SCC Meeting

February 2, 2009

5:15-6:15

Present: Emily Kelley, Linda Horton, Peter Gulick, Carolyn Varin, Bruce Parsons, Maryanna Swanson, Julie Fogarty, Gillian Cavezzali, Robert Price, Barbara Noyes, Pam Harland

Peter called the meeting to order and explained that Gail Poitrast was at an unavoidable meeting, but that the subcommittee had met and discussed the data on level movement and the socio-economically disadvantaged population in Science & Social Studies classes. Peter asked Pam to present the data to the full committee.

1. Discussion of level movement:
Pam explained that the data in Science & Social Studies mirrors the data in Math & English classes. Specifically that Juniors and Seniors from all socio-economic populations are taking electives. We found that track changes are being made in both directions. We also saw that when numbers decreased in Honors & AP classes- that they decreased across the board (not only in the socio-economically disadvantaged population).

Our final result after looking at Track Placement data is that students are not locked into tracks at PRHS. Some students may take a low level Math course and an AP Social Studies course because they feel more comfortable studying History- or working with a specific faculty member.

Bob Price pointed out that the number of AP course offered at PRHS in relation to the student population is high. He also explained that all of our AP courses were audited several years ago- and that AP classes at our school have been approved by the College Board.
2. Discussion of the use of regional resources:
Tabled until next meeting, in the hopes that Kathleen Norris will join us and share some valuable information about PSU.
3. Discussion of the book *Detracking for Excellence and Equity*:
The book advocates phasing out all low track classes. Is this something we want to consider?

Bruce Parsons explained that several progressive schools are dropping all low level courses. He indicated that this is something that we could be considering. He clarified that by dropping the lowest level courses, we are essentially raising the bar for everyone- not lowering standards for anyone.

He pointed out that we could do this successfully if we could keep class sizes small enough, offer extra support to struggling students, and continue professional development in differentiated instruction.

Peter explained that elective classes are already heterogeneously grouped.

Bob Price pointed out that if we were to eliminate level 2 English classes that all class sizes would be approximately 19 students. (Currently we have about 15 students per class in level 2 English classes and 23 students per class in level 3 English classes).

Bob also explained that our roll as a high school is to prepare students to be successful out in the real world. He also asked “What does it mean to be a graduate of this high school?” It should not be different depending on who you are. All of our students deserve the same educational opportunities.

Bruce also indicated that there is a lot of support at our school right now: Academic Advisory, POLA, PBA, credit recovery, Student Services, and the Library is open from 6:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every school day.
4. Peter announced that our next SCC meeting is March 9th at 5:15 p.m. We will continue this conversation and discuss the results of the Feb. 9th Literacy Committee’s meeting and if summer reading will change for next year and how this impacts students in all classes.