

Instructional Practices Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, August 27, 2019

Time: 3:00-4:00 pm

Attending: Rick Barnes, Holly Babcock, Yolanda Flamino, Crystal Paul, Claire Paré, Theresa Risdal, Tiffany Testa, Tom Solon, Cooper Adair, Krista Whalen, Stacey Plummer, Jennifer Staub, Amanda Zeller

The meeting began by assigning roles, as follows.

Facilitator: Rick Barnes

Process Observer: Jennifer Staub

Scribe: Crystal Paul

Note Taker: Yolanda Flamino

After assigning roles, the minutes from the August 13, 2019 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Rick Barnes asked for feedback on his presentation to the high school staff regarding the work done by the Instructional Practices Committee (IPC) and his request for participation on subcommittees. The general feedback was:

- There did not seem to be any negative reaction to it.
- There was not a lot of discussion about it at the meeting or after (within departments), most likely due to the timing of getting classes ready for the start of school and not due to a lack of interest

Tiffany Testa shared information about a resource, parts of which, she thought would be helpful to the work of the committee. The resource, put out by Great Schools Partnership, is called Global Best Practices and includes a free self-evaluation tool for schools. She thought it may be helpful around the topics of instructional practices and grading. She explained that it provides questions for self-evaluation and could save time by providing direction.

Rick added that a link to it can be found in the committee's resources folder. He described it as being comprehensive, but not overwhelming and agreed it may help guide subcommittees.

Rick then turned the conversation toward subcommittees. He asked the committee members what they were thinking about subcommittees--in terms of design and logistics. The responses include:

- There should be mixed demographics on groups (combination of teachers, parents, Students, etc.)
 - Amanda Zeller added that the grading subcommittee should be heavy on teachers (but still include other stakeholders)
- This committee should offer some structure, guidance—but allow leeway for groups to do what is needed for a given particular objective.
- People on the committee expressed a desire to also work on subcommittees.
- After each subcommittee does their work, members will bring it back to departments to gather faculty input.

For clarity of messaging, this committee agreed that it would be referred to as “the steering committee”, in reference to the subcommittees.

The committee then discussed the topic of class rank, during which it was agreed that this should be referred to as the “Top Ten”, since class rank is already not disclosed at the high school. So the question then becomes: Should we continue to rank/disclose the top 10?

The following were questions generated through discussion:

- What are colleges’ current opinions on ranking students? (particularly the top colleges we send students to)
- How critical is it for colleges that rank by decile?
- Who/what does it serve or hurt?
- Does it serve to motivate students? If so, are any negative consequences associated with it negated by this benefit?
- Will there be a decline in cheating, if removed?
- Who cares about top 10 ranking and why?
 - Do colleges care for the application/entry process?
 - Do students care? Why? (Consider kids in and those not in the top 10.)
- How does it impact our students?

The discussion then shifted back to our role with subcommittees and the balance between providing structure while granting latitude.

Amanda suggests that our role is to: introduce the charter, connect the topics to the mission statement, and identify processes. The committee agreed and then discussed the process component of this suggestion. In this discussion, the following topics were raised.

- Subcommittee roles should be assigned with person from steering committee assigned to be a liaison.
- The steering committee will identify essential questions and subcommittees will be asked to examine questions, with latitude to add their own questions.
- Subcommittees should gather evidence and ask if there is research to do. They should consider, in order to fully explore the topic, what type of research is most beneficial.
- How do we prevent intrinsic bias from corrupting the outcome?
 - ask subcommittees to look at problem/questions from various angles
 - gather and use data, where appropriate
 - work must be discussion fueled
 - have diverse groups and make sure student voice is heard
 - consider question from all angles
- In exploring topics, subcommittees should consider and evaluate the impact at HBHS.
- Subcommittees are being asked to make recommendations and report back to the steering committee

The conversation then returned to the Top 10 discussion and the list of original questions were distilled down to:

- Who cares? and Why?
- How does it impact our students?

The next meeting was then set for: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 @ 2:45-4:15 pm in HBHS Main Office Conference Room.

The process observer reported out by providing a recap of the meeting, stating that it started by reading and adopting minutes, discussing the NE School Consortium Tool, examining the role of subcommittees, exploring the role of data (where it was decided to make sure autonomy is part of subcommittee process), and then the questions about the topic of the Top 10 were reduced to the essential questions that should be passed along to the respective subcommittee.

The meeting was then called to a close.