**School Community Council Meeting Minutes**

**November 2, 2009**

**5:15 p.m.**

**PRHS Library**

Present: Peter Gulick, Robert Price, Sally Grand, Annie D’Elia, Emily Kelley, Kitty Greene, Bruce Parsons, Gail Poitrast, Amy Jemery, Meagan Kimball, Alicia Barney, Doug Ross, Dawn Day, Jen Werda, Troy Harris, Carolyn Varin, Gillian Cavezzali, Katie Covacs, Mikaela Hogan, Julie Fogarty, Pam Harland, Carol Lurie, Ann Blanchard, Emily Weber, Ashley Fleming

1. Change in schedule discussion began immediately.
2. Peter started by asking us to look at some of the school’s core beliefs:

What is most important to us at PRHS?

What are our core beliefs?

1. Doug Ross spoke on behalf of the Career Technology Education (CTE) program. He stated that CTE courses require the block schedule in order to fulfill their specialized curricular needs. Some courses travel to a site to do work, others provide lessons and then hands-on activities. These courses call for blocks. Doug recommends looking at our current schedule and seeing if we could mix skinnies into our existing blocks- allowing Math and World Language classes to meet daily for shorter periods of time, while project based courses could continue to meet in blocks.
2. Bob Price said that he has attempted to mix skinnies into our current block schedule and found that it would be detrimental to our students. They would lose flexibility in choosing classes and choices would be limited based on their block courses. This would prohibit waterfalling of a schedule and would impact leveling.
3. Bruce asked: Is 90 minutes too long for most students? Teachers? Are there minutes within a block where students begin to tune out?
4. Peter requested that each department representative speak on behalf of their department:  
   1. **Math**: (Gail Poitrast & Amy Jemery) Math is looking for more face-time and consistency in meeting. 90 minutes is too long for Math students. 60 minutes 4 out of 5 days per week would be ideal for Math classes.
   2. **Science**: (Dawn Day & Ann Blanchard) 90 minutes is ideal for labs. Some labs last for two blocks in a row- so having a single block class in a week would not be ideal for Science classes. Science teachers also use the entire block to address learning modalities.
   3. **Art**: (Peter spoke for Peggy Houseworth) Longer classes are ideal and more productive for Visual Arts instruction and work on projects.
   4. **CTE:** (Doug Ross) that CTE courses require the block schedule in order to fulfill their specialized curricular needs. Some courses travel to a site to do work, others provide lessons and then hands-on activities.
   5. **English**: (Meagan Kimball) The English department skills are scaffolded. English teachers are able to break each block into skill subsets each day and review & introduce new subjects in one block. The English department is not unanimous on this viewpoint.
   6. **World Language**: (Troy Harris & Kitty Greene) 90 minutes is too long for learning a new language, especially at the lower levels. Skills are introduced and require practice before they are able to introduce a new skill or concept on top of that. World Language students would be better served if they could meet everyday. They do all agree that having a single day each week of blocks would be good for giving exams and allowing students time to work on projects.
   7. **Special Education:** (Julie Fogarty) Although in last months SCC minutes, Julie was quoted as saying that the block schedule works well for special ed students, she also acknowledges that face-time and consistency is important for her students as well.
   8. **Wellness/PhysEd**: (Ashley Fleming) 90 minutes is great for PE. It allows time for students to change (before and after class) and allows for actual instruction and physical activity. If Wellness is taught without blocks, they may need to change their course into a full-year class instead of a half-year class in order to cover all of their curriculum.
   9. **Social Studies:** (Peter Gulick) The SS department is split down the middle on what they would prefer. AP classes should be taught in a block schedule. However, for Geography, Civics, and Economics 90 minutes is too long. Students lose focus.
   10. **Students**: (Annie, Emily, Mikaela, Alicia) Annie agreed that 90 minutes is too long for most courses. She would prefer 60 minute classes. Emily likes the idea of skinnies and blocks mixed together- which would allow time for labs and projects in Science but Math would meet nearly every day. Mikaela stated that 90 minutes is too long in some of her classes and expressed an interest in meeting with Math and World Language teachers daily. Alicia prefers 90 minute classes so that the there is time for long discussions and student questions. Alicia also said that 90 minutes is good for when athletes are dismissed at the end of the day.
5. Bruce recommended that Bob Price take everyone’s comments and come up with a new schedule that incorporates skinnies, blocks, and a waterfall for our next meeting. Bruce would also like for us to look at snow days and how we make them up. What is the most beneficial way to make them up?
6. The December meeting agenda is to look at the Bob Price sample schedules to see how they would impact departments and students.
7. The next meeting is Monday December 7th at 5:15 p.m. at PRHS.