

Work Group Recommendations

BOE Discussion – Recommendation Categories

- (1) Novel, relevant and appropriate for Sub-Committee assessment
- (2) Relevant and currently within the scope of tasks aligned to district goals (and, thus, captured within current budgetary initiatives)
- (3) Contrary to district goals
- (4) Opinion, non-actionable

General Recommendations

1. **Relevant** There are many changes that can be implemented that will not only save money, but actually improve the quality of education at SHRHS. The district needs to recognize and take advantage of its small size. It cannot offer the same range of options that a large high school can, but it can offer a smaller set with very high quality.
2. **Relevant, Contrary, Opinion** There should to be a heightened sense of urgency in executing changes. The district has acknowledged certain actions that can decrease costs, but has not always taken action on these. It is imperative that those actions be taken as soon as possible.
3. **Relevant, Opinion** Cost savings in one line item should not be viewed as an entitlement to raise costs in another line item. For example, there are anticipated savings in out-of-district placement costs over the next several years. These savings should be reflected in the overall budget.
4. **Relevant** The district must make choices that will not always please all constituents. Not every sport or club can be offered for example. The operating principle must be to do a smaller number of things really well and give children an opportunity to participate in high-quality experiences.
5. **Novel, Relevant** The district must use data to inform its decision making. For example, when students are put in certain academic tracks, purportedly because it meets their academic needs, what are the academic outcomes? Do students in lower tracks succeed in school? Are they prepared for academic work after high school? It is not enough to simply claim that a

program is “good for students” and its elimination is “bad for students.” People are more willing to accept such claims if there is supporting data and evidence.

6. **Relevant** Increase the tuition paying student population through marketing of the school to surrounding school districts (by showing improvement in the school; highlight students that write success stories in the newspaper; scout good sports players that are lost at larger schools that are looking to make a contribution at a smaller school.

Programs/Curriculum

1. **Novel, Relevant** Elective offerings: Criteria should be set so there is a minimum class size required to offer an elective course - if this is not met after selection process it should be eliminated from the course of studies. Phys. Ed, Gym, Music & Band Classes to continue to be looked at to include the maximum number of students per period.
2. **Novel, Relevant** For all non AP courses 9th, 10th, 11th, & 12th grade Math, History, Science, & English they attempt to have a minimum class size of 20. So in other words in a 9th grade Algebra class there should not be one class of 9 & another of 12. Understand it's a lot of work to make it happen but, not even private schools have that low class size.
3. **Novel, Relevant, Contrary** Instructional Costs: There are a very large number of courses with very small enrollment. There appears to be a very high level of tracking students in courses, an approach that has, in general, no educational benefit. Classes can be merged across grades and across tracks, resulting in a reduced set of courses. This should eliminate the incremental cost of paying additional compensation for teaching 6th courses. It will also have the potential effect of reducing a number of teaching positions. Options that increase educational access while reducing costs should be pursued – Advanced Placement courses offered through distance learning providers are one likely candidate, for example.
4. **Relevant** Assess all programs and work loads for all teachers, and analyze electives to determine levels of interest.

Special Education

1. **Novel, Relevant** The group recommends that South continue to evaluate the non-mainstreamed classrooms and make reduction adjustments where possible. Fewer of these classrooms may be educationally more appropriate and will result in cost savings. South needs to address the cost to support Spec Ed, which is primarily attributed to the unusually high percentage of classified students. However, the group has determined that the Spec Ed enrollment is not limited to, nor precipitated by the school. While the aggregate Spec Ed for the elementary schools is 14% as compared to South's 22%, it was shown that 6th grade Spec Ed was more at 25% due to the cumulative nature of classification. Thus South Spec Ed numbers were inherited from the sending districts. There is no obvious explanation for why placement rates, particularly from Lambertville Public School, should be so much higher than state averages. While the Committee recognizes the importance and need for appropriate classification of students, efforts are needed to understand this apparent discrepancy with other schools in the state. Recognizing South's limited authority in driving change at the

sending schools, we recommend they engage and partner with the sending districts to explore and achieve reduced Spec Ed placement rates. There needs to be a much better actuarial sense of what the future holds with respect to special education placement rates are likely to be going forward. SHRHS ought to be able to predict on the basis of elementary classification rates in 2nd through 4th grades, what the likely classification rate will be for the entering cohort of 7th graders. Obtaining the necessary data will require close cooperation

2. ***Novel, Relevant*** Obtaining a clear understanding of why classification rates have been historically so high. There is no obvious explanation for why placement rates, particularly from Lambertville Public School should be so much higher than state averages. While the Committee recognizes the importance and need for appropriate classification of students, efforts are needed to understand this apparent discrepancy with other schools in the state. We recommend an external state audit by those with expertise and training to help the community understand the problem with more clarity. While it cannot be assured, the hope is that classification rates will begin to align more with expected patterns, resulting in substantially lower costs over with the sending districts via the shared child study team.
3. ***Relevant*** Continue to move to practices that put students in the least restrictive environment. Fewer of these classrooms are both educationally more appropriate and will result in cost savings. Out-of-district placements should be used only when necessary.
4. ***Novel, Relevant, Opinion*** We should remember that one reason for the formation of our committee was to better advise the SHRHS B of E on community outreach before the budget is presented to the voting (and non voting) public. In this capacity we should advise the B of E not to place such emphasis on its ability to provide Special Ed services as it did in its last newsletter, in which nearly half of the letters content boasted of special Ed as something of a priority, such emphasis clearly frustrates voters.
5. ***Relevant, Contrary*** Analysis of data provided by Drew Gitomer reveals that two policies should be addressed, one is to reach out to LPS requesting a raising of the bar for "classification" as well as all IEP's, this coupled with a streamlining of the declassification procedure may well result in a much lower percentage of special Ed students at SHRHS.
6. ***Relevant*** It is recommended that SHRHS develop a plan of action that could lead to a reduction in the overall K-12 special education numbers.

Long-Term

1. ***Novel, Relevant*** Staff development/training (1-12th grade) with focus on reading
2. ***Relevant*** Working with elementary schools for heightened curriculum coordination and dialogue
3. ***Relevant*** Review out of district lists for potential additional students
4. ***Relevant*** Monitor quality of Instruction of teacher skills/data collection

5. **Relevant** Curriculum bench marking
6. **Relevant** Focus on Differentiation of instruction/targeted lessons
7. **Relevant** Support services from guidance
8. **Relevant** Develop one on one goals for assessing out into mainstream
9. **Relevant** Develop a process for identification of at risk kids in the early grades (intervention programs, program evaluation, teacher monitoring)
10. Early Intervention/Summer Enrichment Program
11. **Novel** On-line resources, such as additional educational podcast for students from the state –kids love technology
12. **Novel, Relevant** Offer training for parents – “Partnering with Parents”-parents toolkit to supplement individual development in school
13. Mainstream Student Mentors – outside of the classroom
14. **Relevant** Increase support for Standardized Testing Prep

Extra-curricular

1. **Novel, Relevant, Contrary, Opinion** Development of Criteria/Standards for an Extra-Curricular Clubs
 - * Each must meet specific goals set forth by administration to exist
 - * Each should include a minimum number (10) of participants or the club does not exist (no deviations)
 - * Each club must operate with minimum of 12 meeting per year
 - * Each club must participate in community service (no exceptions), etc.....
 - * Anything currently on the list not meeting this should be eliminated for the 2010/11 school year
2. **Opinion** Advisors should not be paid incremental stipends (salaries) for hours between 8:00 - 2:45
3. **Novel, Relevant, Opinion** Based on ratio of students to advisors all "co-advisor" positions should be eliminated - represent 29% of total budget for extra-curriculars (Savings of \$16,349 per Schedule D - Extra-Curricular Compensation)
4. **Contrary** Where regulations do not prohibit combine MS & HS clubs (Savings of \$3,545 per Schedule D - Compensation)
5. **Novel, Relevant, Contrary, Opinion** These costs need to be reduced through the elimination of particular programs and the merging of middle school and high school students when possible. Programs (sports and clubs) with higher levels of participation should be strengthened and those with low levels should be eliminated. Actual participation levels in clubs should be monitored as signup numbers at the beginning of the year do not necessarily mean that students are participating.
6. **Novel, Relevant** Parent(s) or other appropriate volunteers could be utilized as cost-saving measures when not in violation of negotiated contracts or state law.

Athletics

1. **Contrary** Staffing (Coaches) vs. Participation (Athletes) Analysis needs to be conducted
 - * Specific criteria must be set (including liability standards & ratios) and held by administration - no exceptions
 - * Needs to be a direct correlation of compensation to participation & success
2. **Relevant** Eliminate all coaching positions not warranted by participation

* This will raise the standard of performance & should be since these should be earned positions.

3. **Contrary, Opinion** Eliminate paid positions such as Athletic Trainer which are not mandated by the state

* This is an extra and most other schools we compete against do not have?

* Cuts must be made in this economic climate and this doesn't eliminate students' ability to play.

4. **Novel, Relevant, Contrary, Opinion** Change the Middle School after school athletics program from a traveling program to an in-house intramural program at a significant savings. This approach is used successfully in many NJ public 7th and 8th grade after school athletics programs.

* Will promote a more competitive program

* Cost reductions due to less uniforms, coaching, gym time and travel expenses

* Allows for athletic participation and choices but eliminates an "anyone" can play cost driver!

5. **Relevant** "Job Sharing" initiatives should be considered for an Athletic Director position.

6. **Novel, Relevant** Complete an analysis on each sport, consider A and B teams for middle school, analyze the costs of **transportation** for away games.

7 **Contrary** Sports teams should be viewed as an opportunity to participate in meaningful, competitive activity. For most sports, elite athletes already pursue competition in other venues (*e.g.*, AAU, Olympic Development, *etc.*) to get attention from colleges. SHRHS should not be expected to provide such opportunities.

8. **Novel, Relevant, Contrary** Athletic Fees for participation should be explored as a cost savings to the school budget— many parents would be willing to defray costs (for travel, uniforms, *etc.*), versus having to go outside to AAU and other choices that are very expensive.

Administration/Personnel

1. **Novel, Relevant, Contrary** Job Sharing initiatives should be considered

2. **Relevant** Clerical / Admin positions should be re-evaluated and considered for consolidation and/or reductions in hours / benefits to reduce costs.

3- **Opinion** **Lastly eliminate all redundant administrative posts, and proudly inform the voters of continued commitment to this policy.**

Facilities

1. **Novel, Relevant, Contrary, Opinion** All alternatives to saving expenses should be looked at.

2. **Relevant** New hours including summer hours should be evaluated to reduce costs -- *i.e.*, electric, heat, *etc.*

* Meetings, *etc.* all to only be held during those hours - no exceptions

3. **Novel, Relevant** Green Initiatives internally should be considered - The Three R's (Reuse - Recycle - Reduce)