

**PARADISE VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT – SECONDARY
Dr. John Weimer – Assistant Superintendent**

High School Graduation Committee Minutes March 31, 2005 – 3:-00-5:00 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: John Weimer **Scribe:** Carol Reiley **Timekeeper:** Kayce Sanchez

- Members in attendance: Dr. Weimer, Susan Benjamin, Jeff Billings, Jim Brewer, Curt Jablin, Laura Lamberto-White, Bev Lewis, Marti Marziani, Ronnie Milburn, Kayce Sanchez, Mitch von Gnechten, Susie Waldrom, Jon Walk, Julia Zandler, Jean Scharrer, Vic Harrell

Set Up

Dr. Weimer reviewed the ground rules; the minutes from 3/10/05 were approved; the agenda for 3/31/05 was approved.

Input for Committee

Dr. Weimer led the discussion by noting that this was to be our last scheduled meeting. Because we still have some things to address and reach consensus on, we have scheduled another meeting for April 14, from 3:00-5:00 in the Burgundy Room at the CRC. We are currently between readings of the PE recommendation by the Governing Board. The second reading will be April 7th.

Polaris Graduation Requirements (handout)

Director Jean Scharrer brought to the table a recommendation of a 20-credit graduation requirement for Polaris students. This is accomplished by eliminating the PE requirement and reducing the number of electives by one. Polaris does not have a PE facility, nor do they have a PE teacher on staff. A brief discussion followed with all questions/concerns addressed satisfactorily. A consensus was reached on this recommendation and will be presented at the April 14th Governing Board meeting.

Class Ranking (handouts)

At the last meeting, Dr. Weimer distributed recent articles on the topic of class ranking for all members to peruse. There isn't anything in the Governing Board Policy about class ranking so policy change is not required. Dr. Weimer recommends that we move from numerical class ranking to percentile ranking. A discussion followed.

Comments from the discussion:

- All of our high school principals support this recommendation.
- When we rank students numerically the top five are typically separated by only hundreds of a percent.
- Students go to great lengths to gain advantage.
- We want our students to be able to take classes that they need in order to be successful rather than take classes specifically because they are grade-weighted.
- One counselor commented that she sees kids give up classes that they're really good at (i.e. art, music, etc.) because the course doesn't carry a weighted grade.
- The 100th student typically has a GPA of nearly 4.0.
- Colleges may request but do not require class ranking.
- Ranking by percentile helps more students. It forces colleges to look at other factors which may contribute to student success in college.
- The kids never know who the top student is.
- This minimizes the "cutthroat" competition.

- The vast literature on this subject supports moving away from ranking. However, that may be due to the fact that few people write articles about keeping things the same.
- It is a trend across the country to eliminate class ranking.
- Other Arizona Districts (notably Scottsdale) do not rank students with no apparent negative impact on college acceptance.
- The possible ‘cons’ would be 1) that this is a change from what we’ve been used to; 2) the public may perceive this as a philosophical shift away from respecting academic success; 3) parents of the top students may feel their students are not adequately rewarded without ranking; 4) some colleges may protest the absence of ranking on the transcripts.
- This won’t hurt the top five but it *will* help all the others.
- GPA’s and percentile ranks would not be published or known until the 7th semester.
- Some students choose to not be in a higher math group because of possible effect on class ranking.

The following recommendation was brought to the table:

We will replace class rankings with percentile rankings beginning with the class of 2009 (incoming 9th graders). We will cease publishing cumulative grade point averages and class ranks. Percentile ranks will not be published until the 7th semester of each school year.

A consensus on this recommendation was reached.

Prepare for Next Meeting

Because legislation is still out on awarding differentiated diplomas, this committee will not be addressing that topic. The legislative decision will set the parameters for differentiated diplomas so it is impossible for us to make a recommendation.

Vic Harrel, Director of Vocational Education, briefly addressed the topic of adding a technology credit requirement. This topic is scheduled for the next meeting. Background information and a draft proposal will be emailed to committee members for perusal. After reading the email, please come prepared next meeting with input/alternative ideas/etc. regarding this topic.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Next meeting: April 14, 3:00-5:00 p.m. – CRC Burgundy Room (the Ivory was booked)