**SCC Meeting Minutes**

**February 1, 2016**

**PRHS Library**

Present: Bruce Parsons, Bob Price, Amey Bailey, Julie Fogarty, Jack Friedman, Lilly Friedman, Maria Sanders, Barbara Noyes, Andy Havey, Hannah Karp, Peter Templeton, Lisa Ash, Chris Inman, Ryan Amtmann, Emelia Fleck

* Ryan Amtmann called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.
* Introductions
* November’s minutes were accepted
* Ryan informed the committee that a survey was not distributed to the students or faculty within PRHS
* Ryan reminded the committee that in the past surveys have not yielded many results
* The purpose of the SCC is to be the representatives of the community
* Ryan shared a pros and cons list concerning weighted grades and asked the committee for their input
* Add to pros ‘with a weighted grades system in place it would affect class rank by not allowing students to take less rigorous classes while having a high class rank ‘.
* How often does this situation happen within the top ten percentage of the class?
* Two or three students within the top ten of the class are enrolled in less rigorous classes
* Bob explained that he took the top 25 students from the 2014-2015 graduating class and recalculated their grades to see what the difference would be in their grades
* The highest movement recorded was 8 places
* There have been instances where students within the top three have not taken the more rigorous classes
* In addition to discussing weighted grades and class rank it would be beneficial to examine the scale that the school currently uses
* Currently this scale is a 100-point scale. We need to determine if it would be beneficial to transition to a 4-point scale with the final grade calculation
* The majority of the high schools within the state of New Hampshire are currently on a 4-point scale
* Colleges and Universities report using a 4-point scale as well as many scholarships
* Students within PRHS frequently ask guidance to convert their grade to the 4-point scale
* If the school is going to be moving towards weighted grades this is the perfect opportunity to examine what the scale should look like
* What do 4-point scales look like at the majority of schools?
* Ryan asked the committee what their thoughts were concerning the 100-point scale versus the 4-point scale
* The philosophy behind the 4-point scale compared to a 100-point scale is that the 4-point scale is more accurate when creating grades. The 100-point scale is more difficult to maintain accuracy
* The current trend for colleges is to grade using +/- (A+/A-) rather than straight grades (A)
* The 100-point scale is extremely specific
* The scale will not change how teachers grade, it will only affect the final GPA of a student
* The 4-point scale is more ‘updated’
* The topic of the 100-point scale versus the 4-point scale was added to the proposal list
* A concern arose about weighted grades equaling lower enrollment in elective courses being on the ‘con list’
* There are many schools that have weighted grades that do not affect electives and have a very high participation rate
* The question was asked, ‘do weighted grades only affect AP courses’?
* Many schools offer different credits depending on the level of the class.
* There are cases when enrolling in an elective class would have the potential of lowering a GPA
* Some schools bypass this by offering a pass/fail option offering credit without an overall effect on GPA
* The question was asked ‘if class rank is no longer used how will the valedictorian, salutatorian and third-honors students within a class be determined ’?
* Some members believed that class rank offers an incentive to strive for high grades
* This competitive nature was also viewed as a negative, stressful experience
* It was suggested that the top 10% of the class are very aware of their position within the class rank
* It was suggested that this competitive nature is a culture within many schools, including PRHS
* Many colleges and universities are looking for a more holistic approach to grades rather than class rank
* Weighted grades may push students who are not within the top 10% of the class to achieve more academically
* This approach may result in decile ranking rather than class rank. Students could strive to be in the top 5-10% of the class rather than 1, 2, or 3. This would provide a compromise
* Some of the top high schools within New Hampshire (Hanover, Oyster River) have decile ranks
* Decile ranking shows the distinction of a class as a whole
* Some colleges send letters home to parents of students who have the distinct honor of having a 3.6 or higher within a class as a whole. This approach of honoring students who are achieving academic greatness can also be accomplished at the high school level
* Ryan stated that the three areas of interest are weighted grades, class ranking (to keep, obliterate or move to a middle ground of decile) and converting a 100 –point scale to a 4-point scale)
* These options are all tied together. If the school is moving towards a weighted grades system the changes will call for alterations within the system
* A proposal should include all three of these options for consideration
* Options for a proposal were discussed
* There was support for recommending a change from un-weighted to weighted grades, replacing the class ranking system with a decile ranking system and replacing the 100-point scale with a 4-point scale
* The most controversial aspect of the proposal is the elimination of the top three positions of honor, valedictorian, salutatorian and third-honors
* This may result in a public hearing
* Bob suggested that the committee look into the history of the valedictorian as an interesting read. Where it came from and what it means today are two completely different things
* Many schools have a speaker at graduation that it chosen by the class, not by the highest ranking students
* Bob suggested that a proposal for an alternative system for choosing a graduation speaker be in place before a proposal is presented to the school board
* An essay contest was suggested
* Change will only be implemented if it does not affect current students (grandfathering). Incoming students would be aware of the new expectations
* The SCC committee agreed to determine the detailed specifics of changes within the grading systems and include these details within the proposal
* Weighting of grades is not determined by the teachers. Teachers determine the grade of each student and then the grade is weighted by a mathematical calculation system
* The majority of the committee is in favor of weighted grades
* Ryan asked the committee to research the grading practices of other schools within New Hampshire and bring specifics to the next meeting
* Implementation will be added to the April agenda
* The proposal will be voted on in April
* It was recommended that the SCC meet both in March and April

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, March 7th, at 5:15pm in the PRHS Library