

Academic Choice Fall Meeting
November 15, 2012 , 7:00 – 8:30 pm BHS library

Meeting Notes

The Academic Choice Team held its fall general meeting on November 12, 2102. About 55 AC parents, teachers and students were present; 39 signed the roster. The quorum of 30 needed for voting was therefore met.

English common assessment

Matt Carton, AC Lead and English teacher, presented plans and activities being used to produce common assessments throughout English courses in AC and at BHS in general. All 9th and 10th graders at BHS took a “pre test” at the start of this year so that teachers could see the current skill levels of their students. 9th graders have had interim assessments after every unit taught so that progress can be assessed. 10th graders will be given a mid-year assessment. The main goals are to prepare 9th and 10th graders for AP English classes in 11th and 12th grade.

Social Studies common assessment

Ben Sanoff, AC Lead and History/Economics teacher, presented the goals for social studies common assessment: to make sure that all teachers are teaching 9th and 10th graders the set of skills identified as being critical for success in the AP classes. Common outcomes are listed on the AC website *[waiting for it to come back to get URL]*.

Science curriculum and common assessment

Lead science teacher Evy Kavalier reported that science assessment is conducted across all of the BHS small schools. All 9th graders take a biology test at the start of the year; this is used to help design a more meaningful curriculum for the students, focusing more on the areas they don't know. Likewise, 10th graders take a chemistry test at the start of the year – this test shows that, as expected, most students start out with very little chemistry knowledge.

11th and 12th graders have quite a few options for science classes. The science department encourages more students to consider taking physics. AC and IB work closely on the science curriculum. AP science classes require commitment and are a lot of work. One parent asked whether there was enough budget for lab equipment – yes, there is.

Math curriculum and common assessment

Math teacher Philippe Henri reported that one major focus of the math department has been to align the curriculum with new state common core standards – which emphasizes more coverage of statistics in all courses.

Common assessments are in place for geometry and algebra 2. The classes give a pre test at the start of the year, then conduct mid-year and end-of-year assessments.

Students tend to take math analysis (pre calculus) in 11th grade and then either calculus or AP statistics in 12th grade.

The math department has an honors program; students need to take a test to qualify. One parent pointed out that it can be hard for students coming from private schools to get into the honors program, since the honors test is geared to 8th graders. Honors classes cover the same material but in greater depth and with more rigor than non honors classes. It uses more proof oriented textbooks and prepares students to take calculus BC – which is equivalent to a full year of freshman college calculus (calculus AB is equivalent to ½ a year).

AC Support Coordinator

Jessie Luxford is AC's Support Coordinator; she provides support to AC students that are at risk of failing academically. She runs two classes for freshmen (during 3rd and 7th periods), which cover topics such as attendance, behavior, study skills, and also provides tutoring help in all subjects, as well as mentoring. Jessie needs parent volunteers to help with tutoring, especially for math and science.

AC Vice Principal Vernon Walton said that BHS also offers a program called AVID to help 9th graders with a GPA in the range of 2.5 – 3.5. This program is designed to push students to take the most rigorous classes they are capable of, and is targeted to students whose parents have not been to college.

Students may select AVID during online registration. Students who select AVID will be screened and those who meet the AVID student profile will be invited to fill out an application for the program. The AVID student profile is

- 2.5 -3.5 GPA
- Basic scores on CST in Math and ELA
- No discipline or attendance problems
- Has college potential with support

AVID will be offered to both 9th and 10th graders next year.

AC is also interested in exploring an AP augmentation program for students with the potential to take AP classes but who lack the skills. 8th grade teachers would identify students for this program and they would get extra writing help.

Attendance and PE Waivers

Daniel Roose, Dean of Attendance, covered procedures for clearing absences by phone, email or written note. Absences must be cleared with 5 school days of occurrence. Make sure to provide all requested information as well as a call-back number.

State rules require that teachers mark students as absent even when they are engaged in school sanctioned activities like tests and field trips. Parents will receive phone calls about these "absences", which they can ignore (so long as the student was actually present).

All students who need PE waivers must come to the PE waiver informational session at the start of each semester. These sessions are announced on the etree.

ACAC Financial Report for the 2011/2012 School Year

ACAC Treasurer Olga Volodina gave the financial report for the 2011/2012 school year.

One of the major duties of the AC Advisory Council (ACAC) is to approve disbursements from funds raised to support the Academic Choice program. Last year parents donated \$44,000 to AC.

80% of funds spent last year went to finance AC program activities such as:

- \$10,000 went to partially finance the position of Academic Support Coordinator. This position was created last year as the result of intense efforts of teachers and parents; it proved to be successful and has been renewed for the current school year.
- \$7,000 was spent to finance the UC Readers Project: UC Berkeley undergraduates are hired to read and evaluate 9th and 10th grade spring history research papers. To evaluate the usefulness of the project teachers and students were surveyed; both groups gave favorable reviews.
- \$800 for a tutor for AP English Language and Composition editing help.
- \$4,000 to acquire a Chrome book cart, consisting of 30 notebooks which are regularly used by students in History and English classes.
- \$3,000 went to purchase 70 used graphing calculators necessary for math courses for students who were identified as being unable to acquire them.
- \$4,000 for the AC Commencement, which included a sash for every senior.

Overall expenditures last year totaled approximately \$34,000 versus \$44,000 collected.

ACAC Budget for the 2012/2013 School Year

ACAC Treasurer Olga Volodina reported that this year ACAC hopes to raise \$55,000 to support the following budget:

- \$10,000 to partially finance the ongoing position of Academic Support Coordinator.
- \$7,000 to finance the UC Readers Project.
- \$4,000 to finance the AP language tutors
- \$1,500 has already been spent to pay for AP history summer training of 2 new teachers.
- \$3,000 for classroom support, including \$2,000 already committed to finance a 10th grade field trip to see ELECTRA at the San Francisco American Conservatory Theatre.
- \$5,000 for the AC Commencement
- up to \$20,000 to partially fund a new AC Program Coordinator position (similar to the existing position of IB Coordinator) to coordinate activities like tutoring support, college visits, student contributions to the AC website, and field trips.

To date this year parents have donated about \$14,000 to AC. If you wish to donate to AC you may send a check to:

AC Fundraising Coordinator Hilary Hoynes
1061 Miller Avenue,
Berkeley, CA 94708.

Make checks payable to BHS Development Group – please write “Academic Choice” in the notes section.

AC Bylaw Changes

ACAC secretary Francesca Verdier summarized the existing and proposed new AC Team bylaws (they are available for reference on the AC website at http://bhsac.com/?page_id=92). See below for a summary.

The only suggested change to the proposed new bylaws was to keep the outreach/diversity committee. A vote was taken: 5 parents in favor; none opposed. This change passed.

Vote to approve the new bylaws with the above change was passed unanimously.

Vote on 5th Parent Representative to the AC Advisory Council

Two parents ran. 28 ballots were received. The winner was Jeremy Thorner.

Questions and Answers

Q: What are class sizes in AC?

A: About 28 students per teacher. 9th and 10th grade classes are a bit smaller on average and 11th/12th grade classes a bit larger. This is intentional and designed to prepare students for the more advanced classes in grades 11 and 12.

Q: Is funding adequate?

A: The passage of prop 30 will allow BHS to keep its leadership structure. Funding is secure for the next few years.

Q. What academic support resources are there in 11th grade?

A: There are language tutors to assist with writing and editing in the AP English classes.

Summary of Changes to AC Team Bylaws

What is the Academic Choice Team?

- The Academic Choice Team is the entire AC community:
 - all AC teachers
 - all AC students
 - all AC parents/guardians
- The Academic Choice Team has established bylaws
- The Academic Choice Team is guided by the AC Advisory Council (ACAC)

Rationale for AC Bylaw Changes

- The AC bylaws were written when AC was a small school with intense parent involvement in its initial creation
- AC today has about 1/3 of all BHS students
- Some of the bylaws are not being adhered to
- The bylaws need to be updated to reflect current reality

Major Proposed Deletions from the AC Bylaws

- The Academic Choice Student Leadership Committee no longer exists
 - Student leadership is now school wide, with student leaders from all small schools and programs.
- The Academic Choice Parent Leadership Committee no longer exists.
 - Instead, AC parents/guardians who serve on Academic Choice committees are encouraged to attend AC Advisory Council (ACAC) meetings, where they serve as alternates if fewer than 5 parent representatives are present.
- The positions of Parent Coordinator and Student Coordinator have therefore been removed.

Changes Pertaining to Parent/Guardian Elections to ACAC

- The Academic Choice Advisory Council (ACAC) is an elected body of 5 teachers, 5 parents/guardians, and 5 students. The BHS principal or a designated administrator – typically the AC vice principal – is an ex officio member.
- Parents are elected at the Spring membership meeting: current procedures in the bylaws are to elect a Parent Coordinator and 4 members from the Parent Leadership Committee.
- However, the Parent Leadership Committee no longer exists.
- **Proposed change:** Simply elect 5 parents/guardians at the Spring Meeting – their roles will be voted on by the ACAC. If fewer than 5 parents are elected at the Spring meeting, additional parents may be elected at the Fall membership meeting.

Changes Pertaining to Student Elections to ACAC

- The current bylaws say that student representatives on the ACAC will be appointed by the Student Leadership Committee.
- However, the Student Leadership Committee no longer exists.
- **Proposed change:** The Teacher Coordinator will facilitate the selection of student representatives in September of each year.

Changes Pertaining to Notifications

- The current bylaws stipulate posting all meetings two weeks in advance to the AC website and the BHS and AC

etrees.

- **Proposed change:** Spring and Fall general meetings must be posted one week in advance, and ACAC meetings at least 3 days in advance, on the BHS and AC etrees.
- The current bylaws stipulate posting cancelled or rescheduled meetings to the AC website
- **Proposed change:** post cancelled or rescheduled meetings to the BHS and AC etrees.
- **ACAC Secretary duties:** proposed change – remove requirement to post minutes to the AC etree (post them to the AC website instead); remove requirement to maintain a Minute book – minutes are simply posted to the AC website.

AC Committees

Proposed change:

- drop outreach/diversity from the list of standing committees
- add student support