

## Academic Choice General Meeting May 14, 2008

1) Academic Choice Vice-Principal **Pasquale Scuderi** discussed the process for parents and students to follow when there is a problem in a class.

- Encourage your student to handle minor issues such as a question about a grade received.
- If there is still a problem or if the issue is more complicated, the parent should contact the teacher by e-mail and or set up a time to meet.
- If the teacher does not respond or if the meeting is not satisfactory, then contact Mr Scuderi at [pasquale\\_scuderi@berkeley.k12.ca.us](mailto:pasquale_scuderi@berkeley.k12.ca.us) He can arrange a meeting with the teacher, parent, student and himself if necessary.

If parents can assume positive intent when meeting with a teacher it will help everyone concerned in the long run.

There are 4 circumstances under which a students' grade can be changed: Incompetence, bad faith, clerical error, fraud.

2) Co-Lead teacher **Sherene Randle** talked about the AC program as a whole. She says this is an exciting and dynamic time for Academic Choice. We have consistent leadership, professional development structured around the results of the online diagnostic test, and innovative ideas brought forth by new teachers in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

The AC 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are working this spring and summer to revise and structure the 11<sup>th</sup> grade AC American Literature class. They are using the curriculum from the AP Language and Composition course as a broad template for the course. AP Language and Composition is a course in which students focus on critical reading and on learning and perfecting the rhetorical reading and writing strategies that they will hopefully be using for the rest of their lives! AC wants to bring more of this curriculum into our regular AC class. We want those students who choose not to do AP English to have an exciting and engaging class next year.

3) **David Bye**-11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English-presented information on the Senior Thesis that will be a program requirement for those students who are currently Sophomores (next years Juniors) and all subsequent classes. *After next year-starting in Fall 2009-the AC program will be approximately 1/3 of school. The International High School will go through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade by then (They are adding a grade each year) and small schools will also be about 1/3. We will have anywhere from 250 to 300 students per grade.*

The students will choose their thesis topic at the beginning of their senior year. The topic will be a 'controversial topic' in that they will have to defend their viewpoint on the subject they choose. The topic can be in any study area. At that time the student will also choose an advisor for their Thesis. The Senior Thesis will incorporate research, writing and critical thinking skills and utilize books, journals and internet research. Beginning in March of senior year there will be benchmarks which students will need to get checked off on by their advisor; Thesis Statement, Rough Draft, Revisions and Final. We hope that this thesis

paper will help to 'reclaim' the second semester of senior year, a time when students notoriously lose focus.

Questions and concerns were as follows:

**Is this paper a year too late? Why not do it junior year?** It is felt that the junior year course load is typically quite heavy, particularly for those students in AP courses. Fall semester senior year is filled with school and college applications for many students. Much thought has gone into placing this paper in the spring semester of senior year.

**How will the paper be graded?** The paper will receive a grade and be a part of the final grade in either the English or History class. We are still working on this.

**What kind of support will be provided?** The advisor will be responsible for being available to give input to the student. Academic Choice and BHS in general needs to develop a culture of support around writing. Since the Writer-Coach connection left the school there is a hole in this area. We are aware of this and are exploring possibilities.

**4) Alex Angell**-10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade history teacher spoke briefly about the work he is leading on the 11<sup>th</sup> grade AC US History curriculum. (Non AP) The teachers will agree on common themes, skills and outcomes such as note taking and document based analysis. He noted that in 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade the students are already working on research papers. He will be developing a standardized content will be taught to the student no matter who the teacher is. (I know it is hard to believe that this does not happen already!) The common standards will be part of any assessments given by the history department.

Outgoing parent Academic Choice Advisory Council (ACAC) members Scott Lancaster (treasurer) and Karen Kaufman (social living program) were honored for their contributions to the school.

**Jon Marley** (ACAC parent, fundraising and school governance rep) spoke about the role of the ACAC. We are the decision making body of Academic Choice, we welcome people to become involved through volunteering to helping with one of our events or program needs. *(A description of the ACAC and members is attached.)*

**Kate Spohr** (ACAC parent coordinator) made up a worksheet listing the upcoming needs for volunteers. *(This is one of the attachments enclosed in this posting.)*

**Jane Wise** (ACAC parent) spoke about the student support resources which have been greatly expanded school wide this year. A list of available tutorials is on our website. Next year a position for a student support coordinator has been funded. One of the responsibilities of this new person will be to analyze our existing resources and figure out what we are lacking and what we can streamline or do better.

Also thank you to Janet Delaney for MC ing and to Karen Meryash for her help with student support this year.

*Also attached is a list of classes for 2008/2009.*