



**YORKTOWN PTA MEETING**  
**Monday, November 14, 2022**  
**Meeting: 7:30pm**

- I. **Welcome:** Katrina Brubaker, PTA President: welcome to Nov. meeting.
- II. **Approval of October 10th Minutes – motion to approve. Approved**
- III. **Guest Speaker: Meghan Smeenk- YHS AP Coordinator/Math Teacher (9-12th grade)-**  
**Topic:AP Capstone at YHS**  
Meghan.smeenk@apsva.

AP program – high school courses that teach college level content. Provides critical thinking skills. AP exams are taken in May – first 2 weeks. AP test scores are on a scale 1 – 5. 3, 4, 5 considered passing. Depends on college how/if they receive credit.

The benefits of AP courses are that they are rigorous. They provide an opportunity to gain knowledge in particular topics. YHS offers 33 AP courses. All APs involve critical thinking. They impact college admissions because they are a sign of rigor. Opportunities to receive credit saves time and money in college. Amount of time that students spend in AP class is a lot more than the number of hours than they would spend in a college semester course. Some are aligned with specific grades (i.e. 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>.)

Expectations are fairly high. YHS has newly formed [website](#) that they are in the process of revamping. Expectations for each course are posted on the website so students can see how much level of effort each class is. A student has to take the AP exam to get the 1.0 quality point on their GPA; students get the point no matter how they do on the exam.

Priority is to make sure that students are balancing AP course workload. Want to make sure that they are not overwhelmed. Students who take AP class(es) have better chance of success in college. Students who took 6 or more AP classes did not get greater impact (after 5 AP courses, there is no additional impact on success). Taking just one AP course can have significant impact on success in college.

**Two new courses coming in the fall of 2023 and 2024.**

**AP Seminar (Fall 2023)** – year long course that develops critical thinking, research, collaboration, time management, and presentation. Prepares students for college level work based on skills. This is a general elective class for which colleges give general elective credit.

**Followed the next year by AP research** if student is interested and gets 3 or higher in AP Seminar exam. Students generate a research question and then develop a 5000 word paper and oral defense for that research question over the course of the year.

Very similar to independent study. AP Seminar is focused on how to research, how to present findings, how to write. And then knowledge and skill set is used in AP Research for them to develop their independent research project.

AP Capstone is 2 classes within the program. If get credit for both AP Seminar and AP Research, the student gets the AP Seminar and Research certificate from the college board. Have to score 3 or higher on both exams. AP Seminar pass rate nationally is about 85 percent.

In addition, if a student does 4 other AP exams of their choice and gets 3 or higher, then student will then get an AP capstone diploma.

Info session on Thurs, Nov. 17 from 7 – 8:30 pm in Patriot Hall – rsvp not required but there is a link in the newsletter. Students from Wakefield will come and share their experience. Will record and post for those who can't make it.

Develop a research question through a "lens". Research questions addressed through a team and individual projects. Most of the work is done in class. Open to all 10<sup>th</sup> – 12 grades next year. Grade for course is "Portfolio grade" – do assessment in team in Dec., individually in April – then 2 hour exam in May.

Great introductory AP course. Do a lot of writing in class and then those skills are applicable to other AP classes. **In order to get capstone diploma, have to take seminar and research.**

Q&A:

**If a student is a senior and can only take research, is it worth it?** Yes, it is worth it if they are interested in research.

**Do students test throughout the year or just in May?** For seminar, students do a written assignment in Dec., a written assignment in April, and a 2 hour test in May. *Most* APs have a 3 hour test in May.

**What is a quality point?** A student received an A in an AP class, it would be 5.0 points in the GPA (as opposed to a 4.0 for non-AP class).

**What do colleges want to see in terms of rigor?** It depends on the school. Child should talk to an admissions counselor in a school that they want to go to and see what their particular position is on APs.

**Why is seminar the starting point for the Capstone diploma?** Because Capstone is an AP program. AP Board believes seminar is a good launching pad.

**If a student has already taken a lot of APs, is it worth it to take seminar?** Yes, if your child is interested in research. Students should focus on what they are interested in.

#### IV. **Principal's Update:** Dr. Kevin Clark, YHS Principal

Shout out to Ms. Smeenk for taking on the AP Coordinator role this year at 50 percent level of effort! To support program, looking to add another half time exemplary project staff to make full-time AP Coordinator. Emphasis on compensation and academic achievement of students.

Last week was a difficult one for our community. We lost a 2022 Yorktown graduate, Alexander Gil, and Washington Liberty lost a student, Braylon Meade. Yorktown will have extra counseling staff available throughout the week to support students and there is a memory wall for students to write on. Also had a therapy dog available for students. Condolences to the families of both students. These were tragic events and important to support our students and make sure we are there for them.

We are now into second quarter – wrapping up fall athletics. Girls Field Hockey team was runner up in state championship this year.

Marching band doing great work with superior ratings. Orchestra and choir have concerts week of Dec. 12.

Winter sports are starting.

**Reminder:** Paper online tutoring service. YHS students have used almost 4000 individual sessions. Patriot period has been helpful for kids to get additional help. Staff have been identifying students that need additional support to help them to get extra support. Parents are part of the discussion too to help students develop skills of self management and responsible decision making.

Attendance process has helped to reduce tardies and absenteeism. Have been informing parents of unverified absences. Have detentions in place – kids are hustling more to get into class. In detention they are making up time they missed.

**If your kids are sick, they should stay home!** Seeing uptick in respiratory illnesses and covid.

Safety coming and going from school is important!! Need to keep emphasizing that.

**Budget:** Superintendent will present soon on his proposed budget. Requesting additional funding for 50% LOE AP coordinator. Reduced class size last year which helped with master schedule development.

**Teacher and staff of the year** – through the school have put out a google form to nominate. Nominations will be put out to community for vote. Whoever is selected, the person who nominated them will have to submit the nomination package which include 3 letters of support. Even being nominated is a great recognition.

**Food drive for AFAC.** Collection boxes in main office, by gyms, and can bring food into Patriot Period. That started this week and goes through this Friday. Thanksgiving break next week. Winter break starting Dec. 19.

Shout out and appreciation for all the support for the teacher grants.

*Comment* - Ongoing school drop off safety concerns: Small children sitting on curb waiting for a bus at entrance of Yorktown parking lot. Have spoken with principal at Discovery and she has spoken with transportation. They are trying to move the Discovery bus stop. Too many little kids mixed with teen drivers. Kids not looking before they cross the street. Darting across streets and sometimes with no sidewalk.

Have moved the Hub stop to Harrison. Working on moving the Discovery bus stop.  
The bus stop on Florida also got moved.

Need to remind Yorktown students not to walk in front of cars.

Addressing this problem needs multiple perspectives. If someone is interested in working on this, can include folks from community association. Dr. Clark will think about putting a working group together.

*Comment* – is there a way to circle back to Patriot Period about driving laws and what to do if you have been drinking and need a ride?

Response: do get some of this information in health. Next year, all 500 sophomores will get drivers education. It won't be an elective next year. Working with students to do a PSA.

Beyond 10<sup>th</sup> grade, needs to be stated again.

Last year had a big focus on sexual harassment . This year could have bigger focus on drug and alcohol abuse. Building better awareness, safety.

*Comment* – coming off of this very tragic accident, can there be a bigger focus on drunk driving? Is there a SADD chapter at YHS? – Dr. Clark will check if the SADD chapter operates.

Need to build a community coalition to build school, parents, and students responsibility. Students can keep themselves but also each other safe. Planning on doing more work on this topic. Right now focused on helping students process and know that they have support.

AP Exams: All kids will be signed up for AP exams – YHS does it for all eligible kids.

**V. YHS PTA Committee Updates:**

**a.** Tia Alfred- Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning (ACTL) Updates: has provided a link to a survey monkey to Katrina. At this month's meeting they had the supervisors from math from elementary and secondary. Key takeaway is that all students should receive quality instruction and extension needs are based on data. Some students may need more targeted interventions. Major concern is the pandemic learning loss which is addressed by acceleration rather than remediation. Survey monkey has 5 questions to be filled out by Dec. 2. Questions focus on areas such as what is going well at your school with math, what concerns you have, to what extent has your child experienced learning loss, etc. This will come out in PTA newsletter this week.

**b.** Kris Van Houten- Patriots Helping Patriots: getting word out about gift card drive. Link will be in newsletter.

**c.** Any other committee chairs:

Amber Kemp and Deb McCreary– report on graduation party – night of graduation. June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Already in discussions with State Theater. Ended up being about 25 percent of the price of the boat trip and was much easier logistically. Will be looking for volunteers from Junior., Sophomore, and Freshman parents in particular.

**d.** Any new business/items to share-

There will be a gathering in Alexander Gil's honor on 11/16 at the Murphy Funeral home. Can visit with family at Knights of Columbus mansion after that.

**VI. Treasurer's Report:** Michelle Cowan, PTA Treasurer: Michelle was not able to make meeting so postponing report out.

**VII. Adjournment** - Thank you for attending- Please note there will be no PTA meeting in December  
Enjoy your Thanksgiving and see you in January!!

Meeting adjourned.