

Wednesday, October 2, 2013, 6:30 pm

Meet the Department Heads

Fifty-four people were in attendance.

Jarra Jagne, IHS PTA president opened the meeting with a welcome, vote on the executive board, and vote on the budget. All passed.

Jarett Powers, IHS principal, welcomed parents and others. IHS is no longer a school designated by the state as a school in need of improvement. Attendance is up, referrals are down. Mr. Powers feels that there has been excellent change in the past few years and thanked teachers and parents for their support.

Keith Thompson, Social Studies, spoke about the community involvement program, the addition of AP classes, and state changes for the global curriculum as part of the common core.

Jean Amodeo, English, said that this department has two new teachers, expanded academic support, expanded AP program, and expanded academic support. There is also a new digital media course which will work in conjunction with WSKG TV.

Helen Perl, Math, said that this department has two new teachers but no new courses. There are many AP courses available as well as the possibility of TC3 credit. Math help: teachers recommend that students ask for help as soon as they need it and can take advantage of walk in help during lunch periods and after school tutoring on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

Carol Spence, Fine Arts, said that this department has six new teachers, a new dance class, and new AP courses. Through grant money received, they are able to bring in professionals to share their expertise with students. Spence also commented on the new peer observation time available to teachers and noted that students are excited to see other teachers in the classroom.

Carrie Brindisi, Science, said that this department has three new teachers and two new courses. Some offerings are forensics, marine biology, and oceanography. A walk-in help room is available during lunch periods Monday through Thursday.

Carlan Gray, Master Educator for math, science, technology, and engineering, talked about APPR (Annual Professional Performance Reviews) and the teacher evaluation process.

Andrea Volckmar, Master Educator for the humanities will be working at the high school for only one year. She is excited about teachers visiting classes and the professional dialogue that improves education.

Lana Craig, World Languages, teaches Spanish. Also offered at the high school are French, German, and Latin. Chinese is not offered as not enough students signed up to take it.

Matt Holl, World Languages, AIS for Spanish and French, talked about pod based learning and helping teachers use the language lab. Mr. Holl is available for drop in help for students beginning in period 4 through the end of the day when he is not teaching.

Micheryl Blake and Angela Affronti, Graduation Coaches, help students who are struggling. They spoke about the credit recovery program, especially with students who are taking online courses such as health. The graduation coaches also work closely with the school counselors and reinforce what

struggling students need.

Danielle Murphy, Student Services, said that the IHS counselors have a new twitter account. Areas covered for student development through Student Services are career and college counseling as well as social, emotional, and academic well-being. Ms. Murphy thanked Mr. Powers for making it possible for the school counselors to be assigned to a student for all four years. An effort is being made to expand the college and career aspect of this office by encouraging students to visit college campuses and shadow specific programs. The College and Career Guide will be fully updated and available to students soon. Naviance, which is an online program designed to help students gather information about colleges, has more accurate information now than in previous years. Students can set up a parent account to allow parents access to this valuable tool.

Margie Shaw, Special Education, said that 90% of special education students are in general education classes. Students begin with a curriculum for their level and then move into regular classes for credit. Accommodations for students are reviewed by College Board for PSATs and SATs.

Joshua Chase, PE and Health, talked about the importance of lifelong fitness and fitness plans for students and commented on the excellent facilities available at IHS.

Karl Mellander, Student Activities Director, oversees 60 different clubs at IHS and thanked Jarett Powers for his support for these clubs. The new ICSD website has updated information on clubs and events. Mr. Mellander also oversees all school events, including homecoming. New this year is fall festival. Mr. Mellander also commented on the EDGE (Enriching the Day Generates Excellence) program.

Scott Breigle, Technology and Engineering, talked about Project Lead the Way, which is a pre-engineering program. It's a great program but unfortunately, out of 45 students in CIM (Computer-Integrated Manufacturing) only three are girls. Efforts are being made to get more girls in this program. A new TV studio is up and running in the former Gun Hill Studios location. It has live TV and a live internet feed that will run 24 hours a day. Drivers Education is now offered. Ithaca STEM Advocates 501(c)(3) status is up and running. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Ithaca STEM Advocates works to support STEM-related activities, clubs, teams, events, and classes in the Ithaca City School District (ICSD).

Associate Principals: Tokinma Killins for students A to L, Martha Hardesty for students M to Z, and Janet Abowd spoke about scheduling changes, student services, testing, help sessions, and resources on the new ICSD website. Ms. Killins, who is new to IHS, expressed her gratitude for the excellent resources and staff. She also said that she is appreciative of the many efforts to provide equity.

Jarett Powers said that 36 teachers were hired over the summer. IHS has received a \$150,000 New York State grant to aid in tutoring, data systems, and tracking of students' progress. IHS had the highest graduation rate in its history this past June. Referrals are down by 54% in the last two years. Since the beginning of the new attendance policy, there have been 43% fewer absences. IHS is using both personal and automated calls to notify families when a student is absent.

Teachers are using some of their preparation time to visit other classrooms and observe. This is creating an atmosphere of collaboration among teachers as they discuss behavioral expectations and curricula.

