

**Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)**  
**Homestead Parent Club Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 8, 2018**  
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Start time 11:00 am

**Present:** (14 attendees) Heather Wilcox, HHS Parent Club President; Elizza Wesner, HHS Parent Club Secretary; Tina Keinsley & Jennifer Kennedy, HHS Parent Club Co-Vice Presidents, Meagan Milne, Chris Perez, Monica Wilits, Kelly Hutner, Dominic Abeysekera, Jennifer Balkenbush, Robin Simunek, Tricia Duby, Donna Bartz, Nina Gery, Karen Gilbert, Chris Perez, and Deb Norman

**Welcome by Heather Wilcox, President.**

**Guests:** Steve Lake, SACS Director of Transportation, Kathy O'Shaughnessy, Heather Wilcox, and Kathy Little. Our guests have children who successfully graduated from Homestead High School and/or still have children at HHS.

Part One: Steve Lake

-Steve's three children successfully graduated from Homestead High School. His daughter earned her degree from Ivy Tech. One son attended Indiana University for one year until he realized that a military career was his passion. He joined the United States Air Force. His second son immediately joined the United States Air Force after high school graduation. Both sons are serving overseas. His sons are able to pursue their undergraduate degrees at no cost while serving their country.

-He recommends supporting your child's personal passion, not your dreams and passions.

-Trade school has positive benefits in life and Fort Wayne needs well-trained individuals.

-He encourages pursuing a four-year degree while attending trade school.

-Steve believes resiliency is critical in a child's success. He highly recommends the book, How To Raise An Adult: Break Free Of The Overparenting Trap And Prepare Your Kid For Success by Julie Lythcott-Haims. A provocative manifesto that exposes the harms of helicopter parenting and sets forth an alternate philosophy for raising preteens and teens to self-sufficient young adulthood.

In How to Raise an Adult, Julie Lythcott-Haims draws on research; on conversations with admissions officers, educators, and employers; and on her own insights as a mother and as a student dean to highlight the ways in which overparenting harms children, their stressed-out parents, and society at large. While empathizing with the parental hopes and, especially, fears that lead to overhelping, Lythcott-Haims offers practical alternative strategies that underline the importance of allowing children to make their own mistakes and develop the resilience, resourcefulness, and inner determination necessary for success.

Relevant to parents of toddlers as well as of 20-somethings - and of special value to parents of teens - this audiobook is a rallying cry for those who wish to ensure that the next generation can take charge of their own lives with competence and confidence (Source: Publisher's Summary from Audible, an Amazon Company)

Part Two: Kathy O'Shaughnessy

Kathy said, "Parents, your child will be successful post-high school in whatever path they choose." Kathy's three children successfully graduated from HHS and are now undergraduate and graduate students at IUPUI.

**Document**

- Beginning in the ninth grade, begin documenting information that your student will need for vocational or technical school applications, military opportunities, teacher recommendation letters, college applications, and for creating a resume.
- Document extracurricular activities, leadership roles, volunteer and work hours, and awards. Document all athletic, band, music, dance, and choir, etc. awards and accolades. Include activities outside of school such as Girl or Boy Scouts, church youth groups, etc.
- In the eleventh grade, your student should pick up "The Purple Sheet: Counselor's Information Sheet for Seniors" from the Guidance Office.
- In the tenth and eleventh grades, your student should think of 1-3 teachers, coaches, or directors who know them well to write a letter of recommendation. The letter of recommendation can be used for post-high school admissions, scholarships or honor programs.

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- Your student needs to allow ample time for their teacher, coach or director to complete the letter of recommendation. What should your student give to this person? A cover letter asking for this favor, the purple sheet completed, and a resume.
- Not all post-high school opportunities require a letter of recommendation.
- However, most post-high school opportunities will want you know what types of activities you were involved in in high school whether it was with the school or outside of the school.

**Guidance Office**

- The Guidance Office and your student's Guidance Counselor are an excellent resource during high school and when planning for post-high school opportunities.
- Your student needs to communicate with his or her guidance counselor. They are available for appointments and by email. Parents are also welcome to communicate with their student's guidance counselor.
- Do not expect your student's Guidance Counselor to do everything for your student. Your student must advocate for themselves and do their own research, too.
- Please share what you and your student find regarding schools or scholarships with your guidance counselor. This valuable information may help another student

**Talk to your student**

- It's never too early to discuss post-high school plans.
- What is his or her idea of what post-high school will look like?
- Living at home and attending a local college? Committing to the military? Attending college away from home? Attending a vocational or technical school? Taking a gap year? Or to get a job right away?
- In the middle of a ninth grader's first semester at Homestead High School, he or she will meet with their guidance counselor to plan their classes for their remaining semesters in high school.
- Remember that this is a working plan and can and will change over time.
- Your student will decide if they will pursue a Core 40 Diploma with or without Academic Honors or Technical Honors.

**Finances**

- Discuss how post-high school opportunities will be paid for or financed.
- How much, if any, will the parent contribute and how much your student will contribute.
- For college, look at total cost to attend: tuition and fees, room and board, books, etc. The school will provide this information. Oftentimes the cost of room and board is the same as tuition and fees.
- Don't forget to consider airfare, hotel costs, and car rental when estimating college expenses if your student is attending a school far away from home.
- How much money do you want your student to have in the bank when they leave for school? Who is paying for Starbucks, haircuts, late-night pizza, toiletries, gas in the car, parking fees at school? Or that cute top at the university bookstore?
- Research student loans and parent loans, grants, Stafford loans for students, etc.
- Complete FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> **every year for each student.**
- FAFSA typically needs to be completed for students who earned a scholarship.

**Types of colleges**

- Consider your family values and beliefs when your student considers colleges. Conservative or Liberal? Private, Christian or Public? In-state or out-of-state? Small or large? Urban or rural? Live at home and commute?
- College visits will play an important role as to where your student feels at home.

**Plan visits**

- Homestead HS allows two college visits per 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years. They require an official letter on letterhead from the school's Admissions Office or whoever scheduled the visit for you and your student. This letter must be turned into HHS's attendance immediately upon returning to school.
- Visit all types of schools so your student can get an idea of what will feel right for him or her. Urban, rural, small to large sized schools, public, private, in-state or out-of-state, etc.
- Make tour appointments with Admissions very early! For example, Presidents Day Weekend tours are booked for months ahead of time. Summer time is a great time to visit a campus even though school is not in session. However; summer sessions are in full-swing and there are students on campus.

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- Attend the canned Admissions tour, but then make appointments with department heads in an area of interest. Many campuses offer shadowing a current student to classes or they may allow you to sit in on a class.
- Sit in class, go on tour when school is in session to get a good “look” at the students, listen to what they talk about, ask students questions. Is it a warm and friendly campus or does everyone appear unhappy or stressed out?
- Go to the campus bookstore, pick up a school newspaper, and go to the local coffee or pizza place.
- Schedule a tour of the dorms.
- Look at the community surrounding campus: Is there a small town close to campus? If my student needs a part-time job, are there places for employment? Does the community offer things to do if your student isn’t of legal drinking age?
- Ask about student safety: the Dean of Students may help with this concern. The Office of Admissions can direct you to the correct department that will answer your questions.
- It is always important for your college student to be involved in an activity or club outside of the classroom. What does the school offer in the area of clubs, religious organizations, social groups or recreational sports?

**Job Placement**

- Does the school have a job placement office? What type of services does it offer?
- Are there job fairs for summer internships?
- Will the office help my student with resume writing and interviewing skills?

**Student Life:**

- It is a good idea to collect your child’s roommate and floor mates phone numbers just in case
- Consider your student’s class schedule: late classes, late labs. Are their ways your student can return to the dorm safely?
- Get very familiar with the campus health center and the closest community hospital.
- The campus health center has many options for handling emotional issues, handling stress, options to see a health care professional when ill.
  - Where can my child go when he or she is feeling stressed or anxious?
  - Where can my child go when she becomes ill?
  - Where can my child find the support he or she needs on campus? Is there tutoring available for students? If so, where? Is there someone to talk to when your student is feeling anxious, stressed, or homesick?
  - How will my student manage stress?
  - It is important to address the emotional and physical needs of your student **before** they move onto campus.
  - If your student had an IEP from high school, call the Office of Admissions or the Dean of Students to see how this will factor into your student’s college life.
- It may be a good idea to establish your student as a patient with a local physician especially if your student has health (allergies, asthma, etc.) Or emotional issues (anxiety, history of depression).
- There are many options to support your student while on campus: Deans Office, mentors in their degree program, the Resident Assistant on the dorm floor, guidance officer and academic advisors.

**Part Three: Heather Wilcox**

Heather said, “Your test score does not define you.” Heather has a high school senior who will attend Miami University of Ohio and a high school junior.

**Standardized testing**

- P(preliminary)SAT (PSAT): National test taken on the same day in October nationally. 10<sup>th</sup> graders take it for practice and 11<sup>th</sup> graders take it to determine National Merit Scholarship eligibility. Elite group of individuals.
- Practice SAT and ACT exams are offered by Homestead Parent Club in partnership with The Princeton Review.
  - 9th to 11th graders are able to take this practice exam
  - Great way for your student to decide whether or not they prefer one exam over the other.
  - Take the exam at HHS just like you would on the “real” exam day or take home the exam and have your family proctor you taking the exam.
  - The review session, with a trained Princeton Review representative, is valuable, find your errors, find areas in need of improvement, and learn good tips.

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- Plan WHEN your student will take the actual exam.
  - Consider your student's extracurricular and work commitments when planning when he or she will take the ACT and/or the SAT.
  - If your student is in Marching Band, plan to have him or her take the exam second semester and/or early summer.
- SAT Test Dates [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- ACT Test Dates [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
- Consider test preparation for your student. There are many options such as a private tutor; HHS offers test prep classes, Sylvan Learning Center, books to purchase or an online program.
- Some colleges "Super Score" standardized test results. A student's test **scores** from the SAT or ACT are crucial for college **admissions**. ... Most colleges **will** use the highest **scores** sent to them, either from the same test day or highest **score** in each section over time, called **super score**.
- Take the exam once for a baseline score and retake if needed. Remember that the higher the score, the more merit scholarship you may earn.
- Once you have test scores, you may begin preparing for the application process

**Part Four: Kathy Little**

Kathy said, "Getting into college is one thing, STAYING in college is another." Kathy is the mother of two Big Ten university students, a senior and a junior in high school.

**Options for post-high school opportunities**

- Non-traditional post high school opportunities
  - Trade and Vocational Schools: Brown Mackie College, Harrison College, International Business College, ITT Technical Institute, Masters of Cosmetology College, Ross Medical Educational Center, etc. There are several that are found in the Fort Wayne area. Please do your research; there are so many opportunities.
  - Military
    - ROTC, National Guard, etc. Excellent avenues to serve our country, pay for your college expenses, and to earn lifetime benefits.
- Non-traditional post high school opportunities
  - What are your child's strengths?
  - What does your child want, need, desire?
  - Research and visit trade or vocational schools.
- Not every student will move away immediately to attend college
  - Living at home and commuting to campus saves money
  - Excellent for those not ready to leave home 100%
  - IPFW, Ivy Tech and Indiana Tech are excellent options for students.
  - Ask your child to support their peers if they choose to take a non-traditional route post high school

**College applications**

- \$40-\$90 per application: it's an investment. Are you willing to make it?
- Many applications go live (online) August 1<sup>st</sup>—narrow down your college choices.
- College Go! Week: FREE application week for Indiana colleges and universities. Visit [www.learnmoreindiana.org](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org) Please ask individual colleges and universities if they participate in College Go! Week
- The applications must be completed by the student. How else will they learn?
- The Common Application (informally known as the Common App) is an undergraduate college admission application that applicants may use to apply to several colleges and universities. Application fees still apply. Find out if the college you want to apply to accepts The Common App.
- November 1<sup>st</sup> tends to be the national deadline to make in order to get top preferences for scholarship money. This is valuable information; have your student find out about deadlines.
- Application essays for admissions and for scholarships vary greatly between schools.

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**Scholarships and Financial Aid**

- Scholarships: research, research, research. Start at your student's university of choice, and then go to HHS's Guidance website, local scholarships, parents' place of employment, etc.
- FAFSA Federal Student Financial Aid: do your research, complete every year for each student.

**Federal Deadline:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State Deadline:** \_\_\_\_\_

**College Deadline:** Check with the college(s) you are interested in attending. You may also want to ask your college about its definition of an application deadline - whether it is the date the college receives your FAFSA, or the date your FAFSA is processed

**Campus Housing**

- Oftentimes the housing application is as important as the admissions application. Learn about the hard deadlines
- Visit the dorms when you are visiting the campus.
- Location, location, location.
- Examine costs: not all two-person dorm room cost the same as the two-person dorm room with a private bath.
- Examine the cafeteria: hours of operation, food choices, can my student eat at other dorms, etc.
- Consider living & learning centers: Honors, STEM, Business focus or international studies focus, etc.

**Acceptance & Decision Time**

- Consider your financial obligation, course of study, location, outside expenses, etc.
- You may need to make another visit to campus perhaps spending the weekend with an admissions office program which allows current students to host a prospective student.
- Final decision date is usually May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- If, after a fair amount of time taking classes and living on campus, you realize that the fit is not there, transfer to another school or move back home to take classes at the local college. Please discuss this with your parents before you make any major moves.

"Your worth is not determined by the university you went to. Or, in other words, "Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be." (Book by Frank Bruni) Alleluia. That's the exact mantra every student and parent must heed as they navigate the stressful college admissions process. I'm doing it for the fourth time and this excellent writer's new book could not have come at a better time for me. As Frank Bruni brilliantly demonstrates, your worth is your worth and it's yours to make wherever you go." --Maria Shriver

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm