

**MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL - SUBCOMMITTEE ON CULTURE  
October 18, 2017**

A comment was made that the SIP goal on culture is not inclusive because it addresses only the "top" students.

The group discussed that the goal was also intended to try to determine how to value kids in different ways, not solely based on rank, including considering, among other things:

- whether to change having the top 3 students automatically be the students to give speeches at graduation
- whether to change the honors night at the end of the school year
- addressing academic honesty
  - whether to eliminate class rank and use a system of recognizing cum laude, for example, and/or a system that reports standings to college, but not otherwise
- how to show that there are other paths to and measures of "success" other than what kids think the school and parents have established
- having more project based learning, less emphasis on testing and grade-driven work
- how to ensure that all kids feel recognized and valued

It was stated that the goal cannot be changed for this year, given that there is a process to formulate the SIP, and that it is approved by the SAC, SC and the Superintendent, but that SAC can consider broadening or changing the goal for next year

It was also stated that there was a reason for this SIP -- it was brought to the attention of SAC that MVRHS students in the past have struggled with mental health issues related to stress related to rank, grades, etc., and that there have been problems of academic dishonesty, etc.

It was stated that a major goal of this SIP is to have every student have something they feel good about.

There was discussion about Project Vine and its structure, trying to have more communication to highlight and educate students and families that there are different paths, the need to offer things for all students, recognizing that students are different and learn differently.

One of the high school students commented that students sometimes feel like where they go to college defines them; that they know that is not true, but that at times it is difficult to remember and see it; that adults make the rank a big deal, even starting in some middle schools with the highest GPA award, for example.

It was commented that it is hard enough to be a teenager without these community and societal pressures.

There was further discussion about trying to focus on kids' interests, to celebrate all paths, gap year, trades, etc.

It was generally agreed that there should be brainstorming with kids to try to determine what kids want.

It was agreed that Deb Swanson and Cheri Cluff will facilitate conversation at future meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Burke