**SCC Meeting Minutes**

**November 5, 2012**

**PRHS Library**

Present: Julie Fogarty, Chris Demion, Mary Donovan, Ryan Amtmann, Amey Bailey , Deborah Brownstein, Dawn Day, Doug Ross, Amanda Bussolari, Patricia Rella, Barbra Noyes, Barbra Noyes, Judi D’Aleo, Peter Gulick, Bob Price, Bruce Parsons, Dan Pierce, Emelia Fleck

* Peter Gulick called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.
* October Minutes were accepted
* Peter introduced our virtual VLACS reprehensive, Scott Prescott
* Scott introduced the SCC to an overview of VLACS
* VLACS is a virtual public school
* Has been in existence for five years
* Tuition free for all students residing in New Hampshire who are under 21 and have not yet completed high school
* Accepts both full time and part time students
* Is an approved New Hampshire School
* Offers a full range of courses 6-14, dual credit options through SNHU/CCSNH and rolling enrollments
* Is working towards offering associates degrees
* Enrollments
* VLACS opened in 2008 with 700 students enrolled
* In 2011 VLACS was up to 15,500 enrolments
* Every high school in New Hampshire has students enrolled in VLACS
* 65% of enrolled students are from public schools
* 23% of enrolled students are Homeschooled
* 5% of enrolled students are VLACS full time
* 3% of enrolled students are from Private Schools
* 3% of enrolled students have dropped out
* 1% of enrolled students are from Charter Schools
* Students use VLACS for a variety of reasons and circumstances
* Credit recovery
* Acceleration
* Scheduling conflicts
* Expanded course offerings
* Travel, Sports, Performing Arts
* Home School
* Work
* Medical
* Teens in crisis
* Dual Credit Opportunities
* Scott went into more depth about Credit Recovery
* Students can take a full course if it is not offered in their school or they were unable to pass a particular class
* Partial courses are offered for competency recovery, taking the pieces of the class that they were unsuccessful in
* Although partial courses are offered for competency recovery the credit must be given by the school involved due to the fact that the course was originally taken at the school
* Scott introduced us to Vlacs.org where we were shown the VLACS Course Catalog
* VLACS has expanded course options beyond standard classes
* Mandarin Chinese is growing in popularity
* VLACS employs two of the five Mandarin Chinese teachers in the state
* Dual Credit Options
* Offered in conjunction with eStart CCSNH and SNHU
* $120.00 for a three credit course
* VLACS is not receiving any of the $120.00 fee, it is required by the colleges in return for granting credits
* The Dual Credit Options are expanding
* Competency Recovery
* Students who were unsuccessful in specific areas of a particular class can have the opportunity to focus on the areas where they were struggling and successfully complete the course through VLACS, receiving full credit
* Student and Teacher correspondence
* Students are given a welcome call
* Have weekly contact
* Communication tools
* Monthly phone calls
* Student pace set collaboratively
* Compliment, coach and encourage model
* 70 hours of online academic helpdesk support
* Family and Teacher correspondence
* Welcome call
* Monthly phone calls
* Monthly progress Reports
* 24/7 access to student progress
* Technical help desk
* Local School correspondence
* Partner with VLACS
* 24/7 access to the Student Information System
* Access to VLACS support including Guidance, Administration, Technical Help Desk
* Access to VLACS Competencies and ELO’s
* Flexibility
* Enrollment
* Student Pace and progress
* Curriculum
* Not bound by time
* VLACS Collaborations
* Auburn Middle School Spanish
* Souhegan Math Acceleration
* Summer School Competency Recovery
* North Country Experiential Learning Opportunities
* Goffstown Alternative Program
* Curriculum
* Is in line with the State Standard and the Common Core
* The future of VLACS
* Knewton Mathematics
* Music Appreciation
* Digital Imaging
* Photo 1 and 2
* Guitar
* Expanded AP Offerings
* Text to Audio Options
* Expanded dual credit options
* Associates Degree
* A question and answer session ensued after the presentation
* Deborah asked the question “The student would have contact with the teacher but not with other students, correct?”
* Primarily that is correct however there are certain collaborative assignments where students are paired off or brought together as a group to work on an assignment
* Deborah continued, “Can you elaborate on how grade 13,14 come into play for the student?”
* This is something that VLACS is developing as a more formal program with the Dual Credit Options.
* Right now in order to take VLACS classes students must be in high school, under the age of 21 and a New Hampshire resident (non New Hampshire students must pay tuition)
* VLACS is developing an associate’s degree program in con junction with eStart CCSNH and SNHU
* Theoretically while a student is in High School they could be taking dual credit courses while starting to build a college transcript
* After High School the student could enroll directly into the school, taking the credits with them or enroll into an associates program at a fraction of the cost of going to a college
* After the associates program completion students can roll the credits directly into a four year program
* This will be offered within the next two years
* Bruce asked the question “Schools are choosing your program for Alternative Education. What does that look like? What kind of courses are you offering? Obviously you are dealing with the ‘at risk students’. Can you describe the courses you offer and how many courses an individual student would be taking?”
* VLACS does not have an Alternative Education program
* Courses are selected from the course catalog
* A relationship is created between VLACS and the Special Education teachers at the local school
* A few teachers are dedicated to work with the student
* VLACS offers flexibility with time and the ability to offer a wide range of courses to students
* VLACS has certified, high quality teaches that can provide a full range of courses that students might need
* Bruce asked “Are your courses tracked with a level?” (example: English/Honors English)
* No, the courses are not tracked with a level
* Most of the courses have an honors option built in which extends the curriculum, requiring more work for students
* Bruce asked the question “Schools are giving you the competencies of students that are lacking and they are accepting that as credit once those students complete the competencies, correct?”
* If a student does not pass Algebra I because they were not grasping a particular section (ex: linear equations) they would go to the Algebra I course, view the 8 to 10 competencies and select the categories that best suits the needs of the student
* Once the student has successfully completed the competencies they receive a transcript of completion that can be accessed by both the school and the family
* Bruce asked “How many classes can students take at one time?”
* It depends on what time of year
* Over the summer you can take up to three simultaneously
* During the school year VLACS prefers that students only take one class due to the fact that they are usually already taking full course load already
* With permission from the schools VLACS will allow students to enroll in more than one class during the school year
* Bruce asked “Is that what you are doing with Merrimack Valley? Are they taking their competencies during the day?”
* Typically they do not have students taking more than one class at a time
* Merrimack Valley has an interesting situation, having a couple of charter schools that are all competencies based along with a traditional school
* Bruce asked “Do your Science courses offer a lab?”
* Yes, they are working with some of the colleges to make sure that students have access to a lab
* Most of the lab work is virtual, such as dissections, but there are some that can be performed with common house hold items or a provided kit
* The labs are created to be accepted by Colleges and Universities
* Judi asked “How are the teachers selected to teach the courses?”
* VLACS hires three times a year
* Only experienced teachers are hired
* Training process takes two to three months
* Teachers are typically assigned three to five students, increasing with training
* There are currently 15 full time teachers
* Deborah asked “Does SNHU award an associate’s degree?”
* VLACS is working towards the ability to do that, SNHU will not award them currently
* They are working out the details, if it will be a SNHU associate’s degree or a VLACS associate’s degree
* SNHU already has an extensive online program
* Right now students receive a SNHU transcript for any dual credit course that they take
* Deborah asked “SNHU is not teaching the courses then?”
* VLACS faculty teaches the course
* Faculty must be certified by SNHU and hold a masters degree in the area that they are teaching
* The VLACS demonstration ended
* Peter stated that he had gone to a training session with VLACS
* PRHS has a large amount of students enrolled in the VLACS programs such as Mandarin Chinese and Latin
* Bruce stated that hearing about other schools using VLACS over the summer was an ‘eye opener’ and wanted to know how we could use VLACS for the ‘at risk’ students, especially the ninth and tenth graders
* Peter stated that in the past PRHS enrolled students in the summer program. If they failed a class their sophomore year they would take the VLACS class during their Junior year to prevent mixing of Sophomores and Juniors in the classroom
* Guidance writes library passes for students working on VLACS course during the school day
* Many schools use VLACS in the back of their classroom, letting students work independently
* Judi spoke about how important communication is with VLACS
* Her daughter had a negative experience with VLACS
* The teacher provided was often unavailable and was not punctual in returning email correspondence and phone calls
* Although her daughter was very successful and highly motivated in her course, ‘at risk’ students will need to be provided with a teacher who is in constant contact, guiding them through the process
* Bruce stated that he was unaware that other schools were using VLACS for competencies and ‘at risk’ students
* Rather than pay $500.00 for students to participate in credit recovery they could use VLACS for free
* Peter stated that they set a time limit for the course
* The time limit can be extended for ‘at risk’ students
* Many of the students enrolled in VLACS through PRHS are transfer students who do not have the requirements to graduate
* Peter stated that the curriculum offered by VLACS is purchased from the Florida Vertical Learning Academy
* Barbara asked the question “Is there any research data comparing students who have taken classes through VLACS verses students that have taken classes through the public school system?”
* Peter was unsure
* Doug stated that it would be interesting to see the data from students who had taken VLACS courses from grades 9-11 and then took the NECAP test
* Bruce stated that he would like to contact Pittsburg to see how their students were able to adapt to taking Foreign language in a classroom in College after taking Foreign Language via VLACS during their entire high school career (they do not offer Foreign Languages)
* Peter asked the committee what they wanted to discuss for a long-range topic for the year
* ELO’s or scheduling
* Dawn reiterated the fact that during the October meeting it had been discussed that the SCC would be taking a look at the PRHS policy, the change in technology/ ELO’s and how they fit in with PRHS compared with how ELO’s fit in with what other schools are doing
* Bruce stated that indeed, we needed closure to the ELO topic
* Peter stated that Guidance would research what PRHS offers and contact other schools to compare
* Dawn stated that the SCC originally was going to research comparisons, not Guidance
* Peter stated that the SCC could work on more than one topic
* Peter and Bob will look at the questions and come up with answers for the next meeting
* Ryan reminded the committee that at the end of last year the SCC had brought up two possible topics to research, scheduling and weighted grades, both of which had been voted on and vetoed
* Peter stated that the school board was not in agreement with weighted grades and that both had been discussed recently
* PRHS recently started offering courses everyday (the Math Department is offering Algebra I, A and B, Read 180 etc.)
* Ryan and Dawn both stated that the SCC decided that scheduling had been discussed enough and that the committee chose not to discuss it again this year
* Bruce stated that after the NECAP results are available it may be inevitable that the SCC discuss scheduling and that as a group we need to be collaborative
* Bruce shared that he had been approached by World Languages and Math that they would like to have their classes meet everyday
* Patricia stated that she felt that it was a very important issue to revisit and although the committee in the past chose not to move forward there are new scheduling models to investigate and new pieces of research supporting better learning for different schedules (Ex: blending the block schedule with another model)
* Peter stated that the SCC would continue discussing these topics at the next meeting
* Patricia asked if we were voting
* Peter stated that as the prerogative of the Chair the SCC needed to finish the discussion of ELO’s before voting could take place

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 7th at 5:15 p.m in the PRHS Library.