

Instructional Practices Steering Committee: May 9, 2022

In attendance: Tim Grizone, Amanda Zeller, Tom Solon, Krista Whalen, Jenn Staub, Tate K, Kristen Roy, Gina Bergskaug, Tiffany Testa, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock,

Reports out from SubCommittees:

**Weighting vs Unweighting:** Reviewed process and status of committee. The committee voted prior to 2020 to continue weighting. During Covid the committee was dormant. Upon re-starting the committee, the group decided to continue with the former recommendations.

However, the committee does recommend that the unweighted grade be added to HBHS transcripts.

After debate and research, it was clear that many colleges fully unweight transcripts or only want to see an unweighted grade. Concerns with continuing weighting include, giving students a false sense of their grades, students taking courses for the weight rather than the course material, students focusing on grades vs. learning.

But research also showed that many colleges actually accept or use a weighted grade. Some unweight and reweight according to their own priorities. Concerns with discontinuing weighting include putting students at a disadvantage against the weighted transcripts of other schools, students who may want to take one or two advanced classes may be too anxious or afraid to take a class that they could earn a lower grade and this cushion allows for a level of comfort.

The committee also reached out to the teachers and students...through small group discussions. Teachers would like students to choose appropriate classes and to not overwhelm themselves or focus on grades. Students were mixed.

After much debate/discussion, the restarted committee decided to keep weighting and to check back in after reviewing the impact of no longer announcing top ten. The idea is that the competitive pressure should be relieved. School Counseling is going to continue their work on communicating the importance of making good choices when choosing classes.

Unfortunately, technical issues in Power School make it unlikely to see the transcript recommendation until possibly the 2023-24 school year.

**Advisory:** See attached slide presentation.

This committee began in October 2021 and has been working on researching and developing a potential advisory pilot program.

As the slide show points out, research has shown and NEASC suggests that every student have a continued connection to one adult (an Anchoring Adult) in the building besides their School Counselor. Consistent for four years is ideal...and small groups of students with this adult can create connections, community and compassion for others.

The committee suggests adding a "Home Base" Cav Block on Mondays (17 mins), which would decrease a small amount of instructional time, but would allow each professional staff in the building to meet with a small group of students and work with them on their academic, social and extracurricular goals. There would be suggested ice breakers and weekly themes to enhance social connections.

Although there would a slight decrease in instructional time, the increase in confidence and connection should help some students actually do better during instructional time. Much like the addition of Cav Block and PLC, Advisory will improve the quality of instruction.

Part of the process for the committee was to visit two schools with an established Advisory. Bedford and Souhegan. The student on the committee spoke of the definite difference of feel in the building...and the comments that students from those schools made to the student visitors. They spoke of connection with friends that don't share the same interests or are not in the same classes. These small groups of students made connections with each other and with their advisor. Committee members who went on these visits were incredibly impressed with the warmth that they felt in the buildings and the positive responses from staff and students regarding advisory.

The IPSC members questioned whether there was time to pilot this in the 22-23 school year, since staff has not seen the presentation. It was suggested that Cav Block had an advisory aspect when it was introduced, but it has morphed into something very valuable, but not an advisory. Concerns were brought up that without proper and thorough implementation, and staff members feeling a part of the process, Home Based Monday Cav Block may morph into the same thing.

Principal Girzone is going to bring the presentation to staff and then come back to the committee with potential need for more development until implementation.

**Grading and Assessment:** Due to time constraints, G&A was only able to report that they have surveyed family and students. More info to follow.

Submitted by,

Holly Deurloo Babcock