**School Community Council Meeting Minutes**

**October 5, 2009**

**5:15 p.m.**

**PRHS Library**

Present: Peter Gulick, Maryanna Swanson, Sally Grand, Isabel Rollison, Gail Poitrast, Amy Jemery, Bruce Parsons, Carol Lurie, Linda Horton, Julie Fogarty, Donni Hughes, Gillian Cavezzali, Deidre Flynn-Robison, Emilie Weber, Bob Price, Pam Harland

1. Peter introduced himself and welcomed new members- everyone introduced themselves.

2. The discussion of the John Ratey study on the Science of Exercise and the Brain was tabled until the November meeting.

3. Change in schedule research. Peter presented the committee with the research packets on alternative high school schedules and research about changing schedules.

The discussion began with the thoughts on the pros and cons of the current schedule:

Peter began by explaining that some classes would do better in covering their curriculum by meeting for shorter periods everyday instead of longer periods every other day.

Several math teachers concurred and added that introducing a topic at the beginning of a class, followed by a short practice would be ideal for math and world language classes. Their ideal class length would be 60 minutes (as 45 or 50 minutes is too short and 90 minutes is too long).

Amy indicated that she believes that students would have more homework but that the assignments would be shorter.

Julie said that a 90 minute block works well for special education students.

Emilie Weber stated that she prefers the block schedule, too. She appreciates that she has an additional day to ask for help on homework assignments, and that she only has 4 classes to prepare for each day (rather than 8).

Isabel disagreed and indicated that she would prefer to not have block length classes. She likes to meet with her teachers and classmates every day to keep the information fresh. She prefers to do her homework & study for exams the night that it was assigned – and sometimes has to wait for several days to actually use the information that she prepared for.

Bob then proposed a hybrid schedule in which all 7 classes would meet 3 days per week and the other 2 days classes would meet as blocks.

Bruce proposed extending our school day or school year in order to cover all of the curriculum. He suggested that other schools that extended their year have increased test scores.

Bob said that he will bring the 5 year trend in SAT scores to the November meeting.

Bob’s recommendation is to create a schedule that best helps our students at our school (not necessarily take another school’s schedule and make it fit our students needs).

We all agreed that we will next look at our school’s philosophy and build a schedule based on that.

Questions to ask:

What is most important to us at PRHS?

What are our core beliefs?

What are the best ways that instruction takes place?

How do we best carry out instruction?

Do we need more time?

Is 90 minutes too long for most students? Teachers?

Are there minutes within a block where students begin to tune out?

If so, how can we garner that time?

How can we make our minutes more productive?

We have been on block scheduling for 12 years now.

The student government would like to get involved. Perhaps they will survey students to see what they think about block scheduling and their own learning/studying styles.

4. The November meeting agenda is to continue to discuss the schedule. Look into the Ratey study on exercise and brain development as well as the Sophomore Team model. How is that working?

5. The next meeting is Monday November 2nd at 5:15 p.m. at PRHS.