

MSA Academic Committee

Meeting Minutes

Weds., Oct. 5, 8 am, Room 12A

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

Meeting start time: 8:01 A.M.

1. Old Business

a. Weighted grades (Emily and Joell)

- Simple to change to weighted -- it can be chosen to be on the transcript or not.
- You can put both weighted and non-weighted GPAs on a transcript. Some colleges look at weighted some don't. Many scholarships are looking for weighted. Many schools include both GPA's on transcripts.
- Decided to put both on transcript, if feasible; Joelle will contact Skyward for details on how to set it up and report back next month.

b. MSA's Expectations for Students and Parents (Lisa)

- Will give students a survey question (re: how to be a successful student at MSA) to complete in study hall this week or next.
- Reviewed the student/parent responsibility sheet for prospective families to look at before they decide MSA is the school for their child(ren). This form can be sent home with others at the time of enrolling into MSA, go on website (prospective families), open house, etc.
- Point out that we're a small school but with rigor; families need to consider that before enrolling. This also is tied in with what Joelle is presenting later.

c. Proposed change in Choir/Symphony course credit (Joelle for Jerry)

- Last year symphony and choir were given .5 credit. Due to the requirements (ie: practice and homework) required for students, Jerry would like to make it 1.0 credit. Other schools offer 1.0 credit for those courses.
- How do we determine credit? By seat time. They are in class 2 hours a week.
- Based on seat time, it seems best to keep it at .5 credit. All courses have homework.

d. World's Best Workforce (Romelle)

- Preliminary work should be done by 10/15/16. We as a school need to complete specific goals. Identify ELL students, math goal, reading goal.
- Need a task force to work on this starting next week. The goals are stated; we need to find the results. A report needs to be given during a parent team meeting.
- Romelle is looking for volunteers to assist her in this; it will be brought up at the building meetings 10/6/16..

2. New Business

a. AP course registration process (Joelle)

- Consolidated the AP forms into one form. The process is explained on the form. They will need to complete the requirements for applying for AP. Add the summer homework and prerequisites for the AP courses to the form. Change some of the wording on the form. Add that some courses may not be offered due to interest. Are students required to be in a certain grade to take AP courses? That should fall under requirements/prerequisites.

b. Proposed 2017-18 Course and Student Registration, New Student Course Progression (Joelle)

- **2017-18 Course/Student Registration:** An earlier timeline for scheduling students in the upcoming school year would make teachers happier. Other schools are done with this process in February.
- Departments meet on 12/15 but not until 1/26 after that. Is that a realistic time line? Needs to be adjusted. We are not committed to providing the courses that students get to see.
- There is so much involved in registration for each year.
- Can we schedule some department time on 12/2 to start the process so that we can meet the timeline?
- We aren't going to allow (middle school?) students to choose electives due to scheduling issues.

- **New Student Progression:** The progression form is another method for students/parents to understand the course progression for students in middle school and high school.
- Is it too difficult to find and utilize the online forms? According to parent committee member - Yes
- Can we create buttons on the website for easy access? That would mean a lot of buttons. Is that a reasonable idea?
- Should we pass this to the Communication Task Force? Jen will contact Communication Task Force to meet
- This will need to include Justin and Joell for input and ideas.
- The form needs some edits added for clarification/specific wording.

c. MSA Strategic Plan – information (John)

- Met twice, 9/26 and 10/3, to share opinions and ideas for the future of MSA. Looking at long-term sustainability for the school.
- Next meeting will be at the end of October. The minutes will clarify when that meeting will be.
- The focus of the school will still be math and science. Revamped mission and vision. FIRE focus or CORE values? What should be adjusted and condensed.

- How do we get there? Strategies were organized into three categories based on ability to accomplish.
- Should we expand or not? The next meeting will focus on this. It is a decision that needs to be made so future plans can be made. We will most likely choose a multi-prong approach. The expense management needs to be part of the plan.
- We will wait to see what that will look like after the next meeting.
- Many don't understand the school finances. John will work to inform the staff where we stand and what the timeline looks like. How will we ensure the school is still viable.
- (Lisa) We need to consider that by expanding we need to approach the angle that incoming staff and students need to be prepared for the rigor we require.

d. **Addressing family/student requests to skip coursework**

- (Cheri) What do we do about students who want to skip coursework at MSA? Should they take a final post-test? Is it something we want to look at.
- (Bronwyn) In math students are given a test to determine their placement. It is given in early August. It needs to be done before the school year starts because to move up during the school year means he/she would have missed a portion of the class.
- There is more involved with moving up a course level than just the class work (ie: maturity, homework load, reading levels, etc.)

3. **Next Meeting**

- a. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 8 am in Room 12A. Next meeting is Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2016. Meetings are open to the public.