

# BHS Academic Choice



## ACAC Meeting Minutes – 10/5/07

### In Attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>eMail Address</b>
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### Student Leadership:

Mia Levin – Reported that the AC student leadership is planning a bake sale for Sunday, 10/7, to raise money for AC student events. They have held two lunchtime meetings this year. The first meeting involved an exchange of contact information and planning for bake sale. The group is also interested in pursuing a “teacher karaoke” event. Zara held a second meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, but only two students attended. They need help recruiting more students to develop mentoring program. Matt noted that seniors need some more prompting to balance out their schedules to be available for mentoring during periods in which they do not have class. In the senior year, that means 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> periods.

### Professional Development Days:

Matt Carton – Sherene Randall will convene one for the 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers on Wednesday, 10/17, to discuss the AC program and curriculum coordination for those grades. Matt was hoping to hold a meeting with the 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers on 10/19, but David Bye will be unavailable for a good part of that day and Matt felt another day will need to be selected.

Sherene noted that the professional development day for the 9

9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grades will focus on the results of the Scantron diagnostic tests. Results of the tests administered to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades are due back Monday, 10/8, and will be analyzed and discussed among the teachers for use in planning core curriculum for these grades. She also noted that the expanded enrollment of the AC program in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade has greatly increased the diversity in the classes and that teaching methods and student support will need to focus more attention on preparing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class for the rigors of the AC curriculum. She also noted that the current 9<sup>th</sup> grade class in general is exhibiting greater need for attention than other classes had in the past few years.

Janet Delaney noted that at the PTSA meeting held on 10/4 that the school board will be putting more focus on the middle schools to raise the level of student preparedness coming out of middle school. This should improve the situation for future incoming freshman classes.

### **Senior Thesis/Project/Seminar:**

Committee discussions at this point evolved into question of how and when to bring the AC teachers into the development of the evolution of the Academic Choice program, the objective of the retreat being planned for Saturday, 10/20. It was suggested that the teachers should be brought in after the AC leadership had developed a better consensus and plan for the future structure of Academic Choice. However, Matt and David both offered that discussions and thought is being given to the development of the senior project which was proposed during the early stages of the AC program, but which remains undeveloped.

David Bye is heading up a subcommittee to research and develop the senior project. So far there have been discussions and ideas exchanged between English department teachers on what the program might look like. Matt noted we could use a history teacher or two in the development process. David indicated that one hurdle that will need to be addressed is that the math and science departments are outside of the scope of the AC program; their resources are shared with the other schools within BHS. Students should have a choice of the subject matter of their senior project, including areas of math or science if they choose. Part of the solution may be to make the senior project a senior thesis, focusing on the writing component. Writing skills and communications are important in all disciplines and important in the continuing educational development and preparation for college and career skills of the children. David suggested that the thesis could be something required to be turned in at the end of the senior year, but not required to be returned to the student. This would require much less time on the part of the reviewing teachers and allow a program to be implemented more quickly with current resources. The focus on writing was generally supported; the idea of how to review and critique the submissions needs more thought.

### **Modified Block Scheduling and the Advisory Program:**

Sherene Randall brought up the topic of the advisory program and the modified block scheduling that is being developed for implementation next year. This is not currently on the schedule for discussion at the retreat, but she felt that it is important

to discuss and focus attention on now. The current plan for the school is to implement a modified block schedule next year, which will provide three days of regular, 6 period class schedules and two days of three period schedules. Three period schedule days will provide longer class periods which require different class preparation and teaching skills. Student advisory sessions will be provided during the two days of longer class schedules and will be differentiated by grade level and by school (AC advisories separate from IB School advisories.) Sherene is working on a curriculum but feels that this dramatic change in scheduling should be addressed in retreat discussions.

Alex Angell noted that the advisories could be used to support senior thesis skills development.

### **Contacting Parents/Families of (Academically) At Risk Students:**

Sherene advised that she will be reviewing student grades next week (10/8 – 10/12) and will be telephoning families of students performing at the D or F grade level. Karen Meryash also noted that letters would be sent to these families and will include information about tutoring support services and about a study skills workshop planned for November 6<sup>th</sup>. Pasquale suggested that he, Sherene, and Karen may review the at risk student list for some of the most severe cases for some extra attention.

### **AC Leadership Retreat:**

Alex Angell asked that the discussion move to consider the leadership retreat scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup>. The plans for a two day, off-site retreat have been terminated because the time commitment and remote location made it too difficult to get the level of AC teacher participation considered important for the meeting. Alex offered his house for a one day venue for the meeting provided that the food be brought in from outside.

### **Internships and Field Trips:**

Janet Delaney gave a brief report on the discussion at the PTSA meeting of 10/4/07 about the desire to see more field trips for students and the development of a program to offer internships to students wishing to explore interests outside of school and the classroom. Sherene mentioned that community service work might also be explored as a valuable learning experience for the students. These outside activities were discussed in terms of team building or community building for the AC program. Jane wise noted that this is something the student leadership may want to focus on in their meetings.

### **Report on UC Reader Support:**

Karen Meryash has secured two UC readers for support of AC English teachers in reading and critiquing student papers. They will be able to supply about six hours per week per reader for Leslie Tebbie, Kate Rosen, Zora Tammer, and David Bye. Two readers are of great help, but the work load could be better handled by four readers, which could provide help for heavy workload for Doug

Powers and Susan Jones teaching AP Literature. Jane is submitting a proposal to the BHSDG for a grant to pay at least part (hopefully ½) of the cost of the readers. Estimating the cost of four readers for the year at about \$6,000, this would be a request for \$3,000 from the Development Group and about \$3,000 from the AC account.

Karen also showed a schedule of the after school teacher tutorial support that is being funded by the Development Group. She stressed that it was important that the information about this resource be well publicized and utilized for the Development Group to support continued funding of this program after this year. Information about these tutorials will be published on the e-tree and included in future mailings.

*Next Meeting Scheduled for 11/2/07*