

Long Range Planning Committee

Minutes July 31 2017

Present: Joe Phelan, Tom Burnell, Laura Schulkind, Deirdre d'Albertis, Diane Lyons

Guest: Dr Davenport

The committee discussed ideas for reaching out to the community. We are easily able to reach our school community through a variety of ways but reaching the broader community is much more challenging. The group decided to send a general mailing(postcard) inviting anyone interested in receiving communication from the committee to provide their email address to us. Then the committee will add those emails to all its communication going forward. It was felt that regular mailings to the entire community would be too costly. This will be done in September. We were then joined by Dr Davenport and the meeting was moved to his office to view the master schedule.

Dr Davenport was asked to meet with the committee to discuss the high schools current structure, how declining enrollment is affecting the HS and what the future might look like in the high school. Dr Davenport described the task of putting together the master schedule to us. The first step is to start with all the constraints; these are things like shared teachers with BMS. The middle school makes their schedule first. As smaller numbers of students have moved into the middle school more teachers from BMS are now teaching at the high school. There are other constraints such as shared space in rooms like band and chorus. The next step is to add classes offered 1x then doubles and triples. It is certainly more complicated than this but it gave the group a good idea of the challenge.

Smaller classes are now moving into the high school with enrollment to be at around 320 within the next three years and below 290 in five.

It was brought to our attention that there are fewer students in study hall this year, although the reason is unknown at this time.

The cafeteria has usually 3 or 4 monitors at lunch time this can vary because the number of students can vary greatly. HS lunches unlike BMS are mixed grades. The number of students could go as high as 105. The shift in numbers is completely schedule driven.

Something to consider moving forward is looking at hiring more candidates with dual certifications. This could help better staff our building as our student population decreases. Would this inspire our staff to get another certification? Dr Davenport shared that hiring someone at .8 or lower usually leads to a much smaller applicant pool. In Rhinebeck we have always looked to hire the very best candidate but as our needs change someone with a dual certification could rise to the top of the list.

It is important as we look to the future to remember that education changes and program needs change. Rhinebeck will need to continue to grow and evolve even in these difficult financial times. An example of this is coding, it will need to be considered to help keep our students prepared for the future.

We discussed some thoughts about local requirements.

College and careers is changing as state requirements for the CDOS diploma will need to be added. If this class still needs to be a local requirement is something that could be looked at further. Could the local requirement of 4 years of math and science be met using some of our computer classes? We have already done that with the engineering elective. Community service is a requirement that some students still struggle to find opportunities. Could we use study hall time to provide those opportunities? For example running structured recess time for BMS students or helping in the cafeteria?

Looking at prerequisites for certain classes, for example studio art is needed to take digital photography. It is possible to get a wavier but some students may shy away from it. Is studio Art really necessary for that class?

Our current PE structure which was changed a few years ago, is to schedule students by grade as much as possible. This is a benefit so that units can be specialized by grade but it adds more constraints to the master schedule and doesn't necessarily fill classes in the most efficient manner.

Could athletes use their sport in place of PE class? It is possible, but if the athlete is not a 3 sport athlete you would have to be able to schedule PE for the times that student is not playing a sport. This could prove difficult both for scheduling and grading. The other concern is that this may create a class system between athletes and non athletes.

Distance learning was something we had at the HS many years ago. An aide is in the room with students who are participating in a class at another HS. One issue with this is that the bell schedule many times does not line up. It is worth looking into as technology has changed.

The idea of taking courses as Pass/Fail was discussed. Students are interested in electives but may not take them because they do not want to risk lowering their GPA or are concerned with the work load. This would take some additional thought but was certainly an interesting idea.

Dr. Davenport shared with us that school based anxiety has increased in our HS this mirrors what we have been told by our two other administrators. Our special Ed director has been doing more training with the HS general ed staff to better deal with the growing needs of our students.

We discussed the idea of a JR/Senior HS. Dr Davenport has previously worked in a district that had this model. Having a JR/Senior HS is basically a mini high school while it does work you lose the focus on the whole child. There is no longer a focus on specific developmental needs. The teaming model we currently use would be lost.

The district will need to weigh its financial and enrollment constraints vs. what we value and pedagogical ideals.

The committee briefly discussed the idea of putting together what the district would look like if it just provided the basics or what is required (mandated) by the state and federal government. What would

that cost? This could be a starting point then adding a second middle type plan and finally a third ideal model. This may be a good way to communicate to our community.

The group would next like to meet with our special education director.

Next meeting August 18th

Respectfully Diane Lyons