

Poland Regional High School

School Board Report

April 2022

Staff Updates

We are getting ready to post several positions that we have open: English, social studies, physical education/health, and Spanish. The loss of Spanish teacher Jasmine Bowen is huge. We wish her well in her new career, but she is an outstanding teacher who will be hard to replace.

Teaching and Learning

While Winter Carnival does not, at first glance, seem to have much to do with Teaching and Learning, this year it had everything to do with the mental health of our students. March 25th was an absolute, unequivocal success with students fully diving into the fun, silliness and competition. Congratulations to the Juniors for winning Air Band and to the Seniors for winning the whole thing. The Dance on March 26th was attended by over half of the student body, and students pretty much danced for 3 hours straight. There were no behavior issues at either event. It was fantastic! A huge thank you to the following staff members who did so much work to make it all happen: **Liz Howe**, the coordinator and a class advisor; **Kristin Ross, Derek Latham and Jes Elias**, class advisors; **Dan Novak**, SRB faculty advisor; and **Deb Downing**, creator of the “what is winter carnival” presentation for 9th and 10th graders who had never experienced it.

Facilities & Safety

Our vape detectors were installed over February vacation and became fully functional the week of March 7th. We have learned a lot and gotten the hang of the technology, and are feeling like we are making good headway on dealing with the problem of vaping among our kids. Here are some stats from the first four weeks of operations:

- In the first week after the detectors were installed, but were not yet fully functional, two of them were vandalized. Once they went online March 7th, none of them have been vandalized.
- During the first week of operation, March 7th-11th, the vape detectors were set off 56 times.
- In the following three weeks, March 14th-31st, the detectors were set off between 22-26 times each week.
- At least 1-2 times a week, a single student sets off the alarm multiple times.
- Crowds of students in the bathrooms have diminished dramatically since the detectors were installed.

The detectors have allowed us to intervene in an individualized manner for each student who is caught. Not every alarm is resolved with a specific student identified, but as we review the alarms on a daily basis we have been able to intervene with some students who had not previously been identified as potential vapers. These students would not have been referred to assistance in the past, but are now more likely to try to quit and access resources. We have found this new resource invaluable!

Events/Activities

- Spring sports are in full swing: Baseball, softball, track, and boys and girls lacrosse. 116 students are participating.
- The spring Musical, Zombie Prom, is cast and in rehearsals! The last musical we had was scheduled to go into production in March 2020. Super excited for the real thing again.
- Celebration of Learning, when sophomores and seniors present their projects, will be held on April 28th-29th. Freshmen and Juniors will be in school one day to view and grade presentations and will have one remote learning day that will give them the opportunity to explore careers, colleges and other post-high school things.