

Instructional Practices Committee  
9/10/2019  
2:45-4:15

Rick began with meeting attendance.

- Lauren notetaker
- Theresa process observer
- Acceptance of meeting minutes - unanimous vote.

Rick reviews volunteers for subcommittees. Steering group has or will volunteer for the subcommittee of their choice. Student council will be meeting this week and students will have the opportunity to volunteer.

Parents will be invited to volunteer as well. Gina recommends sending out a Google Form to all parents with places for parents to share information about why they are interested as well as more information about themselves. Holly agrees with extending this form to all parents and Rick could compile the information and choose members accordingly. The committee feels that transparency is important.

The committee discusses the subcommittee titles.

Weighted vs Unweighted opened a discussion about grading systems in general, including no grades. Tom reflects on the ultimate goal and whether the short term policy goal may be able to be determined. Holly mentions that she believes the policy to be that the School Board approves a grading system.

Amanda asks the question of bigger scope versus a specific focus of weighted vs unweighted. She expresses the concern that there is currently an unfair grading practice with the weighted vs unweighted. Yolanda and Holly discuss the focus being beneficial especially with

Krista asks for feedback from the teachers on the committee regarding the possibility of no grades. Jen explains the perspective of no grades being freeing especially in light of cheating. She continues to discuss learning for the love of learning.

Amanda reflects how this committee could deal with the weighting as it stands now and then move to the further discussions of no grades. Tom mentions how these are interactive and weighting is just a component of the overall grading system.

Holly discusses how weighting and grading has been mentioned at board meetings and there have been questions. She reflects on the need for a process – communicate with the community in stages with the discussion of weighting before moving to no grades.

Rick mentions that he does not want to see the conversation go away. He feels that pushing the conversation to an extreme yields important points and results.

The committee decides on Weighted vs. Unweighted as the title. Jen asks about the stakeholders in this discussion and the weight of each stakeholders opinion. Clare asks about the impact on course offerings. Important to consider the ripple effects.

Weighted vs Unweighted:

Who Cares and Why?

How Does it Impact our Students?

What is the impact on course offerings – impact on student selection of classes?

Is the way we weight equitable – how did we decided on/develop the current system?

If courses are weighted, how is access to the weighted courses determined?

How should GPA be calculated? Ex. alternative credits

Tom asks if the decision is to have a weighted system then what is the process for how students access the system. Theresa mentions the value of transfer credits and whether a student takes an alternative credit, ex. VLACS because it may be easier.

Gina mentions that Bow has moved to no grades. She expresses interest in the grading and assessment committee.

The committee moves to the next subcommittee topic- Grading and Assessment.

Holly expresses the importance of defining what grading and assessment means, and Gina adds homework to the conversation. Clare discusses the equity of grading. Rick brings up the point that HB has many equities and how classes are taught the same (ex. regarding content, timeframe, assessments) here especially compared to other schools. This is not to say there are no inequities. Tom says this contradicts an original statement about equity. Gina further explains that with the work of PLC and integrating new teachers the school is better than average in aligning courses among teachers. Rick notes that although there is room for improvement it is important to recognize what has been working well as well as the work staff has done in PLC. Amanda continues to speak from a departmental view to a schoolwide overview. Gina pushes back that best practice is not necessarily a schoolwide view, but rather departmental. She cautions that it's not a blanket "let's get rid of homework." If we have a grade what does it represent? Are we grading compliance or knowledge? Tom discusses what are we actually assessing? What do we want our students to come out with for each class? Krista voices a concern regarding knowing the material and not a student doing poorly on an assessment and the class moves on. Tom discusses that the content material is not automatically the knowledge we are looking to assess, but rather skills in assimilating and synthesizing information along with application of skill. Krista explains that this is dependent on the class.

Holly expresses the concern regarding who the grading and assessment system is working for? Whose needs are being met? Rick discusses standardized testing. The students can typically perform on these

tests – why? What is the impact? Tom wonders about federal and state mandates. Do we want to incorporate this now or ignore it for now? Amanda rephrases this with what drives our assessments? This will potentially lead to the question about external drivers vs what we want for our students.

Grading and Assessment:

Define GRADES, ASSESSMENT, HOMEWORK

What drives our decisions about grading and assessments?

What is working about what we do now? What is not working?

What should we be assessing?

...and how should we be assessing it?

Whose needs are being met and whose are not?

Are there inequities in our current practices (and if so, what are they)?

How is our assessment impacting academic integrity/behavior and therefore actual learning?

Midterms and Finals? Why?

Tom asks about timelines or milestones for the subcommittees. The committee agrees that the grading and assessment subcommittee will take the longest time.

Tom asks about the cheating discussion. He asks if the gray area of helping each other is considered cheating within the context of the voice stating we have a cheating problem. Amanda expresses that we identify it as a problem because we cannot tell what a student does or doesn't know when they are done with the work. Rick mentions that the students who do not cheat are impacted by those who do cheat as well. Amanda discusses whether the students understand the long term view of why they are being assessed or are they only concerned with getting the assignment/task done and move on. Those students with intrinsic motivation to learn have the assessment as a measure of their achievement and accomplishment.

A student discusses an assignment for Honors Chem. He explains how he got a lower grade than someone who may have just copied the answers. But the student learned from his mistake from this assignment and performed well on the test in the long term. The short term cheating could have longer term consequences.

Tom asks if the committee wants to add a cheating component question to the other committees as well. Jen asks us to consider if we are creating assessments that really get to the heart of their learning rather than create assessments that allow students to cheat their way through. The team discusses formative and summative assessments and what is graded and not. Gina cautions that these buzzwords can impact the committee's intent and that looking more at the authentic assessment piece is important.

Rick asks to consider if the questions will lead to a discussion of midterms and finals? Holly recommends putting the question on the list as it is important to note all concerns that are beneficial to discuss.

Tom clarifies the word “system” under the grading and assessment questions. He wants to ensure that the subcommittee understands the intent of this committee. The committee discusses and decides to use Holly’s suggested word of “practices” instead.

Tom asks to what degree we will be providing corroborating evidence for any conclusions drawn. He notes it will be interesting as the subcommittees work through these questions. Then how the steering committee will defend and justify the conclusions of the groups as deliverables. Rick notes that data is not the only factor.

Timeline:

- Rick will reach out to parents to generate and gauge interest this week – estimates a couple of weeks.
- Once committees have begun (end of Sept/beginning of Oct) the steering committee could give a report out date.
- Holly expresses the possibility of having outcomes/recommendations from Class Rank and Weighted vs Unweighted done by the end of this school year (19-20).

Next meeting: October 8 from 2:45-4:15

Process Observer Report: meeting started on time, met goals of agenda, ended one minute late.