

## SAINTS PETER AND PAUL HIGH SCHOOL



### MIDDLE STATES PLANNING TEAM Minutes from April 22, 2009

- The meeting began at 6:10 p.m.
- Present---Mr. James Nemeth, Ms. Caron Pons, Mrs. Edna Patchett, Miss Courtney Murray '12, Mr. William Duncan, Mr. Benjamin Payne '11, Mrs. Barbara Biddle, Mr. Steven Brohawn, Miss Katie Witwer '10, Mrs. Kim Kaestner, Mr. Tim Linck, Mr. Edward Bergman, Mrs. Linda Murray, Mr. Mark Murray, Mrs. Patricia Wiles, Mrs. Mary O'Shea, and Mrs. Gina Hovland
- Absent---Mrs. Vicki Cappa, Mrs. Debra McQuaid, Mr. Doug Becker, and Mr. Nick Lapres
- The meeting began with a prayer by Miss Katie Witwer.

#### **New Business:**

- Mr. Linck requested that we begin with an introduction of new members: Mrs. Patti Wiles, Mrs. Mary O'Shea, Mrs. Linda Murray, and Mr. Mark Murray.
- Mr. Nemeth thanked the new members for agreeing to work with the Middle States Planning team. He thanked Tim Linck for his diligent leadership and guidance in this process. Mr. Nemeth feels that this leadership has empowered the planning team and committees to accomplish great things.
- Mr. Linck then thanked and recognized the members who were moving on: Mrs. Paula Broll, Mr. Paul Galanek, Mrs. Rosemary Fasolo, Mrs. Julie Webb, Mrs. Linda Steinmiller, Mrs. Kim Kaestner, and Mr. Dan Leve. We are truly grateful for the time, effort, and insight these members afforded our Planning Team. He also stated that the SPO committees have been rotated this year with new chairs and members. The Administrative team felt this would bring a fresh look into the goals that still needed to be achieved.

#### **Old Business:**

- The minutes from the October 22, 2008 meeting were reviewed and approved.
- Mr. Linck then noted that the school's website link to Middle States has been updated. He felt this would prove to be a positive tool for families and those interested in the school. He also noted that the website contains a full text of the Middle States Mid-Point Review.

#### **New Business:**

- **Information on the Mid-Point Review which occurred in the fall of 2008**  
Mr. Linck informed the committee that their meeting packet contained a part of the letter informing us of our Mid-Point review. We were given two options; we could request a visitor to review us at our school, or we could choose to send a detailed written report. When opening the report on the website you will see how extensive the journey of the Middle State process has been. Mr. Nemeth and the Middle State committees are very pleased that our written report was accepted. The letter from Mr. Cram was also included in the folder. The Mid-Point Review was

sent December 12, 2008. We received a letter after several months validating the work that has been done by the SPO Action Plan teams, their committees, parents, and students.

Mrs. O'Shea requested clarification of the five AFG commitments listed in Mr. Cram's letter. The five commitments are:

1. **A Focus on Student Performance and Growth;**
2. **A Culture of Accountability in Student Performance;**
3. **A Planning Ethic;**
4. **Commitment to Continuous Improvement; and,**
5. **Involvement of Representative Constituents.**

Mr. Linck said that the full 123-page report with these items may be found on the website.

- **Report on Student Performance Objective #1 Action Plan—Mr. Linck and Mrs. Smith**

Mr. Linck explained to the new Planning Team members that the Student Performance Objectives (SPO) have data to help set up goals for the school. These objectives are data driven to prove that the goal is being met. Our school's mission statement which includes a focus on mind, body, and spirit spearheaded the three objectives. Under each objective are the goals, and the activities that help us to achieve our goals. The committees are made up of faculty and students. Mr. Linck also noted that action plan items that are lined out are items that have been changed. The committees left these lined out activities in and noted the changes below it. This was done for future committee members so they were aware of the process.

**SPO #1 a. 1:** Mr. Becker will take over the Advanced Placement Committee. This committee met once this previous year and worked on establishing a committee of AP students. Vertical teaming was completed last year by all departments. Habits of mind are presently being worked on in all departments. Horizontal teaming will take place next school year.

**SPO#1 b.:** Mr. Linck pointed out that activity 5 under (b.), which deals with strategies for reading and writing across the curriculum for all departments, has been implemented. These strategies have been shared by half the departments during our faculty meetings. The departments share with the faculty the ways they encourage reading and writing and the strategies they use in the classroom. This is also part of our horizontal teaming initiative.

**SPO#1 d. 1.:** Mr. Linck shared a report on Study Skills from Mrs. Smith. "The Study Smarts program was administered again this year. It was administered to all of the incoming freshmen students during their first two day orientation this year. The students viewed the Study Smarts video and completed a workbook during four sessions. A pre-assessment of their use and familiarity with study skills was also administered. All of the freshmen teachers reviewed the videos during the sessions. A majority of the tenth grade teachers also watched the videos. Study skills integration was included into the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum this year. Results: There were no ineligible 9<sup>th</sup> grade students this year for the first semester. A post-assessment will be administered to all freshmen students in June. The Study Smarts program is scheduled to be continued for the next academic year of 2009-2010." (Linda Smith)

**SPO#1 d. 2. a. b. c.:** The committee has struggled to find a viable plan for the students who become ineligible. Mr. Dahlen is presently tracking ineligible students and if they are attending their six study hall sessions that are mandatory. These study halls started first semester and have been successful. If an ineligible student does not go to their study hall, they receive a detention.

**SPO#1 d. 4.:** Mr. Nemeth asked whether the NHS tutoring program was active along with the peer group piloted tutoring program. Mrs. Patchett stated that NHS tutoring took place under her direction and the peer tutoring took place under Mrs. McQuaid's direction. Not all students who were ineligible

were targeted by NHS. Mrs. Patchett said she was not sure what Mrs. McQuaid was doing with the peer tutoring. Mrs. Patchett asked if the peer tutoring should be added to the plan. Mr. Linck responded that it is part of the student activity and should probably continue if it is beneficial to the students.

- **Report on Student Performance Objective #2 Action Plan—Mr. Brohawn**

**SPO #2 a. & b. 3:** Mr. Brohawn explained that his committee has learned a lot about students, collecting data, and outside considerations which limit student involvement in school activities. Our committee set a number of ambitious goals in an attempt to further student body participation. One major item we have learned is the process of obtaining viable information. This information has shown the need to redesign our survey instrument. We question whether a 99.5% number in participation is accurate. We have determined our students are very active, but are they active at a 99.5% rate. The committee has become more aware of this skewed number through anecdotal evidence.

**SPO #2 b.:** Mr. Brohawn stated that students who are active remain active and those students who were not active freshmen year do not increase their activities and tend to stay low throughout their high school career. The Action Plan team is looking at the types of activities offered and where students are involved outside of school. Mrs. Kaestner asked a question about the sharp decrease from the baseline number to our present number of students involved in activities. Mr. Brohawn explained that the numbers vary due to the first year survey where students identified the activities they belonged to. In following years, the number was based on the club moderators determining the students who were active. Mr. Nemeth asked what survey instrument is used now for determining who is involved in the various activities. Mr. Brohawn said the committee uses athletic rosters and academic profiles.

**SPO #2 c. 4:** Concerning elected positions, Mr. Brohawn stated that the committee came to the realization that a student can do a lot as a student leader without being in SGA. For example, students are officers in other organizations within the school. For example, Lizzie Grieves is very active in leadership through Key Club, and Keats Gardner has been very active in bringing about donations for the Lions Club glasses and Coat collection for the needy. These leaders typically have not been represented in our numbers. Mrs. Patchett confirmed this by saying SGA officers are also asked not to be officers in other groups. Another way the leaders are acknowledged is in the school paper when it is being printed. These leaders have their profiles identified. Another item that has been implemented this year is videotaping SGA speeches which may encourage those who are nervous about presenting their speech in person to run. All clubs have leaders and these are not counted in our data. Mrs. O'Shea asked where this understanding for leadership had been noted or listed in the plan. Mr. Brohawn said this is part of the goal for this year to implement this definition of leadership into the plan, if not now then it will be noted to be added in the next process. The exciting part of the struggles is they have helped us to recognize those who are active leaders within the school system who have not traditionally been counted.

**SPO #2 d.:** Mr. Brohawn said the Attendance Committee has met several times and is attempting to determine if attendance should be taken by period or by the day. There are technological as well as personnel issues involved for recording attendance either way. The committee was able to disaggregate the data by class this past year to give us a clearer picture as to absentee trends by grade level. There are issues as well with absences of convenience and long-term illnesses and how they impact the percentage of students with ten or more absences. Mr. Brohawn noted that it is likely that a student who has ten absences in a row needs to be evaluated differently than a student who misses two days in five different months. All agreed that 38% of the student body having ten or more absences during the 2007-2008 school year was an alarming figure. Mr. Nemeth added that Mrs. McQuaid and Mr. Dahlen were presently at a conference in Pennsylvania and one of the issues being covered will be how to switch from day to period attendance. He reemphasized the fact that it is a struggle with personal to keep track of the period attendance. Mr. Nemeth also explained that the number of absences we see for 15-18 days has decreased, while the numbers for 8-15 days has remained fairly consistent. Mr. Nemeth stated that he would like to have a schematic for this committee of what issues need to be dealt with and in what order.

**SPO #2 e.:** Mr. Brohawn suggested that the same issues his Action Team had with sections a, b, and c also apply to section e. Student participation may be influenced by factors other than how interesting the activities may be to students.

**SPO #2 f.:** Mr. Brohawn readily admits that this section is not at the top of his favorites' list. The Drug and Alcohol Task Force has eliminated the focus of a survey instrument to gauge student use and abuse of illegal substances. The reason being it is difficult to come up with accurate results. For example, did what we do make a difference? It is difficult without trained staff in recognizing problem students, and we have a pastoral duty to help those working out struggles. Mr. Nemeth will form a new ad hoc committee whose objective will be to identify specific actions and activities that can be implemented to dissuade students who might otherwise use alcohol or drugs. Mrs. Kaestner shared information on the MADD program that would be excellent to bring to our school; however, their reservations are booked a year in advance. If we are interested in this then we would want to reserve a date fairly soon for next year. If we want them in 2010-2011 then we need to start now. Mr. Nemeth went on to explain that the committee would be made up of students, parents, and faculty. They would brainstorm measurable activities. Then come up with specific things that are accessible to the students. Mr. Nemeth went on to state that the Blue Ribbon Commission identified Talbot as a community that allows abusive behavior with alcohol and drugs to happen, therefore another area to focus on is education at home and in the community.

- **Report on Student Performance Objective #3 Action Plan—Mrs. Cappa (Report shared by Mrs. Hovland)**

**SPO #3 a.:** Mrs. Hovland shared the statistics for 2008-2009 retreat participants at @80% of seniors attended their retreat and @ 88% of juniors. This year proved to be strong in retreat participants. The development of a video to promote the retreats has been moved to spring 2010. The development of a plan to have students who do not go on a retreat to still be part of the day has been reviewed by the Academic Council and is still in discussion. Mr. Pool shared with Mrs. Hovland that the majority of students are going on the optional retreats which is good. He also stated that one item being looked at is students not going on retreat would do Morning Prayer which would integrate the theme.

**SPO #3 b.:** This year's Mission Team has 25 students participating for the summer work experience, and a total of 88 students have participated in the Monastery service opportunity at this point in the school year. This puts us at 42% participation of the student body; this number is expected to be higher as the year progresses.

**SPO #3 c. 3:** Mr. Pool shared with Mrs. Hovland that the policy of service hours needed for graduation was implemented into this year's student handbook. He also stated that the 80 hours cumulative needed for graduation would be grandfathered in starting with the freshmen class. Mrs. O'Shea asked if the need to do 150% of required hours would still hold true for students when they hit the 80 hour requirement. Mr. Linck shared that the objectives are based on the baseline numbers, not each year's new totals. Once we have completed the cycle for these Middle States Objectives new ones will be established for the next cycle.

**SPO #3 d.:** Mr. Pool reported to Mrs. Hovland that the Peer Ministry Program has been implemented through the DeSpiritus class with Mrs. Cappa. The goal is to have it fully initiated by 2011.

- The meeting concluded with a Pauline prayer by Mr. Linck.

- **The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Team will be September 30, 2009. Please put this date on your calendar.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Gina Hovland, Middle States Co-Internal Coordinator

