



**Wilmington High School
School Advisory Council (SAC) Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held on October 16, 2023**

Meeting called to order at 3:00pm by Principal Ryan Gendron

In attendance:

Principal Ryan Gendron, **Parents-** Leica Turner, Jessica Bourgeois, **Teacher-** Lisa Bellavia, **Students-** Purnima Thapa, Maria Cummings

Welcome and Introductions

- New and returning SAC members were welcomed and introduced.

Wilmington High School Updates

- The year is off to a good start.
- The school is working on increasing academic rigor in its courses. Part of this work included a review of retake procedures and the implementation of revision to these procedures. Teachers still have flexibility in this area, but the entire school should follow the same student expectations regarding retakes. For example, students should not be allowed retakes unless the homework on the content for the test has been completed, students having an issue hindering their ability to take the test have been conferencing with the teacher, and extra help has been accessed. Teachers should be implementing a partial credit approach when allowing retakes to make the procedures fairer. Students had been becoming reliant on multiple retakes and it was not enhancing their understanding of the material.
 - Students voiced that this seemed to be a better way of doing things because it allowed the students who came prepared to the test to be rewarded for this effort. They also felt that possibly addressing this new change in retake procedures could be fully explained in a W2 advisory or similar because when some students first heard about it, they thought that retakes were being eliminated and it caused some confusion. Students agreed that many had become reliant on the old method where sometimes many retakes were allowed, or full credit could be obtained by retaking the test.
 - A parent was wondering if there were any data points from last year that could be used to establish if this new retake policy was creating a better distribution of the grades in a way that was more representative of the student achievement reflected in things like SAT scores and AP test results? Principal Gendron will be looking into this as grades become available and seeing if there is any affect because of the changes.
- This year, clearer expectations will be set for the course levels. Considering changing the College Prep class title to something more like Standard, which is more reflective of the level, as not all students are preparing for college- often they are preparing for the workforce. The workload, homework expectations and assessment requirements for each type of course will be clearly laid out to help students during the course selection process.
- W2 Flex Time seems to be working well with the new scheduler, MyFlexLearning. Both staff and students agreed on this. Using this time for student and staff enrichments has become much more effective. Things like the Activity Fair, School Counseling Seminars, Q&A with WPD, Language Conversation Groups, Captain Council, NHS Peer Tutoring, Guest Speakers have been offered during this time block. And student safety (knowing where the students are during this block) has been addressed.
- The 8th grade Open House event will be held on the 24th for students and 26th for parents. There will be a day event for students and a night event for parents and students. Feedback from last years event has been considered and will help things run smoother this year.

School Advisory Council Purpose

- Discussed the purpose of the SAC and covered the School Committee Policy regarding Councils. This year we will be discussing the School Improvement Plan and how its creation will be informed by the districtwide Strategic Plan. This plan needs to be presented and approved by the School Committee in November.

Input Regarding Educational Needs and Goals

- Last year the Scheduling Committee took an in depth look at the current 7.0 High School schedule to ensure it was addressing students' educational needs. The committee also looked at an 8.0 schedule to see if it could

address giving students access to more courses, making master scheduling more effective and still take advantage of the White/Blue days while keeping the W2 block.

- This is all in the preliminary investigative stages, but the 8.0 schedule would help address some students access to electives. The current schedule has limitations for students who chose band because that is a five-credit course. This uses up the student's elective slot and creates an inequity. It also limits student choice for students in Learning Center because there is not enough room in the schedule for electives.
- The 8.0 schedule also addresses the issues with the master schedule. Some blocks become overloaded due to scheduling restraints and students often don't get their first choice in electives because of the limitations. A preliminary run through using an 8.0 schedule allowed more students to get their top choice electives.
- The next phase for this schedule review will be including more teacher input. This may be especially important for teachers of AP classes as there will have to be review of curriculum to ensure that there is enough teaching time to include the material that will be tested.
- One area of focus in the new Strategic Plan is the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This is to ensure that all students are getting what they need in terms of instruction (working towards academic achievement), and social, emotional and behavior needs. A clear map of this system and a playbook for staff, students and parent/guardians will be part of the High School plan this year. This will help all stakeholders to better understand MTSS and the resources available for success.
- Review of grading policy, grade distributions and SAT, AP/ACT scores resulted in the info needed to work towards increasing the academic expectations at WHS. Encouraging students to use higher-order thinking and complex problem solving will become a focus. Clear expectations will be developed for all levels of courses and reassessments. MyFlexLearning will be monitored to ensure it is being used effectively.
- After discussing the possible Educational Needs and SIP Goals above, SAC members were encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions.
 - Students acknowledged that the 8.0 schedule would be very beneficial for students wanting to take advantage of the wide variety of electives available. Students felt that the competitive environment in academics with regards to college acceptance sometimes makes them choose classes that give them a competitive edge (AP or Honors) as opposed to classes that might interest them or be related to their career path. Making all electives the same weight (no honors option) will help level this playing field and encourage choice.
 - Students also felt that this 8.0 schedule would give them more freedom and less stress. It will also address the imbalance in scheduling that they feel regarding White and Blue days and how they are structured around band and strings.
 - Students worried that adding the space for another class might increase their workload. Principal Gendron said this would not be the case-the workload would just be distributed differently not increased. Counselors will work with students so that they don't overschedule themselves.
 - Teachers felt that the AP classes could still cover all their material with this schedule-some instruction may just be more student driven.
 - Members felt that Social Emotional and Mental Health interventions and resources should be a focus in the MTSS system.
 - Members felt that teacher and staff mental health should also be a priority. The strain of the pandemic years and increased workload and students needs is taking a toll. Retention of good staff should be a focus.
 - Purnima had been thinking about school improvements since the beginning of the school year when she joined the SAC and had some suggestions:
 - The library could be better utilized and have more accessibility. More like a library with the ability to borrow books and hold meetings or club events.
 - The ability for each classroom to have a couple designated Chromebook chargers for emergencies would provide a less stressful environment.
 - Students had recently taken the Panorama Survey and felt the wording on some questions was confusing and could be answered multiple ways.
 - Lunch choices should be more culturally aware. There should be a way to access the ingredients being used in the lunch for students who have dietary restrictions due to religion or personal

choice, allergies, and sensitivities. Possibly a board or a place where you could look up and find out what you are eating with confidence.

- Keeping in line with the Strategic Plan she felt the High School could benefit from more diverse students, staff and curriculum.
- SAC input on the School Improvement Plan is an essential part of its work. This plan must be presented to Dr. Brand on November 8th and then to the School Committee on December 6th. Because a lot of this work happens at the beginning of the school year, we will need to meet sooner to accomplish this and review the School Improvement Plan.
- Jessica Bourgeois volunteered to co-chair and will provide meeting minutes for members unable to attend.
- Future meeting dates will be finalized at the next meeting (all meetings begin at 3pm):

11/6 - early reconvene to beat the 11/8 School Improvement Plan submission date

12/11

1/16 (Tues)

2/12

3/18

4/9 (Tues)

5/13

Meeting Adjourned at 4:05 pm