

# MSA Academic Task Force

## Meeting Minutes

Weds., Sept. 7, 8 am, Room 12A

Present: Emily G., Bronwen W., John G., Tim T., Romelle P., Lisa A., Noelle H., Maggie B., Jen H-N, Cheri H. Absent: Kassie L., Hannah K., Jerry S., Joelle P.

1. (7 min.) Introductions; someone to take minutes; makeup of task force (discussion)  
Review of what the purpose of the task force is; dept chairs/dept. rep, admin, interested parents
2. **Old Business**
  - a. (2 min.) Update - Class fees handled by financial clerk, not teachers (Howe)  
Wondering if students are confused about this process; all fees go to financial clerk
  - b. (7 min.) Update – Academic Counseling - new website, other updates from previous minutes (Emily, Romelle)
    - (Emily G.) Created a link to the website for students to utilize for college help. Under the teacher website page.
    - Can we create a button on the front page for easier access?
    - Bring any scholarship and college information to Emily G. She will organize the information and make it available to students. Department chairs will let their departments know about this.
  - c. (1 min.) Update – Marketing MSA as High School option (Jen)
    - (Noelle H.) Concerned that many post-secondary institutions are not aware of who we are. Concerns about MSA not weighting grades and not ranking students.
    - Is the Communications task force responsible for Marketing? We should change the *About MSA* section of the website.
    - Is there a way to let post-secondary institutions what our most rigorous courses were offered for each graduating class? This is because our offerings change so often.
  - d. (5 min.) Update – World's Best Workforce *separate task force now?* (Romelle)  
Romelle will be completing the paperwork, but she will need input from more staff members before she gets started.
  - e. (2 min.) Update – 2016-17 Cross Curricular Theme (Maggie)
    - Maggie and Teresa Ward are meeting with Romelle on 9/9 to go over the PD plan for the year.
    - Wondering how many CEU's will be given to staff members for participating.
  - f. (5 min.) Update - MSA's Expectations for Students and Parents (Lisa)
    - Lisa has a rough-draft ready for other staff.
    - Concerns about the new 9th graders not understanding the amount of homework given at MSA.
    - Discussion about accepting high school students vs. middle school students. This is a concern because of attrition. This will be discussed at the BOD meeting.
  - g. (7 min.) Weighted grades and/or “honors” classes - any research? LINK: *“Do Colleges Use Weighted or Unweighted Grades”*
    - Cheri and Emily did more research. They found that for admission for non-ivy league schools it was about rigor of courses taken/offered.

- Romelle and Noelle found that scholarships seem to vary if they want/look for weighted grades/“honors”.
  - Still wondering about weighting PSEO and AP courses. How do these courses fit into the GPA? Can we only put MSA courses into the GPA? PSEO is supposed to be an equivalent to MSA classes.
  - Can we weight PSEO classes?
  - Schools that have weighted grades do not weight PSEO grades.
  - Are our kids being penalized by not weighing AP classes?
  - More discussion is needed. Emily will check in with Joelle.
  - Can we do both weighted and unweighted GPA?
- h. (5 min.) Alternative schedule (*ex-zero hour English 10/11, evening AP Calc II*) -- pursue for 2017-18 school year?
- We would need to offer busing if the courses are core courses. An elective course enters a “gray” area.
  - Putting it aside.
- i. (5 min.) Homework over extended breaks: school-wide procedures? (unresolved?)  
John G. will send out a reminder to the staff.

### 3. **New Business**

- a. (1 min) Dept. chairs – remind teachers of upcoming deadlines for PD (9/15) and PBIS form (9/19)  
Department chairs need to remind their departments to complete the forms for PD and PBIS (6th/7th teachers only)
- b. changing choir from ½ credit to full credit  
Jerry would like to increase this. He needs to give us information before we can discuss it again.

### 4. **Next Meeting**

- a. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 8 am in Room 12A. Next meeting is Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2016. Meetings are open to the public.
- b. Joelle would like us to discuss how we slot kids into AP classes. We need to set up a procedure.
- c. Scheduling AP courses for students is difficult.