

BHS Academic Choice



ACAC Meeting Minutes – 9/7/07

In Attendance

Name

Scott Lancaster
Sherene Randle
Kate Spohr
Pasquale Scuderi
Jon Marley
Alex Angell
Hedy Reeves
David Bye
Matt Carton
Mia Levin
Zahra Axinn
Janet Delaney
Karen Meryash
Paris Clark
Doug Powers
Jane Wise
Heather Sadlon
Karen Kaufman

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Update on recent happenings: Class sizes, non cored classes, new teachers and support, etc)

- Matt Carton; Class sizes are large. Some of the sophomore cores do not have exact pairings. Pasquale will find out how many students are not paired with the core teachers. We still need a full time history teacher for glut on junior/senior classes. We have a .4 English teacher coming in to take Heidi Ramirez-Weber's .6 case load while she is on leave due to her husband's illness.
- Janet Delaney; Wants to know if the Ramirez-Weber situation will be monitored throughout year. Concerned that this will continue indefinitely, not fair to students in her classes where they must endure semi-permanent substitute.
- Pasquale Scuderi; The .4 position is intended to deal with this situation, attracting a qualified teacher to a potential full time position since the .4 position on its own was not attractive. The promise held out is to either

replace Ms. Ramirez-Weber if she does not return or find full time position if she does. In the meantime, the 4 position is guaranteed for the year.

- Matt; Amanda Green's classes are going up to 40 students. Other classes are running between 35 & 40.
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- Freshman & sophomore English and history teachers are working very well together.

- Alex Angell; Wanted to expand on how well things are working. Noted that his students were asked to review the important themes of ancient civilizations when starting with modern world history in sophomore year. Each student and each group was knowledgeable about the important teachings of ancient civilizations from their freshman year regardless of which teacher they had. The coordination of curriculum is beginning to demonstrate itself.

Introductions:

- Jane Wise; Called for introductions around the room. (See attendance/roll call above.)

- Janet Delaney; Before moving on, wanted to reiterate the importance of focusing this year on getting more resources and support for AC rather than assuming that the situation will take care of itself over time. Class size and lack of support is detrimental to the students who are in the program now.

- Pasquale; Noted that this issue is being worked on. Jim Slemph has asked him to run the numbers to present to school governance to review teacher class size and class room allocation.

- Janet: That's good, but what can we do for this year?

- Pasquale; The difficulty at this point, even if additional teacher resources were brought in, is that student schedules are difficult to shuffle after the year has begun.

- Jane; Karen Meryash is our student support representative – what are her thoughts?

- Karen Meryash; Perhaps we should re-explore Cal Readers, we have about 5 students interested in providing reading support to teachers @ \$15/hour. We need someone to coordinate teacher needs. AP Language – David Bye can coordinate. Karen will reconnect with Chris Gilbert who did research on readers to determine who is available to help. The other source of

assistance might be student teachers or help from SF State, which usually comes in the spring. Is this something we could tap into early?

- Doug Powers; Brian Evans (current full time teacher) is looking for additional work. Perhaps we could hire him to do back-up on US History & Econ Government.
- Karen M; The Development Group will be sponsoring tutoring. She can link him up with them for possible funding.
- Doug Powers; AC has two important tasks to work on : 1) Fairness of scheduling and 2) How decisions will be made on staffing. How to approach these tasks is the subject of another meeting.

Student Leadership update:

- Zahra; Will have a student informational meeting next week. Plan is to have an activity for the freshmen to do. Have students & mentors break in to small groups of four or five and have names on pieces of paper with activities and interests on paper. Sharing this information with the group will get mentors and students to get to know each other better.
- Mia; Had a scavenger hunt to help incoming students get to know the school. Turned out to be more of a tour, but it worked out well. They got a lot of sophomores & students to help out.
- Janet Delaney; Wants to meet with student leadership periodically throughout the year to lend support.

New Diagnostic Tool for 9th, 10th

- Sherene Randle; Online assessment, will be uploading list of all 9th & 10th grade AC students into system today, training should happen within next week and a half, and students will be able to take the diagnostic test within 2 weeks. This diagnostic test, along with Kinsella training for 9th & 10th grade teachers, will be a big help in allowing teachers to pinpoint individual student needs of students moving into higher classes and give them the tools to succeed. Sherene believes that the district may pay for the teachers to attend the Kinsella workshop this fall, but it has not yet been decided. About \$300/teacher. We should be prepared to fund teacher attendance if the district does not.

Social Living Update:

- Heather Sadlon; This summer, Heather met with Karen and Jon to discuss social living curriculum, including how to integrate the curriculum into the 10

th grade, separating topics into those age appropriate for 9th v. 10th graders. What materials could be integrated into the regular English and history curriculum v. what needs to be taught in the three week intensive sessions in January. Heather will be setting up a meeting to introduce the program and curriculum to the teachers, particularly the new teachers who have not taught the material before. Hope to get a formal training session for the teachers at the end of October.

- Alex A: Point of clarification – are you suggesting that the three week intensive training block apply to 10th grade as well? (Discussion & answer in brief – yes, this was planned and is needed.) This makes a difference and needs to be communicated ASAP to 10th grade teachers because it changes their schedule, shortening teaching time and moving up test dates.
- (Note – full curriculum was taught to 9th grade last year, this will be a transitional year of splitting up curriculum for 9th & 10th. Will need to work with curriculum this year to avoid unnecessary duplication of training to 10th grade. See handouts for “Proposed Social Living Content – 9th v. 10th Grade – When to cover What”.)

ACAC retreat – Oct 20, 21?:

- Pasquale noted that requisition is in for approval of retreat for teaches to be held October 20th & 21st. Separate teacher retreats (3) yet to be determined. Those will happen during work week. AC will provide support where needed to facilitate these.

Finances:

- Scott L: Sent out pro-forma of current and projected financial information for AC to the advisory council members in email this week. Started the year off with about \$20,000 in AC accounts, balance as of meeting date down to a \$15,600. Appealed for information from group about projected needs during the year as the pro-forma was based on last year’s expenditures. This year the group will be funding different projects, such as the new Scranton diagnostic tool for 9th & 10th graders which cost \$8,000, which will have significant impact on the budget. Donation income, year to date, is a little above \$6,000, which is on par with the prior year’s receipts at this time. For discussion at another meeting, are we going to do another fundraiser event and what will it look like.
- Alex; The teacher karaoke event should go forward, it can’t miss.
- Jane; Thank you, Alex, for volunteering to put that together.
- Karen: Teacher support will be a major expense item, but cannot budget at this time. The BHSDG is picking up the expense for tutors that AC paid for last year, but we want to hire readers and student teachers to support overburdened teachers this year, and we do not yet know what this will cost

until needs and resources are determined.

- Jane W.; We should not worry too much about running out of money because BHSDG will fund grant proposals from the group if needs arise after our account balances are drained.
- Karen M.: Will BHSDG consider funding readers now? (Jane will check.)
- Scott L.: Will check with BHSDG on policy regarding funding while subgroup still has positive account balance. We should maintain a reserve to handle important needs that come up without depending on approval of funding from the Development Group.

Student Support Plan 2007-2008:

- Karen M.; Provided handout and reviewed student support plan for this academic year. (See handout.) Projects identified and in progress include:
 - New Diagnostic Tool
 - Study Skills Workshops – one scheduled for 9/11, two additional to be scheduled for November and February.
 - Math Tutorial to be run by Scott Wilson, up & running by 9/11
 - Work with Student Learning Center, to get specialized tutors for AP
 - Counselor/Admin letters home & phone calls to families of students failing (D or F) in subjects after first progress report. Notice to include invitation to study skills workshop & list of tutorial services. Need to figure out how to help 10th graders struggling in 2nd semester.
(Note, discussion at this point about how this situation is changing with improved curriculum, teaching, and coordination in 9th and 10th grade. Teaching staff feels that improvements will lead to significant improvement in student abilities – that will create a need for 11th & 12th grade curriculum in the future to be stepped up a level.)
 - Tutorial to be posted regularly on etrees, classroom posters, student bulletins and in the Jacket.
 - Not on handout – Hiring readers for teacher support, discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Jim Slep; (Stopped in to meeting late, during the discussion on Student Support.) He wanted to reiterate that progress is showing in the curriculum changes and support implemented by AC and that should be applauded. He also recognizes that student/faculty ratios in AC are out of line and that is being looked at. However, this analysis cannot be made until all the initial school year scheduling adjustments are made to determine validity of enrollments in each class.

Next Meeting Scheduled for 10/5/07