



Blue Ridge Middle School (BRMS)
Heterogeneous Grouping Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes

Date: March 15, 2013

We believe the purpose of implementing heterogeneous class methodologies in English 8 is to produce increased levels of achievement for all learners and enhance the positive climate of English 8 classrooms at Blue Ridge Middle School.

Members present: Matt Bolen, BRMS Assistant Principal - Chairman; Brion Bell, BRMS Principal; Karin Nixon, BRMS 7th Grade Dean; Allyson White, BRMS 8th Grade English Teacher/Subject Area Lead Teacher (SALT); and Theresa Rosette, BRMS Parent and current PTO President; and Karen Dillon, former BRMS PTO President. **Not in attendance:** Pat Kinney, PhD., Consultant, former Adjunct Professor at the University of Maryland and former Director of the National Child Care Center.

Agenda Item:	Notes:
Community Questions & Comments	<p>A 7th grade parent of an academic student called Mr. Bolen for information about the program. In addition to speaking with him, she was directed to the website. She expressed positive feelings after talking with Mr. Bolen about the opportunities to promote success of all students by challenging them.</p> <p>Nothing new from Mrs. Rosette from the community. She expressed that her 8th grade son feels very ready for the writing SOL.</p> <p>Discussion: We are always looking to create a climate of high achievement—more kids trying honors/ above & beyond option. This is significant when we think about numbers of students in subgroups who are enrolled in honors.</p> <p>Re: Minorities in honors. Mrs. Rosette asked—what can we do to help parents who are hampered by outside circumstances—to help them to help their kids? Mr. Bell mentioned our use of buses & snacks for STAR program. He also suggested parent volunteers to be tutors for recovery school on Friday—particularly for math. We are not sure yet about privacy concerns. Mrs. Rosette suggested seniors as a possibility, perhaps from the Carver Center, and suggested that there should be training (on privacy issues).</p> <p>Discussion of students who need camp: Names are being established. Because of roof replacement, BRMS cannot host summer enrichment of any kind.</p>

<p>Preview of 3rd Quarter English 8 Diagnostic Test Results</p>	<p>Writing diagnostic results were positive. Students typed responses and scoring was completed by English teachers (teachers did not score their own students' papers). Analysis is not finished yet; however, Mrs. White was able to share that for her students the median increase was +.7 points (on a 1-6 overall scale where 3 is grade level). Students wrote a reflection comparing both writing diagnostic assignments so they could diagnose differences in scoring (positive or negative) and areas of growth and improvement.</p>
<p>Preview of a 9th Grade Honors English Assignment</p>	<p>The structure of 9th grade honors assignment is similar to 8th grade at Blue Ridge, i.e....including assertion, proof, and commentary in essay development. Comparison between high school assignment and BRMS analytical essay was conducted. The committee viewed middle school assignment as rigorous and in line with the high school assignment.</p>
<p>2013-2014 School Year</p>	<p>2013-2014: By unanimous decision the committee decided to continue heterogeneous instruction in English 8; the Steering Committee will continue to meet to monitor progress.</p> <p>Suggestion: Have perhaps a day a month when parents are specifically encouraged to come in and see what is going on—in addition to the general “open door” policy. This can particularly help to highlight the extra training that is happening. This can help to make people feel that they really are welcome.</p> <p>How to get message out to rising 8th grade parents: Bulldog Bytes, ConnectEd, then directed to a fuller explanation/ more information, statement on webpage.</p> <p>Should BRMS present to Curriculum and Instruction Committee about progress during the last year? Progress of steering committee should be shared.</p>
<p>Upcoming Meeting</p>	<p>10:30 on Friday, April 26th</p> <p>Agenda Item: Committee requesting student writing work samples to view progress of a few students during the year.</p>