

SCA HS/MS Joint Parent Council Meeting

Friday, November 13, 2020 Via Zoom

Markella Maliagros, Middle School SCA President, Janet Diaso, High School SCA President.

Champions for Charity Holiday Shopping benefit will begin 12/3/20 until 12/5/20- the fundraiser kicks off at Blue Mercury, 25% of the sale proceeds go to the SCA.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Vincent Butera

- The rumors circulating that Manhasset Schools will close after Thanksgiving are false. No one has directed this at the county or any other level. We are planning to stay open as of now.
- There are two upcoming important discussions. First, we will follow up with our medical panel of doctors and our community will have the chance to ask them more questions. Another conversation is centered around diversity. Some members of the community are not pleased about the use of the Indians as our symbol and want it to be removed. We also want to make sure that each and every child feels included. We must discuss the kind of changes that can be made to our curriculum etc. to ensure inclusion. On November 30 we will have a community dialog about what has been done to date in the curriculum and more. The next step is to have Native American faculty and community representatives at our meetings to discuss this. We will not rush a decision with this issue; the intent is to have a discussion as to how we can best maintain the dignity of everyone.
- The SEL center which was put on hold because of the lockdown will now be addressed. The learning wellness center will have middle school Transitions class and the students will have access to counselors, psychologists and social workers. We want to make sure students who need help are in a place that is inviting, and we want students to get instruction on the SEL skills they need for life. In two weeks, the project will be put up for a bid and the work will be done this summer. The intent is to have it ready by September.

Principal's Update: Dr. Dean Schlanger

- Quarter one report cards will be posted 11/20/20 at 4pm.
- Parent teacher conferences: the teacher reacher sign up will be available 11/24/20, you must first register for an account. The PTC will be the evening of December 3rd and all-day December 4th. It will be done via zoom. The waiting room function will be enabled on zoom.
- We have had many meetings with the frolic chairs. The challenge is how do we continue to offer events to our seniors and unify them when new health updates make planning difficult. Currently working on the senior superlatives video, this montage video will be available shortly. We will do a senior parade.
- Also meeting with the staff and talking about what to do about midterms – most schools are not holding midterms. January Regents exams have been cancelled.
- On November 25 we will do a dry run of all students going fully remote (K-12).
- With so many kids being full remote, only 40% of the kids were hearing announcements so we switched them to the Canvas platform. The Canvas page is called Daily Announcements, it is color coded and very interactive with hyperlinks. We now have 5 minutes of music and the pledge and this saves some time. We are alternating the students who are doing the music/pledge since only one student is allowed at a time in the room.
- Extra help and extra support are difficult to provide at this time because kids are not permitted in the school before 7:30am and teachers have to prepare for zoom. We will discuss with our teachers better ways of going over tests so that children can learn from their mistakes. The issue of testing must be revisited.

Guidance Update: Dr. Joy D'Anca

- There have been many inquiries what about the role of the counselor vs the social worker vs the psychologist.

- We are currently seeing that our children are dealing with social media, managing school and activities, worrying about life after high school and managing relationships. There is a lot of pressure from peers and from society regarding these issues and now you insert COVID-19 and the growing concerns about getting sick.
- Online learning is tricky for kids because home has distractions, trying to learn online is difficult. Wearing masks all day in school is hard and being separated from friends is also a problem. We are trying to make a communal environment, but they cannot sit at the cafeteria and talk to their friends- they cannot have the same close-knit connections.
- The anxiety of not knowing when this will end because it is ongoing can lead to self-medicating and harmful self-soothing.
- Our wellness team educates the whole child mind, body and soul. The concept of self-care is huge for adults and this is what the wellness team focuses on with the students.
- The wellness team identifies kids at risk and stays in touch with these students. Administrators, school counselors, psychologist and school nurses make up the wellness team.
- The model offers three RTI (Response to Intervention) tiers of support to teach kids and help them self-regulate.

Tier one: core classroom instruction, *i.e.* school counselors who offer academic and social emotional support pushing into classroom providing direct instruction to help all students.

Tier 2: core instruction with additional support, school counselors along with the social workers respond to patterns of behavior. The goal is targeted small groups.

Tier 3: The highest need students are counseled by primarily the psychologist but also the counselors and the social workers. These students are often referred to outside counseling. The goal is intensive individual training,

- Counselors look at the social, emotional and college and career aspects, even at the kindergarten level. Elementary counselors are required by the state to push into the classrooms and talk about careers. We want the thought

process to be front and center and let them know its ok not to know right now what you want to be in the future.

- The elementary counselor focuses on the dynamics of recess with respect to COVID-19 since they cannot interact with each other. We build coping skills to get the kids to move to the next level and help them understand their emotions.
- Our child study wellness teams meet on a weekly basis to discuss students they are concerned about; they collaborate with each other to get ideas.
- Middle school works on the transition from elementary; trying to help students with learning the layout of the building. The SALT team will teach them how to navigate Canvas.
- If a student has anxiety and your child does not want to seek someone on their own, you can reach out to anyone on the wellness team, but the counselor might be the best first person to call. The counselor can then reach out to others on the wellness team, if needed. Some students go right to the teacher and that is fine too, the key is to have at least one person to talk too. The teachers were trained to recognize the invisible backpack, *i.e.* what heaviness do they have on their shoulders besides coming to class and taking tests.

CASA Update: Jen DeSena and Connie Bruno

- CASA sponsored Red Ribbon week which focused on character education for students. For parents, David Hymowitz discussing drug trends. The average age of first alcohol use was 18 in 1987; two years ago, the age was 13 for girls and 11 for boys. Manhasset is much higher than the national average. It is important for parents to keep a pulse on this with the pandemic.
- Stephen Hill told his story about being an athlete who was introduced by his older teammates to alcohol and then it escalated to marijuana and opioids. He was very honest and open, and the students asked many questions. The talk was powerful, and we are going to bring him back for a session with the parents to discuss why he was the only one of four brothers who had an addiction problem. Was he predisposed to it and how can parents identify

some of those traits? We will also provide information on the financial obligations for treatment and resources there are to get help.

- November 19 David Hymowitz will be speaking again for the district.
- CASA is looking to bring back parenting workshops, raising resilient children will be the first topic.
- The Set Connect club has been launched. The SET Connect club helps kids to connect—reach out to CASA and Robyn Hoffman for more information. Set Connect is open to anyone in middle school and high school.
- The SALT club will be using flip grids to do interviews, applications are due April or May.

Board of Education Update: Pat Aikens

- Manhasset is fortunate in that we have had only handful of COVID 19 cases in the district.
- Holidays are coming up and people want life to be normal in general; we need to be vigilant as a community for each other to keep the schools open. More than the nine weeks have passed without closure and the board has toured the two elementary schools and the middle school. The faculty has adapted and are trying to make things as normal as possible.

Next meeting January 15

