

Hall-Dale Middle/High School
Communications Cohort Meeting
Tuesday April 27, 2010
7:00am

Members present: Diane Smith, Steve Zembroski, Edda Briggs, Carol Sinclair, Kendra Guiou, John Stivers, Chris Chamberlain, Steve Lavoie

I. Shared Visioning

What is it? A process of having stakeholders identify what is good about our schools, what needs to be addressed, what our students need upon graduation

How is it done? An initial review of student achievement data at the national, state and local level is presented. It articulates how students in the US are falling behind other countries. It compares proficiency rates of our students to Maine. For example: proficiency rates in reading for students in grade 11 may be 50% and that is at or above the state average. However it also means that 50% of students are not proficient in reading upon graduation.

Following a discussion of data, small groups are formed each with a specific question such as "What specific skills do our students need upon graduation? Groups respond and categorize responses.

There is an RSU visioning process scheduled for 4/29 with 25 people from each community attending. A shared visioning process is underway at HDMS/HS with faculty.

The discussion: The discussion included items relating to student performance such as what happens at the 8th grade level at HD and statewide that results in lower student achievement scores, the value of job shadowing as a taste of the real world, the value of the Senior Capstone project and the need for more communication on a wide variety of issues.

II. Leveling

What is it? It's a method of presenting curricula (such as reading) that addresses specific student needs based on assessments that identify strengths and weaknesses. Students are grouped by reading levels and lessons are designed to address identified strengths and weaknesses. An example: a 4th grade student reading at the 3rd grade level is grouped with others to read appropriate level material and work on identified deficits. By the same method, a 4th grade student reading at the 7th grade level is grouped and presented appropriate reading material. The system is designed to be fluid allowing students to move when appropriate.

The discussion: We discussed the current situation with a small group of freshmen who are exceeding the standards in English 9 and the possibility of their taking AP classes as sophomores. The state is willing to give a waiver of the 4 year time requirement for English. Other parts of the discussion included that the system has possibilities if designed and implemented with stakeholder understanding, the comparison to an "open curriculum that exists in a Connecticut High School and the need for solid assessment to determine student levels. A parent relayed a comment made by their student, "Don't remove the process of natural selection, meaning let's allow students to perform at their own level. Leveling supports this concept.

III. Other topics discussed

Freshman meetings: are being held on a regular basis. Can a summary of those discussions be posted as the notes from these meetings are? Good idea!

Next meeting: May 18, 2010

Topics of discussion:

1. Adding gradations such as 2.5 and 3.5 to the 1 - 4 scale currently in use.
2. Reviewing a newer and more current Parent/Student Grading Guide.