**SCC Meeting**

**February 11, 2008**

**5:15 – 6:15**

**Present**: Peter Gulick, Pam Harland, Bob Price, Emily Kelley, Gillian Cavezzali, Connor Barry, Maryanna Swanson, Carol Lurie, Julie Fogarty, Carolyn Varin, Linda Horton, Matthew Lepage, Hannah Ingerson, Taysha Allen

The minutes from the 11/19 meeting are approved.

Peter presented the new task to the SCC:

The NEASC wants us to “review the grouping practices beyond ninth grade and assess the impact of those practices.”

Peter explains that we are to evaluate the current practices of tracking, grouping, leveling students at Plymouth Regional High School. We currently have 4 levels (2s, 3s, Honors, and Advanced Placements) from sophomore through senior years- and our task is to find out if those levels are serving the best interest of our students. We will look at grouping practices and assess if it is working for us. This task is given to use via the NEASC report.

NEASC is not telling us to change what we are doing. They simply want us to look at what we are doing.

Our goal is to examine our current practices and come up with a recommendation to the school board.

We know that the current levels from sophomore through senior years have not changes in over ten years. About five years ago we eliminated these levels from freshmen year and created freshmen teams.

Bob Price explained that we currently do “ability grouping” but not “traditional tracking.” As long as general prerequisites have been met, students can take whatever class they want to take. We do not force students into a specific track and insist that they remain there. He said that freshmen failure rates decreased from 30-40% to 5% in the five years that we have had freshmen teams.

Questions that were raised:

Are students in level 2 classes complacent?

Has the freshmen team project been a success?

What is the impact of eliminating levels on a class?

What are our graduation rates?

Are other schools leveling or tracking? (or not)?

Have graduation rates changed since we started freshmen teams?

Is the dramatic decrease in freshmen failure rates due to grouping/tracking, teaming, or something else?

Are students prepared for their sophomore year?

What is the transition like from 9th to 10th grade?

Has the sophomore failure rate increased or stayed the same?

Bob Price indicated that sophomore failure rates are much higher than freshmen failure rates. Linda Horton said that expectations are much higher from 9th to 10th grades. She said going into sophomore year is like “falling off a cliff for many students.”

Matt Lepage stated that he felt frustrated and “held back” in his freshmen english and geography classes. He recommends smaller, leveled classes in geography especially.

Hannah Ingerson stated that she also feels frustrated in a “learning environment with lower level students who don’t care about learning.” She is taking Adventures in Reading with a small group of students who want to learn- and she feels inspired to learn more.

Linda Horton stated that she would like to do away with all heterogeneous group projects at our school.

Julie Fogarty stated: “This project should be a philosophical introspective examination of our current practices.”

We agreed to study the research that Peter and Pam prepared and meet again next month. We will discuss forming a subcommittee and establish benchmarks so that we can measure our own success.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday March 10th at 5:15 p.m.