

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL HIGH SCHOOL



MIDDLE STATES PLANNING TEAM Minutes from November 11, 2009

- The meeting began at 6:10 p.m.
- Present---Mr. James Nemeth, Mrs. Linda Murray, Mrs. Edna Patchett, Mr. Steven Brohawn, Mrs. Gina Hovland, Mrs. Barbara Biddle, Mr. Edward Bergman, Miss Katie Witwer '10, Mr. Ben Payne '11, Miss Courtney Murray '12, Mr. Peter Paul '13, and Mr. Tim Linck
- Excused--- Mrs. Vicki Cappa, Mrs. Debbie McQuaid, Mrs. Caron Pons, Mr. Douglas Becker, Mr. William Duncan, Mrs. Patti Wiles, Mrs. Mary O'Shea, and Mr. Mark Murray
- The meeting began with a prayer by Mrs. Gina Hovland

Old Business:

- Review of minutes of April 22, 2009 meeting and acceptance

New Business:

- Introduce a new member of the Planning Team: Mr. Peter Paul '13

- **Annual Review Process**

“A process used to evaluate the progress made during the past year in implementing action plans and in meeting the student performance objectives and mission. The review of progress leads to the school making adjustments to the plan to increase success during the next year” (AFG 331).

- **Preparation of Annual Report**

“*Accreditation for Growth* planning is an ongoing, dynamic process and therefore, requires a structure for regular updating, reviewing and modifying of action plans.... To be most effective, reviews need to be planned well in advance, should be ‘data-driven,’ and should allow for input from a wide variety of stakeholders” (AFG 41).

- An updated binder with all pertinent documents was given to each Planning Team member and will be used until the next Middle States Association team visit in 2012.
- **Report on Student Performance Objective #1 Action Plan—Mr. Bergman**
Mr. Bergman then reviewed the current status of Student Performance Objective #1 which relates to Academics. Each sub-topic of the Action Plan was reviewed and several changes were noted as well as other suggestions that were made by the Action Team:

SPO #1 (a):

- AP courses that met or exceeded the proposed improvement in 2009 were AP English, AP U.S. History, and AP U.S. Government and Politics. AP courses that are not meeting the proposed improvement percentage are AP Calculus AB, AP Chemistry, AP Biology, and AP European History.
- Of the nine activities under SPO #1 (a), seven have been completed and are ongoing, one was eliminated, and activities 7 and 10 will be implemented when all departments have concluded their vertical teaming.
- Mr. Nemeth said that the implementation of horizontal skills among departments will help raise AP scores.
- It was felt that the data display for this objective was confusing. Paul Dahlen will create a table that is easier to read and interpret. Has not been completed.
- It also was felt that the AP Chemistry data is a bit misleading. The drop in percentage can be attributed to a number of factors. The increased number of students taking the AP Chemistry course is one of those factors. Another factor is calculator use by students on the AP Chemistry exam. Student math skills without the use of a calculator are weak. Mrs. Patchett, Math department chair, said her department is focusing on limiting the use of calculators to improve students' ability to solve problems without them. She also noted that the elementary school is working to develop students' mathematical skills without calculators.
- Mr. Linck said the AP committee has met once this year. Miss Katie Witwer '10 said the student AP committee has not met and is not sure what they are to do. Mr. Linck said the purpose of the student committee was to discuss teaching techniques and suggest recommendations to the AP teachers. It was believed that the student committee should not meet until later in the year when they have had some experience with their AP classes. Mr. Brohawn suggested that students who have taken an AP test would be most beneficial to the student committee. Mr. Brohawn also said the AP committee is looking at the exit evaluations from last year and if there is a better time to administer the evaluations rather than immediately after the test.

SPO #1 (b):

- For 2009, both the SAT I Verbal and SAT I Quantitative fell short of the proposed increase while the SAT I Writing exceeded the proposed increase.
- Of the five activities under SPO #1 (b), numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 have been completed. Activity 5 has been implemented. A sixth activity was added which requires skills identified in activity 4 to be implemented by fall 2009. Activities 4 and 6 will be implemented when all departments have concluded their vertical teaming.
- All three areas are showing a significant increase in student success with the SAT I.

SPO #1 (c):

- In the area of PSAT scores [SPO #1 (c)], the data has been updated and the Class of 2010 (67%) exceeded the proposed improvement to 59%.
- Of the three activities under SPO #1 (c), number 1, 2, and 3 have been completed and are on-going.
- The Action Team believes the baseline figure for this objective is much higher than it should be. The Class of 2006 was a relatively small and very bright group of students. The standard they set for PSAT improvement is above what most Classes are able to accomplish. That being said, we understand that only using one year's result as a baseline figure can be misleading. When baseline figures are generated for the next reaccreditation, they will be averages.

- Mr. Nemeth suggested the Action Team should compare our scores with national averages to get an idea of where we stand. Mrs. Patchett said we need to get the mean scores from these results.

SPO #1 (d):

- In the area of academic ineligibility [SPO #1 (d)], the data has been updated and reveals that 11% of students were academically ineligible sometime during the 2008-2009 school year which meets the proposed decrease to 11%.
- Of the four activities under SPO #1 (d), numbers 1, 2, and 4 have been completed and are ongoing. Number 3 was eliminated and replaced with number 2. The Study Skills Program was implemented in the fall of 2008. This Program is a cross-curricular endeavor. Activity 2 was amended to include mandatory study halls for all ineligible students. This program will begin after the first marking period of fall 2008 and is ongoing.
- The following is an update of the Study Skills program by Mrs. Linda Smith:
 “In accordance with Middle States objective 1d, the Study Skills curriculum continued implementation for the 2009-2010 school year. The curriculum began with the ninth grade students viewing the “Study Smarts” video and completing the workbook, during the first two days of orientation to the school.
 As of September of 2009, all juniors, sophomores and freshmen have successfully completed the “Study Smarts” workshop. A majority of the upper-classmen teachers have also successfully completed the workshop.
 A Study Skills pre-survey was given to the freshmen students to establish a baseline of study skills prior to entering high school. A study skills post-survey will be administered at the completion of the 2009-2010 school year.
 Study skills objectives continue to be revised and established to meet these objectives for integration into all 9th, 10th and 11th grade curricula for the 2009-2010 school year.”
- All student members of the Planning Team believe the Study Skills program has helped them in their studies. Peter said it has been very beneficial; Ben said it has helped him with organizational skills; Courtney said she has made good use of mnemonics. They agreed that being exposed to the “Study Smarts” program early in the freshman year sets a good precedent.
- It was suggested that all teachers should review “Study Smarts” skills both formally and informally.
- A discussion was held concerning our school’s tutoring program. Mrs. Patchett said she and Mrs. McQuaid will join forces to create one group of students who will tutor. More announcements will be made to let students know that tutoring is available.
- Some of SPO #1’s successes: Study Skills program, Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum, mandatory study halls for ineligible students, and AP scores.
- **Report on Student Performance Objective #2 Action Plan—Mrs. Hovland**
 Mrs. Hovland then reviewed the current status of Student Performance Objective #2 which relates to Student Life. Each sub-topic of the Action Plan was reviewed and several changes were noted as well as other comments from the Action Plan Team:

SPO #2 (a):

- Due to the high numbers from last year's survey it was decided to revamp the survey and administer it in fall of 2009. The students surveyed were 10th-12th. There was an increase of 14-percentage points from the 2004-2005 school year. The committee felt the new survey shows a more accurate rendering of student participation in social activities. Students will be surveyed again spring of 2009. Seniors will be surveyed during senior exams, and the rest of the students will be surveyed after prom.
- The Student Life Committee will be meeting before Thanksgiving break to initiate development of proposals and evaluation of established social activities. Four students from each grade will be asked to be on the committee to help with activity 3 and SPO #2E activity 3. The timeline for activity 4 was adjusted to school year 2011. Activity 5 is contingent upon the completion of activities 1 through 4.

SPO #2 (b):

- In the area of club and organization participation, data was updated to reflect the 2008-2009 school year. The data has been disaggregated to show participation rates by the respective classes (freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors). The data shows a slight increase from the baseline.
- The committee identified the development of two new clubs, the International Club in fall of 2008 and the Pro-Life club in spring of 2009, while also noting the loss of Mock Trial, Teen Advocacy, and Model UN clubs. SPO #2 committee identified the fact that student interest will expand the clubs. For example, International Club and Pro-Life Club began in 2008-2009 due to student interest and leadership, a Table Tennis club was also initiated in fall 2009. The Student Life Committee will be meeting before Thanksgiving break to look at the initiation of the new clubs and loss of other clubs, evaluating both issues.

SPO #2 (c):

- In the area of contested elections, data updated for the 2008-2009 school year shows both increases and decreases.
- Of the six activities designed to obtain 100% contested elections, activities 1 and 2 have been completed, with the SGA recommending no change after reviewing procedures for elections (activity 2). Activity 3 is being taken back to SGA to further discuss commitment to the leadership program. They will be looking at the MASC and NASC programs to decide how to implement a leadership program that will work with our school. Activity 4 will be implemented through various outlets such as the Star Democrat, the yearbook, the Parish Bulletin, and the school newspaper. Activity 5 was overwhelmingly approved by the SGA, implementing the student honor court to deal with minor disciplinary offenses. Scheduled timeline is to have a proposal completed by June 2010 for approval by the administration and to implement the Honor Court during the 2010-2011 school year.

SPO #2 (d):

- In the area of absenteeism, updated data for 2008-2009 school year reflects an overall 5.6% decrease in absences from last year, but a 3.2% increase over the baseline.

Absenteeism decreased in freshman, sophomore, and junior classes, but increased in the senior class.

- Electronic attendance has been implemented this fall for morning attendance, with electronic afternoon attendance to begin in fall 2009. Goal is to move to period attendance by January 2010. Activity 7 will be addressed once committee receives more info in regards to period attendance.

SPO #2 (e):

- In the area of extracurricular and athletic participation, data was updated for the 2008-2009 school year. The data reflected a slight increase in participation.
- Of the five activities designed to increase participation, activities 1 and 2 have been completed. For Activity 3 the Student Life Committee will be meeting this fall and will submit their written proposals. Activity 4 had a Cross Country team initiated last year as a club and has become a varsity team this year. There are no other sports team opportunities that we can participate in due to league and financial limitations as well as a limited student population. As stated in Objective B, the Pro-Life and International clubs are new clubs with strong student participation, as well as the Table Tennis club. Student Life will also complete Activity 5 fall of 2009 as part of their written proposal for Activity 3.

SPO #2 (f):

- Mr. Nemeth addressed Objective F through a one night brain-storming session with parents, students, and faculty. This session was held on September 29th and the results of this meeting are as follows:

Drug & Alcohol Brainstorming Session

September 29, 2009

Meeting Notes

What are the *primary issues* regarding drug and alcohol usage by our students?

VALUES ISSUES

1. According to the Blue Ribbon Commission report, this is first and foremost a parental issue. The primary reason that there is a drug and alcohol problem with teenagers in our community is that the community fosters that behavior through action, inaction, ignorance, and or denial.
2. Moral and ethical decision-making for young people is challenged (honesty)
3. Individual accountability is lacking
4. Lack of fear and brazenness of young people
5. Existence of teenage 'honor' (or dishonor) codes that limits information and intervention amongst peers
6. Failure to see the big picture (Long-term social, emotional, and physical consequences)
7. Peer pressure is enormous (most *cool* kids drink and take drugs)
8. Overcoming ignorance and denial of both students and parents
9. What reasons are there to drink? Not to drink?
10. Alcohol is viewed as acceptable and 'cool' rite of passage
11. Alcohol is a gateway drug to other substances (which are also becoming viewed as an acceptable part of the rite of passage for young people)

12. Difference between binge and social drinking

PRACTICAL CONCERNS

1. Lack of post-DARE education
2. Usage before or during school
3. Presence of drugs or alcohol at home parties
4. 'Taking of keys' parental approach
5. Access to drugs and alcohol – from home and outside sources
6. Prevalence of non-prescription meds – high access

Potential Ideas of Response

SCHOOL POLICY, LOCAL COMMUNITY, and LAW ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES

1. Review school's drug and alcohol policy – define and publicize consequences
2. Create and publicize policy for use of breathalyzers for school related activities
3. Randomly breathalyze students prior to or after student activities or before or during school
4. Review and remind parents and students about school search and seizure policy
5. Ask law enforcement to be present (in uniform) at major school events.
6. Remind parents and students that questions related to potential student use of drugs and or alcohol will be referred automatically to law enforcement
7. Periodic police presence at events and before, during, and after school
8. Invite Easton Police Department to use dog searches of school, lockers, and parking lots
9. Turn the lights up at future activities
10. Review time that students are allowed to show up for a dance or activity
11. Closed circuit cameras on rear parking lot

PARENT, STUDENT and SCHOOL EDUCATION & PASTORAL INITIATIVES

1. Survey students about perceptions of issue and what school can do
2. Integrate drug, alcohol and decision-making issues and topic into school curriculum
3. Publicize school point of contact that students can go to confidentially and without consequence
4. Focus any discussion or educational initiatives in small groups rather than school wide activities (allows for greater participation)
5. Examine college orientation programs for use at high school
6. Work with Talbot Partnership in creating a resource list of videos, books, online, pamphlets for parents and students and publicize to school community
7. Create a student assistance program in school
8. Student leaders at SSPP High School need to step up and take an active role
9. Send out pre-activity reminders about school policy and possible consequences – School – Talk to students
10. Increase of pastoral presence in schools
11. Start a SADD program at SSPP High School
12. Spiritual activities for students found in violation of school drug or alcohol policy
13. Invite parents to chaperone dances and major school events
14. Scared straight visit from lifelong drug addict

PARENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Participate in Safe Homes Program – Talbot Partnership
2. Create periodic information and discussion sessions for parents
3. Use TIPLINE to report homes that are holding parties where alcohol is available to minors
4. Create contracts with consequences with their children about these issues –
TALK with your kids
5. TALK (not lecture) with your kids
6. DO NOT trust your child's cell phone conversations – verify where they are
7. TALK with other parents (especially those parents your child associates with)
8. Be Face Book police – check your child's site periodically
9. Get over anger and denial on behalf of your children – Trust but verify

Post-Meeting Goal – Where do we go from here?

1. Ideas will be collated and distributed to parents, students, and appropriate community liaisons
2. Any changes in policy, preventive activities, or responses will be publicized to broader community
3. Reasonable adjustments may be enacted to subsequent activities at the school, including cancellation of certain events, policy revisions, etc.

- **Report on Student Performance Objective #3 Action Plan—Mrs. Biddle**

Mrs. Biddle then reviewed the current status of Student Performance Objective #3 which relates to Spirituality. Each sub-topic of the Action Plan was reviewed and several changes were noted as well as other suggestions that were made by the Action Team:

SPO #3 (a):

- In the area of increased participation in the voluntary retreat program, the data has been updated for the 2008-2009 school year and reflects that 70% of juniors and seniors participated in the program which is 17 percentage points above the 53% standard.
- Activities 1, 2, and 3 are complete and ongoing.

SPO #3 (b):

- In the area of participation in the Mission Team, the data has been updated and reveals that 40% of the student body were members of the Team in 2008-2009. This percentage is 14 percentage points above the 26% standard.
- Of the two activities designed to increase participation on the Mission Team both activity 1 and 2 have been completed.

SPO #3 (c):

- In the area of service hours, the data has been updated and reveals that 37% of the student body completed at least 150% of required service hours. The percentage is 7% above the proposed 30% standard.
- Of the three activities 1 and 2 have been completed. Activity 3 is ongoing and scheduled to be completed on time.

SPO #3 (d):

- In the area of discipline referrals, the data has been updated and reveals that 45% of the student body received at least one disciplinary referral during 2008-2009 school year. This percentage falls short of the proposed 39% standard.
- Of the three activities designed to decrease disciplinary referrals Activities 1 and 2 have been completed and are ongoing. Activity 3 is ongoing and scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2011. It has been determined that a peer ministry program has been implemented through the retreat programs and is ongoing.
- All four areas show tremendous improvement and have not only met, but are exceeding 2012 expectations.

When Mrs. Biddle finished her presentation, Mr. Linck asked if there were any questions, comments, or concerns about the 2009 Annual Report. Since there were none, the Report was accepted unanimously by those present.

- The meeting concluded with a prayer by Mr. Linck.
- Tentatively, the next scheduled meeting of the Planning Team will be April 20, 2010. Please put this date on your calendar.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Hovland, Middle States Co-Internal Coordinator
Mr. Tim Linck, Middle States Co-Internal Coordinator