

**Parent Advisory Board Meeting Notes**

**Date: Tuesday, September 6, 2016**

**Time: 7:45am**

**Location: HS Conference Room**

*(Notes were taken by Melissa. Therefore, any ‘I’ found below refers to her.)*

* PE Requirements

I shared that we received a parent concern at the July board meeting regarding the difficulty some of our students enrolled in Bloomsburg University’s Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Program had in scheduling their required courses while trying to remain in band/chorus. Because our STEM students are only available until 11:30am in their junior and senior years, they must take their high school courses in the first five periods. After removing period one for band and/or chorus, a STEM student is left with only four possible periods. Attached please find the graduation checklist that was created to aid students and their parents in staying on track. As noted this morning, I met with the family of a freshman who is planning to attend the STEM program and we mapped out a way for her to get her required classes and continue with band/chorus. For our current STEM students, however, this planning was not part of the process.

Because physical education credits caused the ultimate conflict in the schedules in question, one consideration is to reduce the number of required physical education credits. As it stands now, students must take four (.5 credit) physical education classes for a total of two credits before graduation. PA School Code requires that physical education be taken by students, but it does not mandate how many credits are required. Our neighboring schools were surveyed to determine how they handle physical education requirements. Of the nine responses, five of the schools require two credits as we do. One each requires .5, 1, 1.25, and 1.5 credits. In addition, PA School Code does not allow waivers for graduation requirements, so discussion must include our current use of PE waivers for athletes who are involved in two varsity sports or one varsity sport and marching band.

I have met with the physical education department to discuss possible changes to the requirements. Our next step will be to meet administratively to discuss all input from stakeholders before recommending a course of action moving forward.

This morning’s meeting provided a few considerations: granting physical education credit for individual sports, offering physical education prior to the start of the school day to avoid scheduling conflicts, and reducing the number of credits necessary. The possibility of each of these will be investigated and shared with the teachers and administrators in our subsequent meetings.

* STEM/ACE Credits

The discussion of the STEM Program progressed naturally into the Advanced College Experience (ACE) Program through Bloomsburg University. This program allows local high school students to take college-level courses for a significantly-reduced cost. While BHS students can take these courses (even during the school day), they do not count toward our high school’s graduation requirements. I met with department chairpersons at the end of the school year to discuss this. The concern at that point is that not all college-level courses meet the rigor of our required curriculum. (I understand that this concern is debatable depending upon which student/parent/teacher is asked.) Considerations for the future include allowing all ACE credits to count for electives and required courses, allowing ACE credits to count as electives only, allowing certain ACE credits to count, or not allowing any ACE credits to count. Further discussion will take place and an update will be shared at our next meeting. The administration recognizes the importance of providing our students flexibility in meeting their requirements. (Besides that, I am a proud Bloomsburg University alumnus!)

* Act 1 Recommendations

I shared the current state of the Keystone Exam proficiency requirement for students in the Class of 2019 and beyond. The legislation that waived this requirement for the Class of 2017 and 2018 required the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to investigate options and make a recommendation within six months. This recommendation was shared in August, although it has not yet been enacted through legislation. Under the recommendation (which is attached), proficiency on a Keystone Exam or completion of a Project-Based Assessment (PBA) is no longer suggested. Instead, schools would be able to determine proficiency based on Keystone Exam scores or students’ grades in Keystone-related courses. Although students’ schedules had been changed in past years after Keystone scores were received in July in order to include remediation and/or PBA work, this did not occur this year. The administration decided that changing student schedules based on a current requirement that will likely change was imprudent and would not allow as much scheduling flexibility as we would like. If the recommendation is not passed by the legislature, the district has enough time prior to graduation of the Class of 2019 to make the necessary changes.

* Study Hall Procedures

The study hall procedures from last year have been changed and there were a few questions regarding them. In terms of the study hall location, this was changed due to the new-found availability of our auditorium. In the past, Mr. Latsha was using it for chorus for the first three periods, so the study halls were held in the cafeteria. Mr. Latsha now has a devoted chorus room, so the auditorium is available all day.

As I explained to all study hall students on the first day of school, our wish is to have an atmosphere that is more conducive to studying. The use of the auditorium for study halls is not new. In the past, we held study halls in the auditorium for the lunch periods without issue. My preference is to have study halls in classrooms when possible, so those study halls that are small enough are now held in classrooms and/or the library as well (period 1, 5/6, and 7/8).

Regardless of the use of the auditorium in the past, concerns regarding the lighting and lack of desks are well-taken. I have spoken to Mr. Marshall, our Industrial Arts teacher, about making lap desks for the students. Attached please find a design one of our students came up with in his class. They will be working on prototypes this week. I will look into the lighting as well. With the exception of one day when Mr. Burrell was working with freshmen regarding Surface Pro devices, our library is open all day for our study hall students in case they need to work in groups or access the resources there. Our seniors also still have the privilege of sitting in our lobby during study halls as they have had in the past.

* Band Practice

I received a parent concern regarding the use of the student parking lot by the marching band. Due to their use of it during period one, it cannot be used by students for parking until November. The band members use it because practicing in the grass every morning in the fall leads to wet sneakers and clothes which do not dry quickly. Students are permitted to park in the stadium lot (no assigned spaces) until the student lot opens in November.

* Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 12 at 8:00am