

UHS School Council Meeting

Nov 25th, 2024/7:00 PM

Agenda:

- Welcome
- USAC Updates
- Subject Department Presentations: Music - Mr. Wrigglesworth
- School Council Forum Report
- Student Activity Fee Participation
- Grade 8 Open House
- Fundraising Team
- ADMIN Updates
- Hong Fook MHA: Parenting (Family Communication)

Location

- Unionville HS Library

Minutes

- **Welcome**

Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm. Land acknowledgement video was shared at the beginning of the meeting.

- **USAC Updates**

Student representatives, Olivia Fu and Michelle Zhang, announced a food drive. Students are encouraged to bring non-perishable foods to school. Designated drop-off areas will be available around the school. It's also mentioned that Unionville School merchandise, including hoodies, will be released soon and available for purchase on School Cash Online. Winter Spirit Week is upcoming, featuring different festive outfit themes leading up to the winter break.

- **Subject Department Presentations: Music - Mr. Wrigglesworth**

Introduction

Anoosh Sharif introduced Mr. Wrigglesworth, the Department Head for Music.

Performance Calendar

Mr. Wrigglesworth presented an extensive performance calendar:

- Performances begin in early October and continue until the end of June.
- Venues include Flato Markham Theatre and local/provincial/national music festivals.
- Some dates are tentative (marked in red) pending confirmation of spring tour dates.

40th Anniversary Celebration

- A special concert is planned for May 25th (Sunday afternoon) to celebrate 40 years of music at Unionville, which will feature current senior ensembles and music alumni who are still performing. Music composed by alumni over the past 40 years will be showcased.
- Official promotion for the event will begin during the Point of Fantasia concerts.

Music Tour Plans

- Original plan for a UK tour to the Harrogate International Youth Music Festival was cancelled due to time constraints.
- New plan is a tour to Whistler, British Columbia and participate in the Contardo Festival in Whistler. It's a 5 days/4 nights trip, flying into Vancouver. Tentative dates: April 22nd-25th or 26th. Administrative approval is in process and details to be announced before the December concerts.

Music Program Highlights

Mr. Wigglesworth emphasized the community aspect of the music department:

- Large ensembles ranging from 30 to 85 students create a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Strong student engagement, with students arriving early and staying late for music activities.
- Supportive parent and community involvement.
- Provides opportunities for significant, meaningful, and cultural learning for up to 85 students simultaneously.
- Fosters confidence and organizational skills in students.

Future Challenges and Considerations

➤ Equipment Needs

- Many instruments are approaching 40 years old and may need replacement.
- Future funding may be required to maintain and replace aging instruments and resources.
- Potential need for community support (parents, students, alumni) to assist with funding.

• School Council Forum Report

Members of UHS school council attended the East School Council Forum on Nov 18th, 2024. They provided a brief summary of the workshops attended:

- William Sun talked about the YRDSB Director's speech and vision. He also covered the workshop of "School Zone Safety".
- Patrick Xie covered the workshops of "Pathways to Opportunities" and "Use of Online Digital Tools and Privacy".
- Betty Liu covered the workshop of "Mental Health - Personal Mobile Devices Use & Vaping".

• Student Activity Fee Participation

Student activity fee is making good progress with roughly 1,245 students or 67% of students who have already purchased. Parents are encouraged to pay the SAC fee if they have not done so to date.

• Grade 8 Open House

Grade 8 Open house was successfully held at UHS on Nov 7th, 2024.

• Fundraising Team

The importance of fundraising for UHS was emphasized. A UHS fundraising team (volunteers) has been set up. Members of this team have extensive fundraising experiences and connections. Anoosh Sharif introduced the team members as follows and they will be meeting with the UHS admin team soon.

- Vibhuti Mehra
- Melissa Gill
- Sabrina Itwarie
- Ellen Chung

- **ADMIN Updates**

No updates at this time.

- **Hong Fook MHA: Parenting (Family Communication)**

Hannah Xu, MPH, Youth Program Worker/Coordinator and Lead of Youth and Family Services presented to address common parental concerns, focusing on four main themes: parental challenges, screen time and gaming, academic concerns, and motivation.

- **Parental Challenges**

- Understanding Parental Emotions**

- Parents often experience primary emotions like anger, sadness, or frustration when dealing with challenging situations with their children.
- Underlying emotions may include Self-blame/Fear/Helplessness or hopelessness/Shame which can lead to unwanted parental reactions.

- Window of Tolerance**

- The "window of tolerance" is a concept describing the optimal state for handling challenges.
- Two extreme zones exist outside this window: Hyperarousal and Hypoarousal
- Strategies for staying within the window of tolerance:
 - ✓ Recognize when emotions are escalating
 - ✓ Take breaks when needed
 - ✓ Explain to children why you need a break to model emotional control

- **Screen Time and Gaming**

- Addictive Nature of Technology**

- Three factors make games and social media addictive: Gratification/Fast pace/Unpredictability
- Game companies exploit these factors to maximize engagement and profits.

- Impact on Mental Health**

- Excessive screen time (more than 5 hours daily) can lead to Hyperarousal/Increased cortisol levels/Hypoarousal
- HANNAH notes that technology addiction is not yet officially recognized as an illness in the DSM-5.
- Parents should be concerned if technology use impacts daily life (e.g., school attendance, hygiene, sleep) for more than two weeks continuously.

- Strategies for Managing Screen Time**

- Set realistic boundaries and gradually reduce screen time
- Use Common Sense Media to research age-appropriate content
- Understand the underlying reasons for excessive technology use (e.g., socializing, creativity, sense of accomplishment)
- Create a family tech timeout schedule (e.g., no phones during meals or after 10 pm)
- If children express interest in becoming professional gamers, encourage them to research the realities of that career

➤ **Academic Concerns and Learning**

Neuroplasticity and Brain Development

- Hannah introduced the concept of neuroplasticity, explaining that IQ is not fixed and the brain can produce new cells and connections.

Strategies for Effective Learning

- Consistency: Repeat tasks to master skills
- Rest: Allow time for recovery to avoid burnout
- Exercise: Physical activity before studying can improve learning by producing new brain cells and increasing blood flow to the brain

➤ **Motivation**

Understanding Motivation

- Hannah explains two types of motivation:
 - Internal motivation: Driven by interest, curiosity, or purpose
 - External motivation: Driven by grades, rewards, or punishment
- Internal motivation is more sustainable in the long term
- Three key factors for cultivating internal motivation:
 - Autonomy: Sense of control over one's actions
 - Competence: Feeling capable of completing tasks
 - Sense of belonging: Feeling connected to others

Strategies for Increasing Motivation

- Get started with small steps
- Make realistic plans and turn them into habits
- Set alarms or reminders to stay on track
- Make studying enjoyable (e.g., form study groups, use small rewards like gummy bears)
- Reveal goals to create accountability

Supporting Your Child's Motivation

- Support autonomy by allowing children to choose extracurricular activities
- Discuss life goals and long-term aspirations
- Encourage "flow" activities where children become fully engaged and focused
- Model resilience and introduce the concept of the window of tolerance
- Focus on internal motivation and help children explore their passions
- Encourage participation in school clubs for social connections and new experiences

Communication Strategies

- Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements to avoid blame and criticism
- Explain your emotions to help children understand your perspective

Resources and Recommendations

- Common Sense Media: Website for researching age-appropriate games and media content
- 3 books were listed as good references:
 - "The Self-Driven Child"

- "Parenting a Teen Who Has Intense Emotions"
- "The Anxious Generation"

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

NEXT MEETING – Monday, January 20th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.