
SUPERINTENDENT'S MEMO

TO: PROFICIENCY-BASED STEERING COMMITTEE
FROM: SUZANNE GODIN
SUBJECT: 12.17.13 MINUTES

Purpose - to broaden the K-12 plan and facilitate the implementation of the plan including Board and Community outreach. The members of that team will then be the liaisons back to their building teams.

Driving Questions:

1. How will we ensure that every student has an opportunity – and is encouraged – to “exceed the standard?” How will we identify exemplary work?
2. How will we recognize exemplary accomplishments in the areas of learning (content and Habits of Work)?
3. What changes to eligibility policies need to be made
4. How do we accurately and meaningfully report learning? What does our report card/transcript look like?

At the November 19, 2013 meeting, the Proficiency-based Steering Committee addressed the second driving question: ***How will we recognize exemplary accomplishments in the areas of learning (content and Habits of Work)?***

The committee determined the purpose of recognition was:

- Honoring achievement or an accomplishment
- Acknowledging hard work
- Showing what we value as a school body
- Developing a sense of pride
- Provide a goal/standard toward which to aim
- Acknowledging achievement above the expected standards
- Providing a motivation to students
- Identifying role models
- Encourage initiative
- Symbol or endorsement of exemplary or excellent work
- Recognition of growth or personal achievement

Themes that were highlighted were:

- Honoring and/or recognizing achievement/accomplishment
- Encouraging, developing, setting a standard for

Proposed belief statement

Recognition in the SPSD should honor the accomplishments of our students in addition to motivating and encouraging efforts toward our shared vision of excellence and personal achievement.

Characteristics of a Recognition System

- transparency: clear and unambiguous standards (both discipline/content area base or around Habits of work)
- provide symbols that serve to distinguish accomplishments
- honor and encourage student learning styles and interests
- We accomplish this by providing multiple, flexible, personalized learning pathways
- Recognitions are typically public (ceremonies, transcripts, etc.)

What are we doing right now?

Elementary schools

- Assemblies
- Class recognitions
- Display case showcasing the work of every student in the class
- Perfect attendance recognition
- Very little – if any – formal academic recognition
- Core value recognitions in the school
- At the end of 5th grade there are several awards recognizing honors such as: most improved, citizenship, content-area (though at times the criteria and transparency of these are not entirely clear)
- Individual student recognition is typically at the classroom level. This occurs usually by setting individual learning goals
- Public schoolwide recognition is typically reserved for entire classes
- There is a level of recognition for students identified as G/T (though it is not set up in this way)

Memorial

- Assemblies (quarterly at Memorial)
- New awards this year
- On a roll: award in 7th grade recognizing the consistent positive growth
- Memorial scholar, Leadership, Wildcat Way (citizenship), 21c: language of criteria for each is tied to H.O.W.
- Honor roll (As = High; A-B = Honor) in 7th and 8th
- Goal: to recognize every student at least once

Mahoney

- Year end assemblies
- Considering new awards similar to Memorial
- Awards honoring retirees that are subject specific
- Honor roll as well
- Involved students last year in creating other awards that are not explicitly about achieving a static, ambitious academic goal
- At the end of each week, 8th graders would come to earlier grade and would recognize students in earlier grades (e.g. citizenship, kindness, etc.)

High School

- Honor roll (based on numbers with varying weights assigned to particular types of classes)
- Class rank (based on numbers with varying weights assigned to particular types of classes)
- NHS
- World Language Honor Society
- Other clubs and organizations have awards. However these don't tend to be very public
- Evening of excellence (book awards + each department). Some are quite specific, but many are not necessarily awarded using a clear and consistent criteria
- Banquets at the end of the year to recognize athletics and co-curricular
- PATHS has ceremony recognizing exemplary work accomplished
- Students wear cords at graduation based on GPA
- JMG has a competition recognizing individual students and teams
- School-specific recognitions, awards, accomplishments, endorsements, etc. would be stated in the school profile which accompanies a student's transcript

What are other schools (who have transitioned to a proficiency-based system) doing?

Mark shared a couple of exemplar policies who share the following features/characteristics:

- Elimination of arbitrarily establishing a specific number or percentage of students to recognize (e.g. Top 10 or top 10%)
- Connect specifically to learning and achievement of school standards
- Use cumulative GPA based on average scores representing achievement on the set of graduation standards
- No additional weights added to the GPA based on the setting or course a student enrolled in
- Establish cut scores/bands for three tiers of Latin Honors
- In some cases, school will also indicate that there is a minimum H.O.W. score required to be eligible for the Latin Honors

What specific ideas do we have?

- Need to make sure we provide supports and scaffolding for students and adults as we make this shift
- Importance of transparency
- There need to be opportunities for students to distinguish themselves

Next steps

1. Policies needed:
 - a. Develop a recognition policy (in a proficiency-based system). Includes belief statement, characteristics, and cut-scores. A group needs to work on identifying these
 - b. Revise grading policy to align with proficiency-based system
2. A document that will serve as an implementation guidebook for recognition and for grading

3. Determine the mathematical GPA cut points for the three levels of Latin honor recognitions. Include statement about HOW
4. Forward to Policy Committee
5. Work on eligibility policy
6. Habits of mind: disposition, K-12, aligned with GPs

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, January 21, 2014

2:00-4:00 pm

Mahoney Middle School Room 114 (Where we met last month)