Land, who could host a Trivia Night for YHS students; it will cost \$250 per event and would be available for 30 screens per event. The PTA is considering hosting one or more of these events depending on interest from students. If we held several, the vendor could potentially give us a bulk rate. The PTA would also provide a prize for the winners of this event (a \$15 gift card for each winning team member). Ms. Milburn asked for parent feedback to determine interest and whether families would like to see this during the break or after, and received positive feedback.

## **VII. Adjourn: Ms. Milburn**

With no further business, Ms. Milburn adjourned the meeting. Our next PTA meeting will be held on Monday, January 11, 2021.