

Garden City High School
Curriculum Meeting Notes
October 19, 2021

Parent Reps:
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AGENDA

1. Project-based learning (PBL):

True project-based learning is a very new way to look at curriculum. It requires teacher training and long-term planning. The High School has begun project-based learning with an Algebra II non-Regents course. Research is still ongoing about how to best implement this new initiative. NYS may be looking into the development of a diploma track in the future focused on project-based learning; this would entail new requirements for graduation.

2. PLTW (Project Lead the Way):

The district is continuing to interview for qualified, experienced instructors. The future direction of the program (as well as which modules may be offered) depends on securing teachers who are trained in PLTW. There is student interest in having the program continue, along with AP coursework (AP Bio, AP Chem, AP Physics, and AP Environmental Science).

3. Honors courses:

Honors criteria and coursework varies by department and grade level. For example, a Social Studies honors class is only offered in 9th grade, and after that the coursework goes to AP level. Teachers determine the amount of work required, but the work must be appropriate to the grade level. Over the years, departments have used guidelines, such as material on SAT subject tests, to help develop coursework that furthers student engagement.

4. Expanded Writing Center and Math Lab:

The library Writing Center and Math Lab are open every lunch period. The program has been expanded this year to include before school at 7 am and after school until 3:25 pm. Math Lab extended hours are 3 days per week. The Writing Center is currently open every day due to the large number of students who are working on college essays. Later in the year, the focus will be writing research papers. Appointments are required for the Writing Center to make sure every student gets the help required.

5. Student progress 2020-2021:

AP test results last year were the best ever in our district. Over 70 percent tested three or higher. The College Board stopped naming National AP Scholars, but the High School would have had 35 National AP Scholars this year (a score of four or higher on eight AP tests). In addition, the High School had 86 Scholars with Distinction this year (three or better on four AP exams). Next year the AP testing model will go back to the traditional (2019 and prior) model.

Generally, teachers reported that report card grades did not go down overall last year. What has been noticed is a slight dip in executive functioning related to organization and study skills, as well as in social skills related to classroom engagement. Things are improving already and will continue to be addressed by teachers and guidance counselors. The school district's new mental health initiative will also be helpful.

Students are showing interest in school clubs and events. The Freshman BBQ was well-attended by two-thirds of the Freshman class. Spring Fling will be back this year. Peer educators will begin soon; this program helps to break down barriers between upperclassmen and younger students. Lunchtime offers students many options. There is seating inside and outside the cafeteria, out in the courtyard, in the library, and soon in the auditorium as well. These are efforts to give the students space to socialize as well as find some downtime and increased freedom within the school day.

6. SCOPE (SAT/ACT prep, college essay workshops, etc.):

SCOPE is not a program run by the High School, though a liaison exists in the district (Dan Seid). However, the High School can request future offerings (such as SAT and ACT prep in the spring) depending on student interest. SCOPE offerings will not necessarily be taught by Garden City teachers, but SCOPE provides their own qualified teachers.