

## **Recap of Principal FAQ Virtual Session (05 /22/2025 from 7:00pm to 7:30pm)**

Attendees:

TJHSST Principal: Mr. Michael Mukai

PTSA Executive Committee: President: Nell Janardhan; First VP of Programming and Events: Catherine Li; Third VP of Communications: Maggy Li; Treasurer: Dinesh Kumar; Secretary Elect: Raji Madhuvana

Around 115 parents attended the virtual zoom session.

### **Session Structure and Purpose outlined by Nell Janardhan**

- Questions for the session were collected in advance via a Google form, focusing on the most frequently asked to ensure a productive discussion.
- The full list of questions was shared with Mr. Mukai for review and transparency.
- Participants are encouraged to submit additional questions in the chat; relevant ones will be addressed during the session; others will receive follow-up responses.
- Attendees are advised not to mention individual students or teachers by name when posing questions.
- The meeting emphasizes partnership between families and the school, aiming for students' academic and personal success.

### **Principal's Opening Remarks (Mr. Mukai)**

- Mr. Mukai highlighted the importance of community, partnership, and open communication - encouraging parents to reach out directly to the school or main office with concerns, not just during PTSA meetings.
- He shared his philosophy: always seeking opportunities to improve and do better as a school community.
- Mr. Mukai needed to leave early to attend TJ girls' soccer championship, underscoring his involvement in student celebrations and events.

### **Key Topics Addressed by Mr. Mukai**

#### **1. Inconsistent Grading Practices & GPA Concerns**

- Mr. Mukai discussed the historical roots of grading systems, comparing letter grades to industrial grading of products like meat (e.g., Grade A, B, C, D).
- He emphasized that the current educational era should focus on learning, not just accumulating points or grades.
- The school is implementing "visible learning documents" for every course and collaborative team, outlining essential objectives and skills students should master.

- This aims to increase consistency in teaching and assessment across subjects and teachers.
- Inspired by John Hattie's "Visible Learning," the focus is on both teachers and students knowing what has and hasn't been learned.
- Feedback systems will track student progress on objectives, ensuring clarity on learning rather than just point totals.
- The goal is for students to discuss what they've learned, not just their grades, and for parents to be informed consumers of their child's education.

## **2. Senior Parents' Concerns about College Admissions**

- Fear of college admissions being rescinded due to lower grades is common but rare in practice.
- Rescinded offers typically occur only in cases of severe academic decline (e.g., failing multiple classes).
- Parents are encouraged to contact counselors or administrators with concerns; support systems are in place to help struggling students.
- The school is committed to supporting students through graduation and transitioning to their next steps.

## **3. Harsh Grading & Test Content Misalignment**

- The school is working to align course objectives and content across all subjects and collaborative teams.
- Visible learning guides will ensure consistency in what is taught and assessed.
- Grade distributions and assessment practices will be monitored to ensure fairness and clarity on which objectives have been mastered.

## **4. GPA Impact and Challenging Assessments**

- TJ offers deeper, more specialized courses and assessments compared to neighborhood schools, which may affect GPA calculations.
- The school's philosophy is to provide more rigorous opportunities, not just match base school offerings.
- Despite concerns, TJ students maintain high GPAs and strong performance on state exams, AP exams, and in competitions (e.g., science fairs, Olympiads).
- The school's unique programs and achievements are valued by colleges and universities.

## **5. Academic Integrity Enforcement**

- Academic integrity remains a significant concern for students, parents, and teachers.
- Uniform testing can create vulnerabilities (single point of failure), so diversity in assessments is maintained.

- The school is addressing academic integrity through both policy and culture, including consequences for violations (e.g., suspensions, which are reported on college applications).
- Incidents of academic dishonesty are not publicized, but consequences are enforced.

### **General Guidance**

- Parents and students are encouraged to maintain open communication with the school and utilize available support resources.

The school's ongoing efforts focus on transparency, consistency, and a shift toward mastery-based learning and feedback.