

Academics Minutes
November 4, 2019
Room 12A at 8:00 A.M.

Members Present: Kassie, Lisa, Maggie, Tom, Joell, Emily, Cheri, Hannah, Noah, John, Jen, Wendell, Angie, Tara, Noelle

1. Discussion about school-wide reading goals for departments who do not have specific goals (Lisa)

a. What is the goal? Fiction or nonfiction?

ELA Department is digging into the data. It has been determined the majority of students who do not meet standards are struggling with nonfiction reading.

b. Who will be teaching these additional interventions? I think that we agreed last time that all 6th,7th and 8th grade classes, which are not Math, Science or English would have 2 interventions to support the increased reading.

ELA and middle school teachers will focus on these goals.

c. How/Do(?) departments know how to create interventions to help achieve the goal?

Teaching nonfiction reading is not the same as being able to read. Teachers would like additional support.

Is it possible to create a template/ideas/suggestions that can be given/shared with staff members who are not licensed to teach reading? If everyone is on the same page, this will help the students as well.

It can be done. But there needs to be time set aside to work on this. The current plan is for ELA department to use a PD day to work on SAM goals and the template for the other departments.

It was also suggested that the ELA teachers (and maybe others) would like Fastbridge training for the staff to understand the data. Is it possible to take the Fastbridge exams to understand what they entail? How can we retrieve the data? How do we read the data?

2. Update on the Progress of the WBWF Report (Tom)

Soon there will be a meeting for WBWF to write up a summary of how MSA did last year and to incorporate new goals into this year's WBWF document. It is due in the middle of December, and it needs to be approved by the BOD.

In the future, Tom and Joell will go through student schedules in August to make sure that ESSA is followed with experienced teachers and students of color.

We need to include that there are a few teachers teaching out of subject this year and that all laws were followed for this to occur.

Recruiting teachers of color is an issue MSA also needs to address as we are not getting those applicants to apply. We've utilized different means for posting jobs: Indeed, EdPost, local colleges. A problem everyone is facing is that there are not high numbers of diverse teachers. Maybe MSA should make recruiting these educators more of a priority by taking time and extra effort to attract these teachers. If we don't actively look for these individuals, it will still not happen. What we're doing isn't working, but we need to start somewhere. The demographics of MSA are changing. There needs to be more intentionality in order to do this effectively. We need to actively seek out groups of new teachers who are minorities. We should have a part in nurturing it along. We also do not have salary incentives. This will be a focus and a part of the personnel committee.

GOALS:

We skip the first two as we do not teach students of those ages.

We did not make progress on Goal 3. It did dip from the previous year.

We did not meet Goal 4 (ACT average score of 28). We did hit 27.1. It is important to remember that MSA student ACT scores are still the highest in the state.

We did not meet Goal 5 (graduation rate). Though there are notes regarding those students. We are going to change this goal to reflect how MDE totals this number.

Do we want to continue writing goals that "aim for the fences"? Or do we want to write goals that show growth and sustainability.

We would like to change our WBWF goals to be multi-year goals/multi-year processes to fall more in line with our SAM goals. This way we can be on track to meet goals rather than not meet.

ELA Department is looking at changing the way we complete MCA testing in an effort to help increase our results for the reading goals of the students.

It is important to remember our numbers fluctuate between grades, and these scores change cohorts from year to year.

3. Modified Transcript Vision/Implementation (John)

a. Teacher Class Recommendation Exemption (Joell/Lisa)

Suggested Language: "If a teacher recommends a class change after MEA, the student will not automatically receive a modified transcript, because the teacher's recommendation assumes that the student can successfully complete the class in spite of the missed curriculum."

We need to go back to the Academic Agreement for this student (grade). In high school we're expecting about 10 hours of work a day (including the school day--3 hours of homework). That means 2 hours of homework is a 33% reduction. We need to look at what a 15% reduction looks like; it should be focusing on modifying what is in the gradebook. That is how we protect our rigor.

Reduction is different than modification. This might be where the confusion might be.

We can create examples for people to look at.

If it needs to be modified, it is addressed on the transcript. Remember a modified transcript It is not necessarily for all classes for a student; it may be a course by course basis.

A blanket statement of modification is probably not a wise thing; 504s or IEPs are for catering to an individual students needs.

An accomodation is providing a reduction. Modifying is changing the curriculum.

Examples and definitions will be shared with the staff.

- b. Students who change classes because they/parents want a different class. (Joell/Lisa)

Suggested Language: "If a student/parent requests a class change after MEA, the student will receive a modified transcript because they missed a significant portion of the curriculum."

If a teacher feels a student will be more successful in a different course (ie: math), should the transcript say "modified"?

If the school is suggesting the change, the student shouldn't be given a modified transcript.

The following will be covered at the next meeting:

4. Revisit the weighted or unweighted GPA (Joell)
5. Discussion and decision on adding grading category W-M (withdraw-medical) for students who withdraw from a class because of a medical reason (Joell)
6. Revisit students who fail MS, (not Spanish/Math) (Joell)
7. Math Graduation Requirements for New 9th graders (Noah)
8. Issues for the next meeting?
 - a. Overall Yearly Achievement Goal
 - i. How is the goal determined?
 - ii. Who gets paid and how much?
 - b. Supplemental Online Learning Update

Next Meeting Date: Monday, December 2nd at 8:00 A.M., room 12A