

High School Curriculum Meeting Minutes September 19th, 2011

Present: Linda Gould, Cathy Shapp, Randi Goldberg, Chris D'Alessandro, Dawn Hedgecock, Laurie Lynn, Allison Galob, Cheryl Dender, Lydia Wieselthier, Margo Garcia, Sandy Steinberg, James Murray, Jill Gierasch, Tom Mattone, Bruce Gould, Neil Lasher and Jeff Yagaloff

Physical Education

At the end of the 2010-2011 school year, the curriculum committee discussed the possibility of switching from a pass/fail grading system to a numerical grading system for physical education (PE). Administration indicated that a numerical grade would not be given to students for the school year 2011-2012. The grading system would remain pass/fail.

This fall, students were told in their gym classes that they were going to receive a numerical grade. Also, it was reported that the allowed "excused absences" in gym was also being changed. Clarification was asked regarding these matters.

Ms. Gierasch reported that the change to the grading system for PE is a "work in progress". Currently the PE department is developing "expectations" for each unit of study and it is developing a rubric. The rubric currently being developed is for a pass/fail grade only. It will include items such as attendance, skills and participation.

If the district ever goes to a numerical grade the rubric should have the ability of being converted to a numerical grade. Presently, the rubric is just for record keeping and is not to be shared with students at this time.

When PE unit expectations and the rubric are completed they will be shared with the BOE and presented publically and then presented again to the curriculum committee. The BOE will decide when they want to move forward with changes to the grading system. Ms Gierasch reported the progress on the PE unit expectations and the rubric will be shared with the BOE in late October.

A concern was raised regarding children with IEP's and 504's who may not have athletic ability because of their disability. Ms Gierasch reported that any child with a disability would not be affected negatively by the rubric grading system and should be able to receive full points.

Ms Gierasch reported that a majority of neighboring school districts have been changing to a numerical grading system for PE. The physical education department is also being encouraged to post grades on the parent portal.

A recommendation was made that freshman and sophomores should have the option to choose a unit of study (sport) that they would like to take for PE. This option is being explored.

Mr. Murray reported that there is no change in the number of excused absences allowed per quarter. They remain at three and can be "made up". Illegal absences cannot be made up.

Students are being encouraged not to bring backpacks to locker rooms to prevent theft. Mr. Murray recommended this issue will be discussed at site based.

A letter will be sent to every parent at the end of the week to clarify the issues that have been raised about PE.

Regents

Prior to 2011 the January English Regents exam had been administered to students in the 11th grade AP English class and the 11th grade special class. In 2011 the exam was changed to a new format and a decision was made not to administer this exam in January because of lack of familiarity with the new exam format. For 2012 the district has decided to administer the exam to the AP English students only. The special class would not be taking the exam. The issue was raised that would it not be better to offer this exam to the special class in January. If they were not successful they would have an additional opportunity to take the exam again in August. In addition, 11th grade students have several regents to exam to prepare for in June. Being able to pass one in January would reduce the pressure and work load for these students in June and allow them to concentrate on their remaining regents exams

Mr. Yagaloff reported that by delaying the test to June the students would have additional prep time - five months of prep verses nine months. This would also give students a better chance at not only passing the test but obtaining a mastery grade. In addition, Ms. Steinberg reported that many of the students in the special class have been receiving read 180 in 9th and 10th grade. As a result, they have not had the same type of writing experiences that students in the general education setting have had. Miss Steinberg reported that the passing track record for this exam and special class is very good. Only one student failed the exam in June 2011, he repeated it in August and passed.

Miss Steinberg reported that the RCT exam for students entering high school in 2011 has now been eliminated. When this group of students reaches their junior year, the administration of the regents in January to the special class may have to be reconsidered.

Ms. Gierasch distributed a two parent letters dated September 12, 2011 distributed to the 11th grade parents. The first letter indicated to the parents of the AP English students that they would be sitting for the Regents exam in January and the second letter was to all other 11th grade students indicating It was not recommended they sit for the English exam in January. They would be sitting for the English regents in June. However, any student that wants to take the January regents has the option to do so.

Miss Gierasch reported the following regents would be available in January: English, Living Environment, Earth Science, U.S. History and Government, Geometry, Global History and Geography, Algebra2/Trigonometry, Integrated Algebra, Chemistry, Physics and Regents Competency tests.

It was reported that the Algebra 2/Trigonometry Part 2 class will be taking the regents in January. The majority of these students are seniors and need this regents to graduate with a regents diploma. If they are not successful they can take the exam again in June.

It was reported that any student can retake a regents exam if they are not satisfied with their grade. The higher grade will appear on the transcript but the initial grade will be used to calculate their overall class average.

It was reported to earn Regents diploma with honors, a student needs to have an average score of 90 or higher on all Regents examinations required for the Regents diploma. These Regents examinations are: Comprehensive English, mathematics, science, US History & Government and Global History & Geography.

To earn a Regents diploma with advanced designation with honors, a student needs to have an average score of 90 or higher on all Regents examinations required for that advanced diploma. These Regents examinations are: Comprehensive English, three mathematics, two sciences (one in physical science/the other in life science), US History & Government, Global History & Geography and a school test in languages other than English (LOTE). If a student is exempt from language they can substitute the five credit sequence to satisfy the language requirement.

Honor Society

Clarification was asked as to the requirements for entrance into the various high school honor societies. Also, the requirements for the honor societies are not easily accessible and the recommendation was made that this material be readily available to students and parents. It was also reported that students in the Spanish classes were being told there would be no inductions into the Spanish honor society this year.

Mr. Murray reported that each society/discipline has different criteria for entrance into their honor society. No defined GPA is mandated for any honor society except for the National Honor Society. Mr. Murray reported administration would inquire as to what other districts criteria are. He also reported a meeting was held with the Honor Society administrators and they could not set standard criteria for all honor societies. He reported that the current criteria for admission will be posted on the honor societies websites.

Mr. Murray reported that there will be inductions into the Spanish Honor Society this year despite what students were told in class.

It was reported that honor roll is an 88 average or above and high honor roll is a 95 average or above.

Future Topics

October – writing curriculum and summer curriculum writing

November- scheduling and homework grading

January – common core standards

March - math