

Instructional Practices Committee  
November 16, 2021

Attendees: Tim Girzone  
Kimberly Meyer  
Sam Shepard  
Jen Staub  
Gina Bergskaug  
Holly Babcock  
Stacey Plummer  
Tiffany Testa  
Tom Solon  
Krista Whalen

Facilitator: Tim Girzone  
Note Taker: Kimberly Meyer

1. The team reviews the committee charter
2. Top Ten Subcommittee update-- top ten has been discontinued and replaced by Latin Honors.
3. Weighted vs Unweighted Subcommittee update-- Mrs. Klardie provides an update:
  - Pros/ con reviewed: middle of the road student to challenge themselves, provide an edge when GPA is a determining factor for scholarships, competitive culture, are students enrolling in an AP class when that may not be the most appropriate course for that student?
  - Colleges and universities are re-balancing GPAs at admissions
  - Student focus groups were used in 2019 to provide insight to the subcommittee-- continued focus groups may be needed
  - Impact on students both negative and positive depending upon the individual
  - The subcommittee believes weighting is not equitable-- impact of the weighted music classes on Valedictorian/ Salutatorian
  - Weighting between Honors and AP is the same
  - 4.0 scale currently being used with weighting reaching up to 5.0
  - Do the pros/ cons outweigh each other?
    - Mrs. Staub inquires about the fidelity of the Honors and AP classes? Has rigor/ challenge been dialed back? In some areas, this has occurred. Teachers might feel pressured.
    - Mrs. Staub reports the AP standards have not changed although the AP tests have become more challenging

- Mr. Solon reviews why weighting came into being-- recognition of achievement, satisfactory performance is a more demanding class, although weighted classes might deter students from participating in the CTE program
    - How does HB's shift to Latin honors impact our current GPA practices (as compared to class rank)?
    - What is HB's understanding and belief about GPA? What is the currency of GPA? Is it resulting in the intended outcomes?
  - What are the values/ beliefs of the community re: GPA and weighting?
    - Do we want to develop well-rounded students?
  - Samantha shares that over the last several years, the student perspective may have shifted where GPA/ weighting is less important
    - In her experience, in her junior and senior years, she's enrolling in more electives that she's interested in
    - She shares, some students are continuing to chase the GPA and potentially enrolling in courses they're not totally interested in
    - Ms. Testa shares the need for students to develop and share their story
    - Ms. Babcock discusses the importance of student, parent, and community participation and input in addressing the weighted GPA question
    - Mr. Solon shares with continued weighted GPA, ... should weighted grading be removed, are we moving toward a competency-based system, how do we identify varying levels of performance?
    - In 2004, Ms. Bergskaug shares junior and senior courses were weighted, but that wasn't what was happening in practice-- for a variety of reasons.
  - Mrs. Klardie shares the committee needs to return to investigating the questions around weighting
    - Student, family, and community input
    - Staff input
    - Area high schools, those similar to HB-- Ms. Staub is curious to learn more about those districts that have discontinued their AP programs
    - Perspectives have shifted over time (COVID, other factors)
  - Mr. Solon wonders what the next immediate steps are-- are there potential "band-aid" steps that should be taken?
    - What areas may not have weighted options? Visual arts, physical science, etc.
  - What elements/ classes are grandfathered in to current weighted practices
  - Next follow-up/ reconvene subcommittee before December break
4. Grading and Assessment Subcommittee update-- Mrs. Zeller provides an update
- Last subcommittee meeting May 2021
  - A survey distributed at middle and high schools to teachers-- responses were received but the responses have not yet been worked through
  - Discussion around potentially surveying community
  - The subcommittee is quite large and may hinder forward progress to address the essential questions of the subcommittee

- Goal is to gather feedback and then work through the topics one at a time-- tackling as a “single issue” is too big/ too broad
  - What are the stepping stones to the larger question? Define the elements.
- What is it the community wants for its students?
  - Stellar grades
  - Holistic approach/ students developing or telling their story
  - The expected outcomes may have shifted over the last several years
- Subcommittee for Advisory?
  - We are not a community focused solely on grades
- Subcommittee to gather and develop the elements of grading and assessment then report back to the Steering Committee
- Ms. Bergskaug asks the Board members if grading/ assessment are focused at the high school level or whether it’s district-wide.
  - Ms. Babcock shares she believes it’s district-wide
  - Ms. Walen agrees-- at the MS they have ROCK-- while not called Advisory, it does address the foundational principles of Advisory
  - Cohesion between the MS and HS is important
  - Mr. Solon shares this will create a philosophical approach for the District-- right now many of the questions we’re addressing only exists at the HS level (ranking, weighted GPA, etc.)
  - Discussion of the vision of the graduate, aligning with what businesses need/ skill expectations-- identifying the function of the school
- Discussion of smaller objectives/ tangible steps that help move us forward to addressing grading/ assessment such as midterms/ finals, assessment retakes
- PLC has unified teachers and department chairs have supported the use of common practices across courses/ subject areas
  - Smaller groups for PLCs can be a challenge-- larger groups allows for collaboration, development of common formative and summative assessments, oversight from Department Chair and the AP of Curriculum and Instruction (at HBHS)
  - Discussion of groupings-- subject area, grade-level driven, interdepartmental, student-specific teaming?
    - Leadership PLC?
    - Do we have consistency between departments around assessment?
    - Early Releases are being used to incorporate cross-departmental PLC’s at HBHS with the intent being the groups are comprised of teachers of common students - Nov 23
      - a. AP/ Honors
      - b. Grade 9
      - c. Grade 10
      - d. Grade 11
      - e. Grade 12

- Ms. Babcock asks whether inter-building PLCs happen
        - a. Discussion of logistics
        - b. We are having quarterly 7-12 department meetings
        - c. Mr. Solon asks whether having 7-12 department chairs could improve continuity of grading and assessment practices rather than the current practice of only 9-12
      - Developing a unifying vision
      - Next follow-up/ reconvene subcommittee before December break
      - Do committees need refreshment? Members have left, do any members need to be added? Consideration of the necessary stakeholders.
        - MS representation
5. Is there a desire for a third subcommittee now that the top ten sub-committee has completed their work?
- Advisory?
    - ROCK meets 5x/ week at the MS
    - Advisory at the HS?
      - A committee was developed to pilot a program in 2020 but did not occur b/c of Covid
      - Ms. Staub shares there was a grassroots committee last year-- with the committee getting pushback from others outside of the committee
      - HB has been convening Homebase CavBlock this year for school-wide events such as the Veterans Day assembly
      - Ms. Whalen discusses the intent of CavBlock when originally developed included homebase
      - Mr. Girzone will form a subcommittee prior to the December break to address the potential implementation of Advisory at HBHS
6. Instructional Practices Committee to reconvene in the new year.