



## YORKTOWN PTA MEETING AGENDA

Monday, February 8, 2021, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

### 1) **Welcome and Introductions:** Dana Milburn, PTA President

Ms. Milburn welcomed all the PTA meeting and presented the agenda for the night's meeting.

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

#### a) **Virtual Yorktown Updates:** Dr. Clark

Dr. Clark reported that some students are doing fine with virtual school, however others are not. There was a higher number of "E"s and "D"s in the first semester than typical, however, the school has been identifying the students that seem to be struggling and the counselors and teachers are working with these students to determine what interventions might be helpful. Dr. Clark emphasized that if any families are concerned about their student's academic progress or have any other concerns, they should feel free to reach out to him or anyone else at the school (Assistant Principals, counselors, and teachers).

#### b) **Planning for return to Hybrid:** Dr. Clark

Dr. Clark reported that plans are now underway for students to return to school in March. At this point in time, only 11 students are allowed on a bus at a time, so, there may be some transportation issues, but APS will be focusing on that. At Yorktown, staff is focusing on lunch coordination, passing periods, hygiene rules, etc. Teachers will be returning to the building this week and are preparing to welcome students back. Teachers will prepare their classrooms and determine how they will provide lessons to students both in the classroom and home. Some teachers are applying for accommodations to teach from home, so YHS will need to find quiet spaces at school for those students to participate in their classes when the teacher is virtual. YHS does not have an official list yet of which teachers will be in person and which will be virtual because some of the virtual accommodations are still being approved.

Dr. Clark also reported on how YHS will be communicating specifics of the return to school for families. There will be a town hall and an orientation. The town hall will be held to help families understand the plans for reopening and the orientation will be held for students to help them understand the expectations for a return to school in terms of hygiene, moving about the school, etc.

#### c) **Equity and Black History Month Information:** Ms. Shari Benites, YHS Coordinator of Equity and Excellence, Director of Center for Leadership and Public Service, Coordinator of Restorative Practices; and Mr. William Lomax, YHS Assistant Principal

##### i) **Equity Team**

Mr. Lomax provided a presentation on the Equity Team at YHS. The Equity Team was formed last August with a small group and has expanded to include students and parents representing all grade levels as well as YHS faculty and staff members.

Its goal is to ensure an equitable, inclusive, safe, and anti-racist school community. To accomplish this, the Equity Team strategically examines individual experiences, data, policies, and practices to actively identify bias, inequity, and discrimination at Yorktown in current and historical contexts. Once identified, we advocate for institutional, curricular, and instructional changes, and engage in anti-bias and anti-racist practices to ensure each member of our school community feels valued, respected, and empowered.

The Equity Team has three committees: Curriculum, Instruction and Representation; School Culture and Community Building; and YHS Structures – Access and Opportunities. The work that is currently being done includes:

- Developing a survey to collect data on equity knowledge and skills and inform the effectiveness of our equity work.
- Creating an “Introduction to Equity” lesson for Patriot Period classes.
- Crafting a checklist staff can use to review curriculum materials.
- Planning implementation of No Place for Hate.

All schools and APS departments have Equity Teams this year, and representatives from each team meet monthly to discuss the efforts in our schools as a school system. All staff received training in October from the Equity Literacy Institute, and non-staff members serving on the Equity Teams have been given free access to training.

## ii) **Black History Month**

Ms. Benites provided an update on the programs that YHS has planned for Black History Month. On Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup> during 3<sup>rd</sup> period, all students and staff will join a Teams Live event to watch a short video about housing segregation in Arlington and its legacy. In addition, members of the Langston Civic Association will join the program and share their personal experiences around segregation in Arlington. There will also be a panel of three students speaking.

On February 8<sup>th</sup> and February 22<sup>nd</sup> there will be information in the Weeklies about Black History Month including background on Black History Month, important figures in Black History, and information about the assembly on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Benites also discussed the Sister Circle Art Project which honors some of the lives lost to police brutality. She also discussed the upcoming PTA screening of the movie *Selma* on February 19<sup>th</sup>. There will be an extension activity offered after the showing for students and families to further consider events depicted in the movie.

Finally, Ms. Benites said that in a partnership with Langston Civic Association, Yorktown, and AETV a plan is in place to make walking tour videos with local experts sharing history and personal stories around six different landmarks. These will be used in history classes and/or Patriot Period.

One question was asked as to if YHS families could be provided with information for actual walking tours of these landmarks. Ms. Benites stated that the John M Langston Civic Association does have these landmarks up on their website and she stated that she will try to make the walking tour videos available so that families wishing to visit the landmarks in person can easily pull up the videos on their phones to watch and learn about the landmarks while they are at the location.

- d) Counseling update:** Ms. Allison Gilbert and Mr. Jeff Stahl, YHS Counselors  
Mr. Stahl and Ms. Gilbert provided a brief overview of the counseling department. The counselors are broken down by grade with one group working with current 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders and the other group working with 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Once a student is assigned a counselor in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, they work with that same counselor throughout their four years at Yorktown. The counselors focus on three main areas:

- Academics – this includes scheduling classes, grades, and identifying which students need additional support.
- Personal/Social Issues – this includes any issues with which a student may be struggling (emotional, friends, home life, etc.) The counselors have been dropping in during Patriot Period to check on their students and to see how they are doing. In order to facilitate this, YHS arranged for all students in one Patriot Period to have the same counselor.
- College and Career Planning – starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the counselors go into the classrooms to help students understand how to use Naviance for college and career planning. Eventually they provide support and guidance to students as they develop their college and career plans post-YHS. Also, the counselors assist in writing student recommendation letters for college.

#### i) **What counselors do (and don't do)**

- **What do counselors do?** Support students in three main areas - academic, social-emotional, and college/career readiness. We monitor student achievement, track graduation requirements, help with self-advocacy, problem-solving, and with college/career planning. We also do responsive services for crisis and risk-assessment, assist with the Special Education process, serve as 504 case carriers, and serve as a resource for families.
- **When would a counselor contact a family?** If a teacher reaches out to express concern regarding a student. Poor academic performance. Social-emotional concerns. A change in student behavior or administrative discussion about the student in the school environment. If a friend expresses concern to a faculty member, it is usually referred to the counselor.
- **How can a family contact a counselor?** Counselors are available during the school day via email, phone, or a Teams meeting.
- **What supports can counselors offer in the school environment?** Individual meetings, group meetings, classroom lessons.
- **When do counselors meet with students?** Each year, for academic planning. In 9th grade, through the English/History blocks. In 11th grade, to start college planning. In 12th grade, for college applications and post-secondary planning.
- **Who do the counselors work with?** Counselors are divided in two teams - 9/11th grade and 10/12th grade. We work with the administrators for our grade level to identify students who are struggling and implement appropriate interventions. We also work closely with Special Education case carriers, our two school psychologists, our two social workers, our testing coordinator, our drug and alcohol counselor, and our college counselor. We are supervised by Mark Rooks, the Director of Counseling.
- **What areas can a counselor help with?** Stress management, coping strategies, academic support, goal setting, organization, college planning, career exploration, friendship issues, mental health support and referrals, decision making, course planning, graduation requirement tracking.
- **How do counselors help with college and career planning?** We help students choose classes to explore areas of interests. We use Naviance, a web-based platform for college planning and career exploration.
- **How do counselors communicate?** We send out many announcements and emails to our families through Naviance. We send out messages to students through Canvas. While we are virtual, we are available via phone, email, or Teams. We have periodic parent evenings (Freshman orientation, Junior Planning Night, Senior College Night, parent coffees, Academic Planning night, etc.)

- **What is the trusted adult concept?** Our goal is for each student to have a trusted adult at Yorktown. We want each student to identify one adult at Yorktown that they feel is their “trusted adult” and they can confide in or speak with.
- **What are the confidentiality rules for counseling?** Counselors are required to abide by confidentiality rules unless the student discloses information that will cause serious or foreseeable harm to themselves or someone else.
- **How are students working with counselors for scheduling for next year?** Students have been added to an Academic Planning Canvas page. Counselors have already done one school-wide lesson on picking classes and we are doing additional events this week. Students will enter their course selections into Naviance. Counselors will follow up by meeting with students to review and discuss their course selections. However, we are available to answer any questions you may have anytime!
- **How do counselors help with mental health concerns?** School counselors do not provide therapy or long-term counseling. However, we are prepared to recognize and respond to student mental health needs and to assist students and families seeking resources.
- **Does the counselor’s role change each year?** The basic functions of our job remain the same as students’ progress through high school. As they become upperclassmen, there is more of an emphasis on post-secondary planning and we help manage the college application process.
- **What resources are available for academic planning?** Counselors are meeting individually with students. We have a Canvas page with resources. We are hosting some parent information sessions and are creating video tutorials to help students through this process. There is also a Program of Studies on the APS web page with info about all courses.
- **Should I reach out? When would a counselor reach out?** Always feel free to contact us with questions or concerns. We work with parents as much as we work with our students! We do try and provide information to our families throughout the year. But if you have a specific concern regarding your child, we encourage you to set up a time to discuss with your child’s counselor.

(1) **Updates on the scheduling process and tutorials** – Mr. Stahl and Ms. Gilbert reminded families that there would be informational sessions for each grade this week covering course planning and any other information that families might need for college and career planning. The sessions will be on the following dates for the following grades:

- Feb 10 - Gr 9 @ 6:30; Gr 11 @ 7:00
- Feb 11 - Gr 10 @ 6:30; Gr 12 @ 7:00

**e) Athletics and Activities Update:**

**i) Season 1 update** – Dr. Clark

Dr. Clark reported that winter sports will be wrapping up soon. Both the girls and boys basketball teams have done well this year advancing in the regional tournaments. The YHS STEM team placed 5<sup>th</sup> in all of Virginia in the STEM competition.

**ii) Season 2 underway** – Dr. Clark

Dr. Clark reported that practices have started for spring sports including football, cheer, field hockey, golf, etc. No spectators are allowed at this point in time, however, depending on the Virginia state regulations, YHS may be able to begin to allow for limited spectators to attend some sporting events.

**f) Questions for Dr. Clark:**

**How do we know when our child is ready to go back and they are able to go back? Will anyone confirm selection?** ParentVue is the place to check to see that your student is confirmed to be in the hybrid program. Dr. Clark reminded families that they were all supposed to make a follow-up selection for hybrid versus virtual in December. APS was supposed to contact any families that did not make the updated choice. If you did not update your choice in December, please check in with the school to confirm that information in ParentVue is correct. Also, Dr. Clark reminded families that if a student has changed their mind on whether to attend virtually or in person, that student can ONLY change if they are going from hybrid to virtual. They cannot change from virtual to hybrid at this point because of the limits in place for how many students can be in the school at a time and plans are too far along at this point to allow for students to be added to the hybrid program.

**3) Approval of January 11, 2021, Meeting Minutes:** Berrin Ozbilgin, PTA Secretary

Ms. Ozbilgin stated that the minutes from the January 11, 2021 PTA meeting were provided in this week's PTA Newsletter and asked if there were any questions or concerns. With no questions asked, Ms. Milburn moved to approve the minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**4) Financial Report:** Dan Sennott, PTA Treasurer

Mr. Sennott reported that the PTA currently has a balance of \$74,095. In the past month we had an income of \$330 (\$300 from donations and \$30 from membership dues). We had a \$250 administration expense, and we are still working through reimbursement for the fall Teachers' Grants. Mr. Sennott also reported an upcoming expense for the PTA purchasing ad space in the YHS yearbook; this is a budgeted amount for \$300.

**5) Announcements:** Dana Milburn and PTA Leadership

Ms. Milburn reported that the PTA is looking for an individual to fill the VP Communications role as our previous Communications VP had to step down due to a work promotion. If anyone is interested in helping in this capacity, please let Ms. Milburn know. She then proceeded to highlight updates from this week's Newsletter and provided a brief review of how the Newsletter is being organized to simplify how content is found within the Newsletter. Events highlighted are an upcoming Zoom event for students with our Congressman, Don Beyer on 2/22 and movie showings of Black Panther (2/14) and Selma (2/19).

**6) PTA Events/Potential Events in Progress:** Dana Milburn/PTA Leadership; Royce Sherlock and Dianne Vandivier, Family Network Chairs

Ms. Sherlock provided a brief summary of some upcoming events that the Family Network has planned (see items below). She has arranged for StudyPro from McLean to provide a presentation to YHS families and the presentation will focus on executive functioning skills – how to identify issues and what to do about it. Ms. Sherlock also reported that in the fall she and Ms. Vandivier watched many free parenting webinars and links to many of these have been provided on the YHS PTA webpage under the Family Resources tab. One of the webinars they watched

was on social-emotional learning/positive psychology and Ms. Sherlock is in touch with the presenters of that webinar and is hoping to have them provide a Zoom presentation to the YHS parent body. YHS is also hoping to provide a similar presentation to the students. The Family Network is hoping to schedule this for March.

Below is a list of upcoming events; some are still TBD, but are in the planning stages:

- a) **Executive Functioning event March 3**
- b) **Resilience event** for March in the works for parents
- c) **Potential resilience event for students** in the works, as well
- d) **Substance abuse/addiction event** likely late March or April
- e) **Grade-level connection** Potentially setting up some grade specific chats for the students is in the works
- f) **Fun/connection/discussions of interest for our kids**, to help address loneliness many said is a problem in survey answers:
  - i) Another well-attended/well-received **Trivia Night**; scheduling more
  - ii) **Movie Nights continue**
  - iii) Chat with **Congressman Don Beyer (parents welcome), 2/22, 12:30 p.m. after PP**
  - iv) **Making hot cocoa bombs on Zoom, week of 2/22**, with Food & Fitness Teacher Rosemary Molle, and YouTube videos of teens making both cocoa bombs and cake pops provided by Food & Fitness teacher Teal Hawkins
  - v) Still researching **media and professional sports figures for chats** with students -- let us know if you can **help with contacts!**
  - vi) Looking into possibilities of **digital escape room** and **life-skills** via Zoom

**7) Adjourn:** Dana Milburn

With no further questions or business, the meeting was adjourned.