

## Tiger Paws Newsletter

Principal's Article

12/7/17

Here we are. Suddenly, it's December, and we are about to end our semester, the first time finals will be over and the semester will end before the winter break. There have been some adjustments, especially for teachers who have put in a lot of planning time to adjust to the new schedule. We are certainly hoping that the coordination of the end of the semester and the break will provide for a much more stress-free and enjoyable family time for all.

Evaluation of what is unduly stressful for our students is a huge part of our school community's purpose at this time. While continuing to provide myriad opportunities for academic and personal growth, we are focusing on creating structures and plans that will help students achieve more balance; using high school solely as a stepping stone for college has robbed many of our students of an age-appropriate and meaningful high school experience. Our partnership with Stanford University-based Challenge Success is giving us the tools to explore ways to better serve our students that maintain healthful practices and allow for them to achieve their dreams *without losing sleep*, so to speak.

Our student representatives to the Challenge Success leadership team, juniors Hayley Villapudua and Brandon Lee, have already formed a Challenge Success student club and have selected sophomore and freshman representative leaders so the club will be sustainable.

Parental voice is also key in any initiatives we undertake, so we will be asking for widespread parent participation along with our students and staff as we study our next best moves that will benefit our student body. Please be listening for opportunities to join us in this most important process.

You may wonder what we do as a staff on Late Start mornings and Professional Development (PD) days. This year, our three PD days (October, November, and March) are dedicated to Project Based Learning (PBL) for our core subject teachers. PBL is one strategy for heightened student engagement, differentiation, and student choice with projects related to solving real life situations. In our Late Start mornings, we tackle many issues and use the time for extended professional development. Challenge Success topics and renewing our use of Thinking Maps as an instructional tool have been some of our emphases. Thinking Maps are likely familiar to you from your students' use in grades K-8 and are ways to graphically represent the eight cognitive skills that provide structure to human thought. Some of our Late Start mornings are department-specific in which the course-alike teachers plan and learn together.

As this newsletter hits your email inbox, we are fully transitioning to our Winter sports season. In the fall season, our Cross Country boys' and girls' teams both made it to CIF finals after three of our teams were Rio Hondo League first place title holders. Our Water Polo team was also the Rio Hondo League Champion and went on to the semifinals of CIF. League play for girls water polo, boys and girls soccer, wrestling, and boys and girls basketball begins just after the winter break and will provide hours of viewing and rooting pleasure for our Tiger fans!

I would like to highlight a campus program that may be new to you. Under the leadership of Mr. Garrett Shorr and Ms. Diana Shen, we are in our second year of a partnership with Cal Poly Pomona to bring hands-on engineering experiences to our female students. Now, two cohorts of girls are part of Femineers, and our school has been chosen as the pilot school for the third-year of the Cal Poly program. This exposure may just alter some future career paths!

As we enter our winter holidays, we will take with us the positive feeling tone that has settled over our campus this semester. We will also have the happy memories of the demonstrations of hard work and perseverance that our students put in to create this season's vocal, instrumental, and dance concerts, the fall play, and the Peer Mediators' TEDx salon. We often say that there is something for everyone at SPHS, and our students continue to prove that through exercising their passions for the arts, athletics, academics, varied activities, and philanthropy.

Here's wishing all of you a great holiday season, lots of family time, merriment, and time to connect with those you hold dear. As we welcome 2018 (2018!!), I look forward to more interaction with all of our students and parents as we work together to shape our future. Happy New Year to all, and "Go, Tigers!"