

PSEO Task Force Minutes September 25, 2017 8am Room 4A

PRESENT: Lisa Anderson, Emily Graveen, Jessie Heydt, Joell Pundsack, Donna Nightingale, Val Meyer, Lauren Zachman, Noelle Haland (secretary)

**Open forum on weighting grades at Parent Team meeting on November 6 at 5:30pm:**

- Lisa will probably meet with John and Rachel Ballard week of October 23 to prep details; discussion about weighting will be in the “open forum” part of that Parent Team meeting.
- BOD had requested an open forum - several BOD members “had no idea” about this PSEO stuff (discussion had been in Academics Committee notes prior).
- Now the state says we need to state on our website whether we weight grades & how we do it.
- Spanish department presentation will also happen at that same meeting (each department has to present once a month). We don’t know exactly what Spanish will be presenting that night (ie. general description of the new curriculum, or PSEO equivalency issues?). Lisa will check with Spanish on this. (Are Spanish department is auditing some courses this year?)
- Will do open forum etiquette reminder for this meeting
- Lauren Z. will present, as will Emily and Joell.

**Weighting grades discussion:**

- Brief discussion of attached materials, which had already been received & reviewed by those present.
- Overall & for most example students, weighting AP classes does not help a student and may in fact harm more students, eg. a student’s A- grade in a weighted AP course would affect overall GPA negatively as compared to an A in a non-AP class.
- Colleges reset weighted GPAs anyway, with the rare exception of one or two known scholarship opportunities which do not re-calculate. Emily can address those rare specific exceptions on a case-by-case basis (versus of changing our entire system for the rare exception). Grade inflation is a problem in the eyes of colleges. Colleges know AP as a brand so they don’t need to see weighted grades.
- Discussion of unintended consequences of weighting grades, ie. over time, some students would be incentivized to take non-AP courses to protect high GPAs. MSA should be encouraging students to challenge themselves, plus colleges want to see that students take the most rigorous courses afforded to them. This would be a net loss for students.
- Discussion of what happened when MSA did weight grades in the past (for “honors” courses), ie. the complications outweighed any perceived benefits.

● Our task force, the Academics Committee, and MSA faculty have previously found that there is too much variability in PSEO courses & it would be impossible to assign appropriate weight to the huge variety of PSEO courses our students take.

● Given the above, allowing AP courses to be weighted but not PSEO courses is not fair to PSEO students & would give AP (non-PSEO students) an unfair relative advantage in GPA calculation.

● Discussion that some find it unfair & cumbersome to continue our current method of weighting AP courses for those students that request weighting & having two GPAs listed on a transcript. Our procedures should be equally applied to and accessible by all students, not only those who are savvy enough to “work the system.”

● Our task force’s recommendation is NO WEIGHTING for ANY courses (AP or PSEO).

**Concepts to make clear in the parent team meeting:**

● We’ve been investigating this for more than one year.

● History of what MSA has done (first unweighted, then weighted in the past & what happened (bad), and why MSA decided to go back to unweighted)

● What colleges are looking for (they un-weight anyway)

● The rarest exception should not write the rule.

● Show the graph of examples of students

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Lisa will check with Spanish department regarding what they plan to present at the Nov.

5th meeting. She will contact the task force if Spanish will be delving into the PSEO equivalency issues at this meeting versus a brief overview of the current Spanish curriculum. 2. Lisa will meet with John G. & Rachel B. the week of Oct. 23rd to review prep for Nov.

6th meeting. 3. Emily, Joell and Lauren will plan to present & answer questions at the Nov. 6th meeting.