



SUGAR GROVE ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL

8405 Bonhomme, Houston, TX 77074

(713) 271-0214 FAX (713) 771-9342

Shared Decision-Making Committee Agenda

Date: October 17, 2019

Location: School Library

Time: 4:15pm – 5:30pm, (75 Minutes)

Present Participants:

School Staff Teachers: Orlando Reyna, U’Nika Harrell Ms. Angers

Parent/Community Member/Scriber: Miguel Dominguez

Agenda/Discussion:

- I. SDMC Meeting Minutes from May Meeting
- II. School Improvement Plan/Targeted Improvement Plan
- III. Organizational Chart
- IV. Enrollment Increase
- V. Grading Policy
- VI. Improvement Required Program/Campus (IR2)
- VII. Transparent Coaching Experience
- VIII. Magnet School Status Update
- IX. New Electives
- X. Yearbook

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Shared Decision-Making Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: October 17, 2019

Location: School Library

Time: 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (75 Minutes)

- I. SDMC Meeting Minutes from May Meeting
 - All member received a copy of the May minutes to review and ask questions.
- II. School Improvement Plan/Targeted Improvement Plan
 - Mr. Reyna reviewed the School Improvement Plan
- III. Organizational Chart
 - Each Member received a printed copy of the current SGA Organizational Chart
- IV. Enrollment Increase
 - Dean Harrell explained the need to hire additional teachers due to the enrollment increase from 2018-2019 school year. The current enrollment 768 students an increase from approximately 684 for an additional 84 students.
- V. Grading Policy
 - Dean Harrell explained the need for a uniformed grading policy and a failure notification letter. Each member received a printed copy of both to review and make suggested changes. The policy and letter with proposed policy is below. Proposed changes are in blue.

Uniformed Grading Policy

Uniform grade weighting will be applied in every grade level and in every content area for which grades are recorded in GradeSpeed.



Rationale: All student work falls into a few major categories and a uniform weighting system allows us to use a common language with all stakeholders, including parents. This also ensure equity vertically and horizontal (within and across grade levels).

-Homework:10%

-Classwork: 50%

-Tests/Common Assessments:15%

-Quizzes/Projects: 25%

-Teachers can design and utilize a classwork rubric that fits their specific grade level and content as long as this is explained to parents at the beginning of the academic school year, in writing.

-Project rubrics must be given to students and sent to parents when the project is assigned.

- *Ms. Angers proposed changing the grade allocations from – Test and Common Assessments/Project count for 25%*
- *Quizzes 15%.*

She stated that due to the different expectations for projects and homework that the allocations should differ. The committee agreed.

- *Mr. Dominguez state that homework incentives should be given. The students who complete homework the most times throughout the year will receive a Pizza Party. He stated that he would sponsor the pizza and the sodas. The committee agreed.*

One campus wide homework policy will be observed for every grade level and in every content area for which grades are recorded in GradeSpeed.

Rationale: We know that students' ability to successfully complete homework is highly influenced by parental involvement and even parent's own educational levels. We want to build a homework habit and routine but also not penalize students who lack the resources to complete homework and/or have not yet developed the skill set of homework completion. We know that without one streamlined approach to homework, many teachers abandon the practice of assigning homework because they start to feel that the results are not worth the effort.



-If homework is worth 10% and teachers collect 10 homework grades per cycle, each homework assignment is only worth 1% of a child's total grade. This keeps students accountable but ensures a child could never fail based solely on homework (which they may or may not have support in place at home).

-Students should receive math homework on Mondays and Wednesdays and reading homework on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Social studies and science homework can be assigned over the weekend. Math and reading homework can be assigned over the weekend but this should be explained to parents in writing at the beginning of the academic school year.

- **Ms. Angers suggested we speak with content teachers to decide on days for content homework**
- **Mr. Reyna stated that we will pick days Monday-Thursday to stay 1.5 hours for tutorials to use for content and homework support. The committee agreed.**

-Teachers will select ten assignments throughout the cycle that they will collect as a grade. A child can receive a 100% (completed and correct) an 90% (completed and mostly correct) a 70% (incomplete or mostly incorrect) or a 50% (nothing completed). The average of these ten homework grades will account for 10% of the child's overall grade. Even though teachers are only formally evaluating 10 homework assignments per grading cycle it should still be collected or very briefly checked each day so that students build this critical habit.

-Teachers can design and utilize a homework make-up policy but this is not required. If they choose to, this should be explained to parents in writing.

The 100-90-70-50 approach for homework grading leans towards a rubric approach and ensures we aren't just checking for completion. If teachers want to create a more specific version of this homework rubric (that aligns to a specific content area) teachers must provide this to parents in writing at the beginning of the year.

Any common assessment or quiz grade lower than a 70% requires a documented re-teach and a re-assessment.

Rationale: If a student fails an independent assessment, we know that this means they haven't mastered the content at a satisfactory level. We are obligated to re-teach the content and provide students with another chance to be successful after re-teach.



-Every time a child scores less than 70% on a quiz or test they need to be re-taught and re-tested. Students can retake an assessment or complete an aligned alternate assessment for a replacement grade once for a total of 2 attempts. All grades are entered in Grade speed. Further attempts past two totals are at the teacher's discretion but this must be explained to parents in writing at the beginning of the academic school year.

-Teachers may choose to document re-teach in their lesson plans or in individual student files. Teachers may choose to use the original assignment to do a re-teach with the child but then must utilize an alternate aligned assessment for the re-test. If teacher does not use the original assignment for re-teach, they have the option of using the same assignment or an alternate aligned assessment for re-assessment.

-If the child fails a re-assessment (scores below 70%) they should be provided with another re-teach (documented) and a second reassessment. Further attempts past three total chances are at the teacher's discretion but this must be explained to parents in writing at the beginning of the academic school year.

- If the final re-assessment grade is between 50-69% it should be entered as such. If a child successfully, independently completes a re-assessment (2nd attempt) and scores any grade between 70%-89% the score shall be entered as a 70%. If a student scores any grade between 90%-100% this score shall be entered as a 80%. This ensures that students who might demonstrate mastery on the first attempt do not end up having lower averages than a student who achieves a 100% on a third attempt.) If the teacher follows a personal practice of never giving a child a grade below 50%, they would enter the final re-assessment grade (between 049%) as such but then override it with a 50%.

-Re-teach and re-test as it applied here happens only in the classroom; none at home or via homework.

Re-assessments do not need to contain the same number of questions as the original assignment. Length does not matter as long as the re-assessment has at least three questions that sufficiently measures mastery of the objective or sub-concept that was retaught.

Any classwork or project grades a child receives lower than a 70% requires that the child be given a reasonable opportunity to make-up the assignment.



Rationale: Classwork/project grades are the area in which there is the largest variance between each grade/content/classroom. The amount of teacher and peer support for each classwork assignment varies largely even within a classroom. If a student is trying and scoring lower than a 70%, they deserve an opportunity to make-up the grade, but they do not necessarily require reteach as the original assignment may not have been a fully independent assignment. If a student receives a 0% or otherwise failing grade due to noncompliance, this again is a behavioral concern that must be addressed with the child (restorative vs. punitive approach).

-Any grades lower than 70% will require a make-up opportunity to be provided to the child.

-The SGA Make-Up Assignment cover sheet should be attached to the assignment and students must be given a minimum of 3 days to complete the work. Teachers can choose to ask the child to re-do the same assignment or can assign an aligned alternative assignment that will be attached to the SGA Make-Up Assignment cover sheet.

- *Dean Harrell requested to add “This also applies to students who were absent.”* The committee agreed.

-Teacher can determine the length of time they want to allow for make-up assignments, but this must (a) be no shorter than 3 school days (b) be no longer than one grading cycle and (c) be explained to parents in writing in the beginning of the academic school year.

- If make-up grade is between 50-69% it should be entered as such. If a child successfully, independently completes a reassessment and scores any grade between 70%-89% the score shall be entered as a 70%. If a student scores any grade between 90%-100% this score shall be entered as an 80%. (Again this ensures students who score high in classwork on the first attempt still have the “highest” grades). If the teacher follows a personal practice of never giving a child a grade below 50%, they would enter the make-up assignment grade (between 0-49%) as such but then override it with a 50%.

-Teachers can design and utilize a classwork rubric that fits their specific grade level and content as long as this is explained to parents at the beginning of the academic school year.



-If teachers know that the reason a child isn't bringing back a make-up assignment because of parent ability/willingness, the teacher should find opportunities during the school day for the child to make-up the assignment.

We recognize that it is not best practice to allow a child to earn a grade lower than 50% and that it is not best practice to enter grades of 0%.

Rationale: We know that students' averages cannot recover if we are entering grades lower than 50. A score of a 50% is just as much of an F as a score of a 13%. We know that if a student tries and scores less than a 50 this means they have not mastered the content which means it is not fair for us to evaluate them in this area before we reteach and retest. If a student is choosing to not complete an assignment, we are obligated to address this student choice (restorative vs. punitive approach).

-If a teacher decides that they are not comfortably giving a child a grade lower than 50%, they can still follow many practices to ensure fairness for all students. These practices can also ensure that there is a record for parents to follow if they are questioning the grades their child has been given. Many teachers practice placing the actual grade (the grade between 0-49%) in the first column on Gradespeed and then entering the 50% (override grade) into the second column. This ensures parents know that the child didn't receive a 50%, they received a 0-49% but the teacher chose to override it.

-Many teachers who follow this practice choose (for consistency) to apply this rule for any student, any category of assignment, with any grades ranging from 0%-49%, including student refusals and blank submissions. It is recommended that refusals should be recorded as such in the notes section and parent communication should occur for every refusal.

If a child's re-assessment or make-up grade is ever lower than the original attempt, the highest grade earned shall be used in the child's grade book.

Any additional teacher policies regarding grading not explicitly covered in the staff handbook must be approved by Mr. Reyna and explained to parents in writing in the beginning of the academic school year. These may include extra credit, long-term assignments, discretionary make-up policies (ie- student got an 80% but wants to try for a 100%), etc.

Teacher must make phone or in-person contact with the parents of any child who is failing any content area at least once every 3 weeks. At this time the parents must be presented with an itemized GradeSpeed assignment print out.



To ensure that we have updated contact information, all students will receive a "Student Information Update" paper at least twice a semester. In the event that no known numbers are working (including numbers listed on tutorial form permission slips, numbers the child gives you directly, etc.) it is the teacher's responsibility to notify their appraiser so that a home visit may be conducted. Teachers should check both the home chancery screen as well as the Address/Phone tab at this always contains extra contact numbers.

- *Mr. Dominguez stated that students should know what their options are when they make a low grade or miss an assignment. He requested that we make a "What to Do if I fail or miss an Assignment" poster. It should list step by step*
 1. *Speak with your teacher*
 2. *Ask to attend tutorials*
 3. *Request to make up and resubmit assignment.*
- *Ms. Angers informed the committee that a lot of our newcomer students are failing and asked that we address grading for Els.*
- *Dean Harrell stated that we would look into a specific grading policy for newcomers which should be based on performance/rubric based task and that students should not fail solely based on a language barrier. The committee agreed.*



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Student: _____

Teacher/Course: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you that your student is at risk of failing or failed their _____ advanced placement course. Their current average is _____. The success of your student in an advanced placement course is very important and based on their progress I am very concerned. It is my goal to ensure that we are doing everything possible to help your child be successful. Therefore, I would like to schedule a mandatory conference with you on _____. If you are unable to attend a face to face conference, a phone conference may be scheduled.

During this conference we will discuss the Sugar Grove Academy grading policy, and mandatory measures your student must complete in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Due to the importance of this meeting, if you are unable to attend or fail to respond, your student will be removed from the advanced placement course.

If you have any questions in response to this notification, please contact _____ or email _____ Telephone: (###) ###-####

Thank you,

Teacher Name

Subject Grade Level



VI. Improvement Required Program/Campus (IR2)

- Dean Harrell explained the meaning of IR2 and Achieve 180
- Mr. Reyna explained why we must have a Target Improvement plan and that it will be posted on the Sugar Grove website.

VII. Transparent Coaching Experience

- Mr. Reyna and Dean Harrell explained the vision for side by side collaboration and on the spot coaching with teachers to improve instruction. The model includes the Principal, Appraiser, and district support personnel. Mr. Reyna explained that he will begin with the teachers who volunteered to begin the experience and move forward until the entire campus is part of the transparent coaching model.

VIII. Magnet School Status Update

- Dean Harrell explained that Sugar Grove reminded the committee that we will be a Fine Arts Magnet school. The school has received new band instruments.

IX. New Electives

- We will hire offer Theater Arts as an elective to help with the increased enrollment number
- Elective classes are overcrowded
- We are currently interviewing teachers for the 2019-2020 school year. We are currently interviewing.
-

X. Yearbook

- SGA has will have a yearbook this year for \$35.00
- So far only one sold
- We will sell ads to business to have a page in the yearbook.
- Parents will receive a callout to notify them of the yearbook offer.

Open Discussion:

Free ESL class for adults are taking place weekly at SGA. Mr. Reyna would like to increase participation. Mr. Dominguez stated that if we make a poster, he will put it up in Pizza Patron.

Meeting adjourned at: 5:30 p.m.