

High School Reform Task Force
Meeting-Palm Harbor, Florida
November 28, 2005
9:00 am -5:00 pm



SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES

Task Force Members in Attendance:

Commissioner John Winn, Senator Evelyn Lynn, Bill Vogel, Lou Miller, Peg Smith, Nancy Bostock, Stephanie Arma Kraft, James Lawson, Daniel Tosado, Joan Minnis, Rosann Sidener, Judy Marty, Fred Williams, Kathy Corder, Daniel Snyder, David Mosrie, Bob Morris, Sherri Hampton, Brenda Speed, Ed Massey, Bob Richburg

- The Commissioner called the meeting to order and asked members who were not present at the first meeting to introduce themselves.
- Principal Harry Brown welcomed the Task Force to Palm Harbor University High School.
- It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 18 meeting, and there was a unanimous "yea" vote.
- The Commissioner reviewed the public input received after the November 18 meeting.
- There was discussion regarding the lack of specificity in the posted strategies, including reading, and the Commissioner agreed to revisit the way of work for today's meeting and future meetings.
- Chancellor Yecke presented a presentation given at a recent Access Task Force meeting regarding Florida's K-20 pipeline.
- Dr. Judith Bilsky, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Students Affairs, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education, presented on Florida's dual enrollment programs.
- Discussion ensued regarding the equal weighting of dual enrollment programs to International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement programs.
- Nancy Cordill and Gayle Manley, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education, presented on the small learning community movement in Florida schools.
- David Barnes, Director of Career Adult/Technical Education for Pinellas County, provided an overview of such programs in his district.
- Pat Balance, Assistant Principal at Palm Harbor University High School, presented on the school's Center for Wellness and Medical Professions magnet program. She was assisted by students Rachel Sloan and Allan Gutberlet.
- Christine Lowry, Assistant Principal at Palm Harbor University High School, presented on the school's International Baccalaureate magnet program. She was assisted by students Somadina Nwokolo and Akash Parekh.
- Principal Harry Brown concluded the host school presentation.

- The Commissioner proposed condensing the original six goals of the Task Force into three goals. The Task Force members approved and the new goals are as follows:

Goal 1: Increase the academic achievement levels of high school students.

1a: Increase the percent of graduates prepared to enter postsecondary institutions without remediation.

1b: Increase the level of rigor of high school mathematics and science instruction.

1c: Increase the percent of teachers prepared to teach advanced courses at grades 6-12.

Goal 2: Increase the percent of high school graduates.

Goal 3: Increase the percent of graduates who begin their postsecondary path to college or career while in a Florida high school.

- The Task Force agreed to refine strategies for goal 1a and determine strategies for goal 3 at this meeting. Goal 2 will be discussed at the December 12 meeting.
- Members divided into groups and refined strategies for goal 1a. Groups reported out and strategies were voted upon. See results below.

Strategies ranked in priority order (those that received at least one vote)

- 1) Implement end of course assessments, especially in the senior year (17 between both groups)
- 2) Identify essential skills correlated to Webb's/Bloom's Taxonomy (12)
- 3) Institute a new way of thinking about middle school based on proficiency and credits; Ideas: FCAT stop-gap at 5th and 8th grade; provide remediation between 8th and 9th grades; 8th grade graduation based in proficiency; 5 year plan/8 year plan (start in 5th then recheck in 8th) (12)
- 4) Provide instructional leadership training for principals; develop professional learning communities (8)
- 5) Reallocate funds: class size requirements vs using resources for teachers (6)
- 6) Focus on restructuring, which requires changing the culture (2)
- 7) Ensure the foundation of academic skills in middle school (2)
- 8) Organize summer literacy camps for grades 6, 7, 8 (2)
- 9) Institute smaller learning communities with various delivery systems (2)
- 10) Include literacy benchmarks as part of all content areas (1)
- 11) Provide data-driven, student-specific, research-based professional development (1)

All Strategies Proposed

Group #1:

Academic Achievement

- Ensure the foundation of academic skills in middle school (2)

- Increase rigor of students
- Identify essential skills correlated to Webb's/Bloom's Taxonomy (12)
- Implement end of course assessments, especially in the senior year (17 between both groups)
- Include literacy benchmarks as part of all content areas (1)
- Organize summer literacy camps for grades 6, 7, 8 (2)
- Offer differentiated diplomas based on academic paths
- Institute smaller learning communities with various delivery systems (2)

Professional Development

- Focus on restructuring, which requires changing the culture (2)
- Provide instructional leadership training for principals; develop professional learning communities (8)
- Provide data-driven, student-specific, research-based professional development (1)
- Focus on articulation between community colleges, districts, and high schools

Group #2:

- Provide time for professional development; explore types of block schedules; increase time on task; extend school day or year; require 8 courses for students; move from 6 to 7 instructional periods for teachers
- Reallocate funds: class size requirements vs using resources for teachers (6)
- Institute a new way of thinking about middle school based on proficiency and credits; Ideas: FCAT stop-gap at 5th and 8th grade; provide remediation between 8th and 9th grades; 8th grade graduation based in proficiency; 5 year plan/8 year plan (start in 5th then recheck in 8th) (12)
- Develop a meaningful and technically-developed Academic Improvement Plan
- Require course proficiency exams that count towards final course grade (17 total)

- Mary Jane Tappen presented new information on goal 3.
- Members divided into groups and refined strategies for goal 3. Groups reported out and strategies were voted upon. See results below.

Strategies ranked in priority order (those that received at least one vote)

- 1) Emphasize career academies and career ladders for pupil progression (10)
- 2) Change the four year program so there is not a four year deadline to graduate; no penalty for schools or districts whose students take more than four years; takes a change in culture; students could take fewer classes if they need to work (10)
- 3) Expand guidance services for career counseling (8)
- 4) Expand exploratory pathways in middle school in grades 6 and 7; expose salary differences between jobs; encourage students to develop career plan by 8th grade (8)
- 5) Implement a program where teachers can earn in-service points for professional internships; this will provide on-the-job revitalization and opportunities for classroom modeling (7)
- 6) Add value points to a school's grade for program completers (4)
- 7) Update exploratory curriculum in middle schools (2)

- 8) Increase incentives for dual enrollment completion, similar to AP (2)
- 9) Promote a more positive image of vocational/technical programs (1)
- 10) Implement career clusters in high schools that lead to industry certification/readiness to enter postsecondary field of choice (1)

All Strategies Proposed

Group #1:

Community Support

- Encourage school-business partnerships
- Promote a more positive image of vocational/technical programs (1)
- Revise technical/career curriculum based on community needs
- Recruit teachers from technical sectors
- Provide financial support for vocational programs

Student Services

- Expand guidance services for career counseling (8)
- Focus on teacher/student relationships
- Emphasize career academies and career ladders for pupil progression (10)
- Offer differentiated diplomas and alternative assessments
- Update exploratory curriculum in middle schools (2)
- Develop relationship with business community
- Build learning communities through community teams and action-research teams

Group #2:

- Enhance opportunities for students to pursue strengths
 - Expand exploratory pathways in middle school in grades 6 and 7; expose salary differences between jobs; encourage students to develop career plan by 8th grade (8)
 - Implement career clusters in high schools that lead to industry certification/readiness to enter postsecondary field of choice (1)
 - Implement a program where teachers can earn in-service points for professional internships; this will provide on-the-job revitalization and opportunities for classroom modeling (7)
 - Change the four year program so there is not a four year deadline to graduate; no penalty for schools or districts whose students take more than four years; takes a change in culture; students could take fewer classes if they need to work (10)
 - Add value points to a school's grade for program completers (4)
 - Increase incentives for dual enrollment completion, similar to AP (2)
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- Carrie Fraser announced that the January meeting had officially been changed to January 19, location to be determined.

- Commissioner Winn thanked members for their service and adjourned the meeting.