**SCC Meeting Minutes**

**November 2, 2015**

**PRHS Library**

Present: Doug Ross, Bob Price, Amey Bailey, Julie Fogarty, Jack Friedman, Lilly Friedman, Maria Sanders, Barbara Noyes, Andy Havey, Chris Ebner, Avery Stone, Hailey Patridge, Ethan Richard, Matt Rossner, Lisa Ash, Chris Inman, Ryan Amtmann, Emelia Fleck

* Ryan Amtmann called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m
* Introductions
* Five faculty names were brought fourth for representation
* Andy Havey
* Ryan Amtmann
* Julie Fogarty
* Doug Ross
* Emelia Fleck
* The meeting minutes from September were reviewed and accepted
* The topics accepted by the School Board for review by the SCC were weighted grades and class rank
* Ryan gave the committee members a brief history of the SCC’s involvement with the topic of weighted grades and class rank
* This is the third time these topics have been examined
* Bob Price was asked to give an overview of the subject
* In the past a public hearing was held which allowed the community to voice their opinions and concerns
* The majority of those in attendance were not in favor of having weighted grades
* At the time there was a national push for heterogeneous classes
* Ryan opened the floor for discussion
* Many scholarships are awarded based on academic achievement
* The question was asked ‘how do weighted grades work’?
* Bob Price explained the varied ways that multiple schools have approached weighted grades (ex: 100 point scale, 4 point scale)
* Bob researched the top 25 high schools in NH based on the NECAP Ranking of 2014
* Based on these schools profiles Bob was able to gather information on 16 schools
* 12 schools had weighted grades, 4, including PRHS, Oyster River, Souhegan and Hanover, did not
* 6 schools no longer had class rank
* Ryan introduced Chris Inman, a guidance councilor at PRHS, who was present to provide perspective regarding college and university roles regarding class rank
* Chris explained the guidance department typically uses UNH as a model for a baseline four year program
* UNH’s process is to evaluate each individual transcript, looking at the core subjects first and re-calculate the GPA based on those courses. They also look more at the decile rather than the class rank
* This is based on a 4 point scale with decile ranking
* In some cases students who attend schools without weighted grades are at a disadvantage due to college and university grade calculation systems (ex: in cases where the grades are taken for face value without the consideration for having weighted or un-weighted grades students who have a higher numeric percentage due to weighted grades have an advantage)
* Some colleges and universities will only evaluate core classes, disregarding grades received in band, chorus, gym and art and recalculating grades only based on the core classes.
* Bob explained that he took the top 25 students from the 2014-2015 graduating class and re-weighted their grades to see what the difference would be in their grades
* The highest movement recorded was 8 places
* A student representative suggested that students currently enroll in easier classes resulting in a higher grade rather than to challenge themselves by enrolling in AP courses and risk receiving a lower grade
* Bob stated that the biggest benefit to having weighted grades is the incentive for students to enroll in more challenging courses
* The question was asked “what is our school’s main reason for not offering weighted grades”?
* The biggest reason is the results from the public hearing ten years ago
* Cons were how weighted grades affect non-AP and honors courses (chorus, band, art, gym etc.). AP and honors courses are weighted differently, if a student takes an art class and receives an A it will still bring their GPA down due to the difference in how the courses are weighted (this would depend on the point system)
* This would affect the ability of being a well rounded student
* Student stress levels were considered
* Students trying to achieve a high class rank or students enrolling in classes that they are not prepared to receive the benefits from weighted grades receive heightened stress levels from pushing themselves above and beyond their academic limits
* It was suggested that there is more stress put on students without the weighted grades. Students who are currently enrolled in AP and honors classes are competing with students who are enrolled in standard classes. Those students in standard classes might be getting all A’s making their class rank higher than a student enrolled in all AP and honors classes that might be receiving B’s. Students in AP and honors classes are therefore forced to push themselves harder to compete to be at the top of their class
* It was suggested by the student representatives that they are all enrolled in AP and honors classes and are in favor of weighted grades. It was recommended that it might be beneficial to the SCC to invite students who are enrolled in standard classes and would not benefit from weighted grades to weigh in on the conversation
* It was suggested that the most beneficial thing a 9th grader can do is to enroll in the most challenging courses that are offered as long as they can succeed. By the end of the four years of high school students will have created an educational record that prepares them for opportunities beyond high school
* Bob Price offered to distribute and share the resources he collected with anyone who was interested. This information covered college and university procedures for evaluating grades of potential students, percentages, statistics, etc.
* The question was asked “why are students ranked”?
* It is used as a selecting process for colleges and universities to determine the difference between students grades and how they are ranked within their class as a whole
* Do grades really communicate how successful students are?
* There are students who are number one in their class however their SAT scores are very low
* Many schools have adopted weighted grades and stopped instituting class rank to allow students to take more challenging classes
* Ryan shared a resource from National Association for College Admission Counseling that stated that the importance of class rank with college admissions has been in decline for years.
* Nearly 1/3 of high schools do not report class rank information to colleges and accordingly colleges have deemphasized class rank as a factor in the admission decision over the past decade
* If students have class ranking it is examined, however if they do not they are examined on a more holistic level
* This is a national trend
* 2/3rd of high schools weight their GPA’s for students who take college preparatory classes and to account for the directed grading practices among high schools more than half of colleges are recalculating GPA’s to be more standardized
* A concern about how class rank will affect students who are not at the AP and honors level was discussed. Will these students ‘give up’?
* Class rank is one more factor to separate students. There is already a mentality of separation between AP and honors students and students enrolled in a level 2 or 3 class, adding in the factor of the worth of an A would affect all students
* For many students, enrolling in the *easy* courses comes as a challenge for them. Many students struggle in math and excel in English
* Weighted grades will help the top students acceptance rates into competitive colleges (Harvard) while having no effect on students who are applying at more accepting schools
* The question was asked ‘have parents been requesting weighted grades’?
* Over the past five or six years there has been an increased interest from parents in favor of weighted grades
* Chris Inman suggested that many students have concerns about weighted grades resulting in the diluting of AP and honors courses. Students who traditionally have lower averages and want the benefits of weighted grades might not have the capacity to contribute to the conversation or live up to the high standards set within the classroom
* Bob suggested that a solution would be not to lower the standards
* It was suggested that a pro and con list be generated for the next meeting
* Ryan offered to create this list
* Bob asked the present School Board members to ask the School Board if they would be open to the idea of listening to the compiled pro’s and con’s and opening up a public forum for additional input
* Ryan reminded the committee that the SCC represents input from all parties
* The SCC needs to compile more research and present it to the School Board before a public hearing is held
* A student poll would be beneficial for collecting additional information
* The SCC chair, the student senate and guidance will meet and create a survey to distribute to the school wide student population
* This survey will include a brief description of what weighted grades and class rank are as well as a section for students to self report on what classes they have been enrolled in to date (how many AP/honors/level 2-3 classes etc.)
* The results from this survey will be discussed at the next SCC meeting to help the committee move towards a decision

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, January 4nd, at 5:15pm in the PRHS Library

\*This date was changed to February 1st due to scheduling conflicts