

# ***Curriculum Committee Meeting***

**Wednesday, February 1, 2017**

## **MINUTES**

Present:

Sally Lindberg (Chair), Jeff Morrill, LeeAnn Wright, Chris Mosca, Shannon Warden, Sean O'Dell, Preston Randall

### **1. Call to Order**

Sally Lindberg called the meeting to order at 8:37am.

### **2. Updates**

#### **a. At-Risk Students**

Preston has identified the students who are in danger of not graduating. That list goes to Heather Fitzgibbons, the new assistant principal, to follow up with the students and families. Formal letters do go out to families. Typically, there are very few students who do not graduate. Preston estimated that there may be around 30-40 seniors who will be tracked closely. He will provide an update to the board. LeeAnn stated that Lynn Bouchard at NWTC also follows up with students Preston has identified. It is a great partnership between BFA and NWTC.

#### **b. Cursive Writing**

Massachusetts and California have returned cursive writing to all schools. Sally wondered if cursive was being used by teachers. Shannon mentioned that teaching cursive happens in younger grades, but some teachers and students are using it. Sean said that this could be brought up in the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment committee (CIA) to see if principals wish to implement it more completely. Sally said that she would like to advocate for cursive with either the governor or secretary of education.

#### **c. Scheduling**

Preston said that we are in the process right now. At this time of year, students are completing course requests. Teachers are doing course recommendations and counselors are meeting with students during advisory period. From here, admin determines number of sections and then builds the master schedule so that students will receive schedules by May. For sending schools, Preston visits the schools to allow 8th graders to do course requests. Incoming freshmen receive their schedules in June. Jeff wondered about the technical part of schedule-building: are there multiple people who know how to build the schedule in PowerSchool? Preston answered that the cross-training is ongoing in guidance, but he is unsure about whether cross-training is happening in IT. Preston and Shannon discussed the PowerSchool retreats where people go for a few days and build the master schedule with PowerSchool support in the room. They are not doing that this year, but it is an option for the future. LeeAnn said that NWTC students have additional restrictions on scheduling and that Claire has been a great help in making NWTC courses work in student schedules. Sally asked whether there are many students who do not get the schedules they request. Preston

said that there are quite a few because of scheduling conflicts. Additionally, the loss of some staff members last year has limited choices to an extent. Enrollment in classes may be lower than level of student interest because of scheduling limitations. Chris questioned whether increased class sizes, resulting from last year's RIFs, has had an impact on the ability of teachers to individualize supports for teachers. Preston replied that the scheduling constraints may limit our school's ability to carefully select the best classes or teachers for students. Neither Shannon nor Preston has heard from teachers about the effects of larger class sizes. Sally wondered if the class size issue is occurring at NWTC as well. LeeAnn answered that her pre-tech courses are getting a little larger because these courses provide additional scheduling options.

We digressed to the topic of credit recovery. We discussed the desire and need for some type of summer program that would allow students to recover credit or proficiencies. Chris and Sally would like to see this investigated seriously.

#### d. Proficiency Based Learning (PBL)

Shannon updated the group. Departments have been mapping proficiencies onto curriculum maps. There is a team of teachers learning about and training others on Canvas, our learning management system, which we are beginning to use to track proficiencies. We are beginning the planning for tenth grade teachers, as they will start tracking proficiencies next year. Teachers are in varying places in terms of Canvas knowledge and implementation. Everyone has had exposure, but not everyone is comfortable yet. Chris provided the vision for the work in PBL, focusing on the reality that PBL is simply good instructional practice and is supported by the statutes. Jeff wondered if freshmen got a different report card than others. Shannon replied that it has both a traditional grade and a record of proficiencies. NWTC is not in Canvas until next year, but they are aligned with transferable skills. Transcripts will need to list proficiencies. Once fully developed, our transcripts should provide colleges with better data. Preston updated the group on flexible pathways giving an example of a student who does first period each day working on a dairy farm... the student has a clearly articulated plan for the learning that is aligned to proficiencies. LeeAnn mentioned that currently evening classes at NWTC are not recognized as credit bearing.

#### e. Professional Development Report (October, November, January)

Chris shared that in October, Shannon had provided self-selected opportunities for teachers to learn from their peers across many different areas (choice theory, PBGR's, Canvas, etc.). The day was well-received. We have been using more surveys this year to be strategic about what we are trying to provide for our adult learners. Chris provided his ladder graphic. Shannon shared that in November we addressed teacher needs based on survey results. One of the largest needs was time to work together, which was provided, along with full-group and self-selected sessions. In January, we had time for moving proficiency scores from Canvas to PowerSchool.

#### f. March 31st PD Update

Sean provided the details about this day. We have a presenter coming to train BFA teachers on the philosophy and the "why" of proficiency based learning. First thing in the morning, we have Outright Vermont coming to do a talk and student panel focused

on making our LGBTQ students welcome. All faculty and staff from all schools will attend the Outright Vermont session.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:24am

Items for Next Agenda: Progress Updates (especially at-risk students, scheduling)

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017