

Pierson High School Shared Decision Making Committee
Meeting Notes – Draft
February 6, 2015

Members Present: Jeff Nichols, Gary Kalish, Joan Dudley, Ella Parker, Eric Reynolds, Peter Solow

Members Absent: Mary Anne Miller, Colleen Samot, Rich Schiavoni

Meeting called to order by Jeff Nichols at 2:00pm.

Art/Music Subcommittee Report

Peter Solow provided an update of the Art/Music Subcommittee projects. Members are currently collecting and analyzing data from the Art and Music Consultant reports, State Education Department standards and sequences, and a questionnaire distributed to administrators and art/music faculty members. Once all data is collected, the subcommittee will focus and adjust the questionnaire for distribution to other constituents, including parents and students.

Gary Kalish offered an idea to collect qualitative data and discussed the importance to have parents and students suggest improvements to the programs and offer opinions of what is effective and ineffective. Jeff Nichols stated that all students and parents in grades six through twelve should be surveyed.

Jeff Nichols shared two impacts on the art/music offerings and enrollment. First, students must make decisions on what is perceived as important and relevant to their future plans as well as how the strength of schedule is viewed by colleges. Second, are art and music courses fun and are students enthusiastic about enrolling in art/music courses? A discussion ensued among the committee about the priority of courses in a student's schedule and the possible devaluation of the arts in schools. Ella Parker shared her opinion that by enrolling in the arts, students have an outlet for activity and a way to find balance in their studies and school day. Ella stated that students do not have to use the arts as a career but having the arts in a schedule is reasonable, healthy, and enriching.

Joan Dudley stated that the art/music program should have a hook and start in the middle school. Her opinion is that interest and enrollment after sixth grade diminishes and the focus is placed on math and science. Eric Reynolds stated that his opinion is there is a lack of a hook and continuity throughout the K-12 program. He feels we are not offering a sequential and comprehensive program in art/music. Peter Solow believes that all students experiencing art/music has value and provides essential learning for their future. He feels that we don't need to increase enrollment as much as we need to make students want to continue art/music throughout high school. Jeff Nichols stated that the end game is having more students access music/art and make the program more attractive while working within the constraints found in scheduling. Currently, there is a loose pre-requisite system for art/music courses. Gary Kalish stated that by looking at the interest survey from students and parents we can hold an informed discussion and look at sequential, comprehensive offerings.

Class Rank Subcommittee Report

Jeff Nichols collected and gathered data, and shared that one-third of high schools do not rank students. Rather, those high schools use a percentile system. On Long Island, forty percent of schools do not rank students. Data collected also showed that the more selective a college, the less emphasis was placed on rank for admission. The committee discussed whether a percentile system would be adequate for

Pierson, considering the smaller enrollment. Most schools that use percentiles use quartiles (25/50/75). Jeff Nichols felt that Pierson could use a smaller system of percentiles (10/20/30).

Negative implications of using a percentile system include having a student fall on the cusp of the percentile (student who is number 26 is viewed as in the 50th percentile), breaking rank will break tradition, and views that numbers, not percentiles, are how people are viewed in life.

Joan Dudley suggested that the subcommittee look at the colleges Pierson alumni are attending and investigate the selection criteria of those colleges. Jeff Nichols will talk to Margaret Motto, Pierson High School College and Career Counselor, and ask her to compile that information for the next Shared Decision Making meeting. Jeff will also interview some Long Island schools, including Southampton High School, to find out how they rank students.

Jeff Nichols will email all committee members to schedule the next meeting for the end of February/beginning of March.

Jeff Nichols adjourned meeting at 2:50pm.