

NAHS Coffee Talk
October 3, 2008
Highlighting the APS Program for the Exceptional Child

Highlights from Coffee Talk

Welcome – by Diane Dickey, PTSA co-president

- Today's program will be highlighting the Atlanta Public School's (APS) Program for the Exceptional Child (PEC)

Introductions – by Mark MyGrant, Principal of North Atlanta High School (NAHS)

- There is a group of unsung heroes in the Atlanta Public School system that works day in and out with students having special challenges. Today we will learn about what North Atlanta High School is doing to raise the bar for these kids.

Presentation – by Dr. Chang Robbins and Ms. Miriam Smith - APS

- There is a vision for diverse learners to meet and exceed national standards. There is a wide range of support services in place for the exceptional child:
 - Assistive Technology Specialists
 - Audiologists
 - Learning disability Evaluators
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Orientation / mobility Specialists
 - Child Service Specialists
 - Physical Therapists
- A range of services are offered in self-contained classrooms
- Requirements for Students with Disabilities
 - Must take the Georgia High School graduation test in 11th grade
 - Must take the End of Course test
- Two types of diplomas
 - Special Ed Diploma (Many colleges do not accept this diploma)
 - Life Skills Concentration Diploma
 - Employment Preparatory Concentration Diploma
 - College Preparatory Diploma (All colleges accept this diploma)
 - Must meet all requirements for regular Georgia High School diploma (including Community Service Hour requirements)
- Transition Services - for all students – plan is mapped out for each student in the 9th grade
 - Transition Plan
 - Medicaid Waiver (State / Federal funding provides financial assistance upon student graduation)
 - Career Technical instruction
 - Vocational rehabilitative services
- PEC has excellent program with **Sun Trust Bank**
 - Students learn all facets of the bank
 - Often students are offered positions at the bank (one student's mother was upset because her daughter was offered a position making more money than she was!)

- Inclusion – Relevant Terms
 - Special Ed is a SERVICE not a PLACE
 - Least restrictive environment (LRE) for the student
 - Collaborative
 - Inclusion
 - Co-teaching
- Services
 - Self-contained classroom vs. Inclusion in standard classroom
 - Inclusion selection
 - Look at students individually
 - Team decision
 - Review of students skills
 - Decide on what supports are needed
 - Make recommendation
 - IEP – Individualized Education Program
 - Pre-Inclusion
 - What if students are not quite ready
 - Rigorous classes
 - Self-contained class teacher consulting with regular class teacher
 - Student may be self contained but the team may recommend services in the goal education classroom
 - Service may be implemented in general classroom by paraprofessional under direction of special ed teacher
 - If problems arise the teacher should
 - Review student instruction adaptations
 - Hold conferences with case load teacher
 - Make parental contact
 - Document strategies attempted
 - Parents should
 - Ask program assistant to schedule an in-school meeting
 - Inclusion Monitoring
 - Frequent contact with school
 - Look at Report Cards and IEP progress reports
 - Parent attend Parent-Teacher conferences
- Conclusion
 - Parents meet frequently to review progress of student
 - Do everything we can to help make the student successful
- Question and Answer Session
 - Can students participate in sports, clubs, etc? This is up to the individual student
 - Are disciplinary standards the same for special ed students? Yes, unless the behavior is a manifestation of their disability, in which case a behavior specialist may meet with the student to map out a plan
 - What about students with ADHD? Students can be served by the 504 program. If a teacher notices ADHD behavior in a student, they can make a recommendation to

create a 504 plan for the student. This may require medical assessment by the student's pediatrician.

- Do colleges accommodate students with special needs? Yes, all colleges in Georgia have accommodation for special needs students and a 504 plan – they can receive tutoring, audio tapes of classes, there are many accommodations available and specialized counselors as well
- How get a copy of the 504 plan? See link:
<http://specialchildren.about.com/od/504s/f/504faq1.htm>
- There is a theme: “Moving on Up” which focuses on increasing the graduation rate of students with disabilities

Musical Presentation Introduction – by Reggie Colbert, head of Center for Performing Arts, Small Learning Center at North Atlanta High School

- We are in the process of adding a communication component to the Center for Performing Arts school – including photography, and morning broadcasts at the school via monitors
- Grease will be the fall drama performance (Grease is the word!)
- The November Coffee Talk will highlight the Chamber Chorus (Schubert's Mass in G)
- Today's presentation is the song “From a Distance” by the Chamber Chorus students – a beautiful performance.

Closing Remarks and announcements – by Mark MyGrant, Principal

- I love my job! What a fabulous performance by the Chamber Chorus students.
- The football team will play St. Pius tonight – they have a great record this season – please come out and support the team – there is limited parking, so please take the St. Pius shuttle
- Limited edition North Atlanta coffee mugs are for sale at \$10 each

Additional announcements

- Please join the PTSA if you have not yet signed up – we have over 250 members to date and are still taking membership donations. See Dianne Irby for more information
- Support your student athletes by joining the Sports Booster Club – see Jane Ulicny for membership forms
- Cynthia Brown announced the continuation of the teacher **PRIDE (Parents Recognizing Instruction Dedicated to Excellence)** program. This inspiring program “catches (and rewards) teachers in the act of excellence”. The teachers LOVE this program – they are awarded “coupons” from other teachers and from parents for outstanding excellence and inspiration in and outside of the classroom. At the end of the semester, teachers use the coupons to win auctioned prizes donated to the school by parents and corporations. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE MERCHANDISE (gift cards, use of a vacation home, etc.) OR a tax deductible DONATION to this wonderful endeavor (make checks payable to the NAHS Foundation, with PRIDE in the memo line of the check) please contact Cynthia Brown at gabrowns@mindspring.com
- Yearbooks are on sale now – within a few weeks you should be able to order your yearbook online and order your students “Senior Page”. See Judy or Cley Knighten for more information.

- The NAHS Marching Band has been invited to attend the Battle of the Bands – see Maria Scott or Mr. Brooks for 2008 tickets for the event to be held on October 19th at Herndon Stadium
- Ms. McCall announced Student / Teacher mentoring opportunities in the Media Center. The first Thursday of every month there is a lunch and learn with guest speakers in the Media Center. The next speaker will be Camille Simms. Upcoming topics include:
 - Time management and organization skills
 - Goal setting
 - Dress for success

Also all parents need to sign the “Acceptable use policy” form for their student – see Ms. McCall for a copy of the form.

- The School Wellness Ambassador program was announced by Ms. Lee and Ms. Howard. This is an APS district initiative being spearheaded by Camille Simms, our student district ambassador. This is a program to get students involved in healthy eating and physical fitness.
- There is a NAPPS initiative to raise money for the Scott Elementary School to provide playground equipment for the school. Each of the NAPPS feeder schools is committed to raising \$2,000 each. Ms. Lee is spearheading an effort to create a NAHS Cookbook to help raise monies for this project. Please send her healthy recipes for the cookbook.
- Nancy and Steve Meister will be coordinating the RED HOT JAZZ fundraising event for NAHS on April 18th, 2009. A planning meeting will be held on October 17th at 10 am in the media center at NAHS.
- Nancy Meister announced the next NAPPS meeting on October 29th at Sutton Middle School – Topic will be “All about IB” event and the Playground initiative for Scott Elementary for the NAPS feeder schools (see earlier item)
- There is a NAPPS Softball benefit October 30th NAHS vs. Sutton Middle School at 4:30 pm.
- The 4th annual **North Atlanta – Sutton Tailgate Party** will be held next Friday evening, October 10th in the NAHS teacher’s parking lot. Hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages will be provided, please bring your favorite dish to share. Our very own "Grill Masters" Mr. Colbert and Mr. Robinson are ready to grill some the best darn hot dogs and hamburgers in Buckhead.

Upcoming Dates:

Wednesday October 8	General PTSA Meeting 7:00 pm
Friday October 10	Sutton Night – NAHS Tailgate 5:00 pm Football game vs. Washington @ 8:15 pm Grady Stadium
Saturday October 11	No Plant Left Behind Sale @ Sutton – see Kathy Saul
Saturday October 17	Red Hot Jazz planning meeting at 10 am in the media center at NAHS.
Wednesday, October 29	NAPPS meeting@ Sutton – Middle School (All about IB)

Thursday October 30 NAPPS Softball benefit on October 30th NAHS vs. Sutton Middle School at 4:30 pm.

November 4 Election Day Bake Sale – see Peggy Wright – please bring baked items to the school for sale during the election

November 7 Coffee Talk 8:30

Of Interest to all:

- North Atlanta High School Clothes Closet is in need of gently worn dress code acceptable clothing. Please drop them off with Mrs. Ballard. (Main office)
- Visit www.northatlantahigh.org for everything North Atlanta!