

School Council Meeting Minutes/February 2, 2010

Communications: Council website is complete and in the near future will have a link on the NSHS website

Data Team Review: NSHS Achievement Gaps Analysis: Understanding Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Racial Gaps Through Data

(Students receiving SPED services or in ELL category were controlled, not eliminated, in order to isolate and analyze SES.)

General Findings: **Three questions asking if socioeconomic and racial gaps existed at NSHS were answered with a definitive yes.**

1. Are there socioeconomic and/or racial gaps in the percentage of curriculum II classes taken?

-397 students, current juniors were reviewed.

-Looked at %age of 9th/10th leveled classes that were curriculum II

-Looked at # of students receiving free/ reduced lunch to determine SES (from 3rd grade on)

-Results: Significantly more African American and Hispanic students were in Curriculum II classes when compared to the Asian or White student population.

2. Are there SES and/or racial gaps in academic achievement?

- 418 students, current juniors were analyzed

- Looked at combined measures; unweighted GPA, English Language Arts MCAS and Mathematics MCAS (determined these variables before analyzing results).

– Results: Of the total group analyzed, ½ students scored above and below the median (measure of central tendency) and mean; peak for kids never receiving free lunch is much higher and above the mean/median on the histogram opposed to kids who did receive lunch where the peak was below the mean and median.

3. When we compare students who take the same percentage of curriculum II classes, do the achievement gaps persist?

-Further histogram analysis showed that the distribution of peaks was consistent with subcategories of students studied. In other words, when separated, the peaks for African American and Hispanic students were found to be below the mean/median and those for White and Asian students to be above.

-A Scatter Diagram analysis showed that white students not on free lunch consistently scored highest on a curve. African American students not on free lunch and white students on free lunch similarly scored lower and African American students receiving free lunch scored significantly lower than all other

groups. Two major gaps were evident; the first is the difference between the white students not receiving free lunch and the white students receiving lunch/African American students not receiving lunch and the second gap was between the above categories compared to the African Americans students receiving free lunch.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Major Goals:

- Feedback from staff and parents
- Principal's working group an achievement
- A renewed focus on achievement as part of our school improvement goals

Feedback from Council

- Need to look at support and perception of students as much as focusing on direct academic skills
- Need to look at level of support the different categories of students receive
- Build on positive approaches or strategies that already are effective and expand them
- If really want to reinforce kids taking a risk, let them receive a Pass/Fail versus a grade
- don't try to fit all kids in an academic setting; some kids are not geared toward college but more vocational skills and should be reinforced for their strengths
- Try to expand Modern Global Communities Classes with different types of kids
- the logistics of switching classes can be very burdensome and hinders students
- -Need to focus more on students' strengths/achievements not their weaknesses/failures. Don't try to fit kids in one mold.
- Need to be more flexible as teachers
- Maybe try to group students that know each other or are more comfortable with each other.
- Move students taking curriculum II classes into different clusters that foster improved learning.
- better help students understand how they learn and reinforce those skills