

11/13/15 Academic Choice Advisory Council (ACAC) Meeting

Nov. 13, 2015, 7:30-8:35AM Berkeley High School Conference Room B

Minutes

In Attendance:

Who	Role	E-mail address
Amanda Green	AC Co-Chair and AC Lead English Teacher	amandagreen@berkeley.net
Felicia Phillips	AC Vice Principal	feliciaphillips@berkeley.net
Alecia Harger	ACAC Student Representative	aleciaharger@students.berkeley.edu
Avi Peltz	ACAC Student Representative	avipeltz@students.berkeley.edu
Sam Arriola	AC Webmaster	sarriola@gmail.com
Caroline Bettendorf	AC Parent	crbettendorf@gmail.com
Lisa Cain	AC Parent	lisa@marketingu.com
Alan Dyck	AC Parent	alan@dyck.net
Catherine Ference	AC Parent	candsfer@gmail.com
Rene Kvidahl	AC Parent	
Lisa Miller	AC Parent	lisa@classroommatters.com
Gay Pelletier	AC Parent	u2ngaj@paszty.com
Rakhi Rao	ACAC Treasurer	rakhiprao@gmail.com
Johanna Reneke	ACAC Parent Rep at Large	j.reneke@gmail.com
Elisabeth Ross	AC Parent	e@elisabethross.com
Candy Rupp	AC Parent	candyrupp@aol.com
Rhasheed Shabazz	AC Guest	RASHEED@berkeley.edu
Donna Storey	ACAC Secretary	donnageorgestorey@gmail.com

VP Felicia Phillips chaired this meeting.

Public Comments

Ms. Phillips welcomed new parents, introduced herself as the new VP for Academic Choice and Amanda as the lead teacher for the AC Advisory Council. Others in attendance introduced themselves. New parents said they were attending to get more involved, find out what's happening with AC, and find out more about a permanent appointment for the Ethnic Studies class (the previous teacher resigned suddenly in August).

Student Representatives' Report

Ms. Phillips introduced ACAC Student Representative, Alecia Harger. Ms. Harger is the co-president of the Black Student Union at Berkeley High and spoke about the troubling incident at Berkeley High on Wednesday, November 4, when threats to African American students were found on a computer in the Berkeley High library.

Ms. Harger said the Black Student Union was working with Principal Pasarow to maintain communications between the administration and students, an effort that had not been as successful last year. Teachers have led discussions encouraging students to think about the incident on a deeper level. The Black Student Union, which has recently grown from 10 to 55 student members, has been sponsoring lunches on Tuesdays in Room H214 where black-identified students and staff can meet to discuss the incident in a safe space. On Tuesday, November 24, the lunch will be open to all BHS staff who would like to discuss further efforts.

ACAC Student Representative Avi Peltz is the president of AC Leadership. He spoke about plans to organize a community-building picnic for AC freshman during the first semester of this year. The picnic would take place from 4-6 periods on the BHS football field and would include food and activities. AC seniors would coordinate the activities and Mr. Peltz welcomed parent volunteers to help and also donate food. Ms. Harger suggested AC Leadership might approach local restaurants that may be willing to sponsor the event or make donations.

Ms. Phillips said that this event is considered to be a field trip, so the administration has to negotiate with teachers. She asked what sorts of activities the leadership was planning. Mr. Peltz replied that they were considering athletic games and other activities such as life-size chess. Elisabeth Ross volunteered to take the lead for the parent volunteer group.

Catherine Ference suggested the event be posted on the AC e-tree and also suggested the students present a budget before we vote on funding. Mr. Peltz said he would present the budget at the December 4 meeting.

Ms. Phillips said she supports outreach to freshmen such as this event, the Welcome Picnic and Link Crew (older students who are advisors to freshmen). Through these efforts, the school is trying to build and sustain a positive culture. They want new students to feel part of the community rather than invisible.

Treasurer's Report

ACAC Treasurer Rakhi Rao distributed the latest Statement of Activities as of November 1, 2015. Academic Choice has a balance of \$71,807. The Berkeley High Development Group encouraged us to spend more of this money, but currently we do not have a budget for 2015-2016. One problem is that teachers don't know how to apply for and collect the funds.

Donna Storey proposed that we create an FAQ to educate teachers on funding through ACAC.

A new parent asked why the Development Group was involved. Ms. Phillips explained that the Development Group is the fiscal agent for all of the small schools. Ms. Rao added that this is why contributors need to earmark their donations for Academic Choice when they write the donation check to the Berkeley High Development Group in order for the funds to get to us.

Ms. Phillips said that at the AC teacher retreat at the beginning of the school year, the teachers discussed ACAC funds. Caroline Bettendorf said she'd heard that parents want their donations spent while their children are enrolled at Berkeley High. Ms. Bettendorf asked what teachers needed. Ms. Green said laptops needed to be replaced.

Another parent asked about the difference between what the ACAC funds and what the Development Group funds. Ms. Rao said that anything specific to AC should come to us first, and that the Development Group funds school-wide needs as well as needs for the smaller schools that have minimal budget balances.

Field Trips

Ms. Ference is the parent coordinator for field trips. She said that it is a daunting and humbling task to take care of the logistics, but that it is possible to arrange field trips for AC students. Ms. Ference is working with AC history teacher Joe Poppas to arrange two field trips for his classes. The first is a trip for 100 students to the Oakland Museum for \$410 (voted on by email, see below). Mr. Poppas also wants to take a class of 35 students to the California State Capitol in Sacramento. Admission to the Capitol is free, but a bus will cost around \$800.

Ms. Ference is also working with freshman class English teachers to arrange a trip for the entire freshman class, about 292 students, to see *Much Ado About Nothing* at Cal Shakespeare in Orinda on June 1, 2016. Tickets are \$15 and there will be 30 free tickets for chaperones for a total of around \$4000. Transportation is a problem because June 1 is a Wednesday and a minimum day, so the BUSD school buses need to be back before the play is over. Private buses cost more, but there is the possibility of using BUSD buses to get there and private buses to get home. Another issue is chaperones and the logistics of coordinating almost 300 students. Teachers and parent chaperones will have to be involved.

A parent asked if parents could subsidize the field trip. Ms. Harger said that in her middle school, King, parents were invited to contribute toward field trips if they could, and also to sponsor another student who could not afford to pay. Ms. Ference said this is a delicate matter because someone is suing school districts that ask for additional funds because public education should be free for all. Some of the freshman parents discussed volunteering to be chaperones. The topic will be discussed further at future

meetings.

Since field trips for AC students are a priority for the coming year, a parent asked how much it would cost for every AC student to have the opportunity to go on a field trip. Based on Mr. Poppas' budget, it would take \$28,750. Ms. Ference suggested that next year if we start early, we might be able to arrange a field trip to the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, which would have no transportation costs. Ms. Harger suggested arranging a special "Teen Night" for Berkeley High Students, as the usual program costs \$10 for dinner and a play. Ms. Bettendorf volunteered to check with Berkeley Rep to see about organizing field trips. Ms. Phillips said she would discuss field trips further with AC teachers.

Ms. Ference proposed that we approve \$800 to fund Mr. Poppas' field trip to the State Capitol. Johanna Reneke seconded the motion.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved.

Feedback on the Fall General Meeting on October 22

Because of a lack of time, Ms. Phillips invited anyone with suggestions or feedback on the October 22 Fall General Meeting to send an email with his/her comments to academicchoiceatbhs@gmail.com

Update on Staffing Issues

Ms. Phillips gave an update on the long-term substitute issue. Right before school began, a teacher of three sections of freshman Ethnic Studies and two sections of African-American Studies resigned. It has been difficult to find a qualified replacement, but the administration has identified a good candidate and is in the process of getting approval, which takes some time. They hope to have the teacher in place by the end of the calendar year.

Yoshi Salaverry's English classes are being taught by Chase Mateusiak, a qualified long-term substitute. Mr. Salaverry will be on family leave until December. Three other AC teachers will be going on family leave in the spring—Ms. Jackson, Ms. Sheikh and Ms. Theodore. The administration is currently seeking qualified substitutes for those positions. Ms. Phillips wants to make sure students have excellent teachers in their classrooms.

Staff Appreciation Lunch on November 10

Ms. Phillips thanked the parent volunteers who provided the appreciation lunch for over 60 AC-affiliated teachers. The staff was very happy to be able to connect with their colleagues at lunch and really appreciated the event. Teachers also appreciated the response to the SignUpGenius wish list (<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0944a8ae28a0fe3-wishlist>) and knowing that parents care and contribute means a lot to them.

One parent asked how often the appreciation lunches happened. Ms. Storey replied that the goal was once a semester. Ms. Phillips pointed out that May is teacher appreciation month and would be a good time to hold the lunch in the spring. Mr. Peltz agreed to

mobilize the AC student leadership to plan something in May.

Funding Votes by Email on November 9

Ms. Storey sent out an email to 15 regularly attending ACAC members requesting a vote on funding two ACAC-sponsored events. As outlined by the ACAC bylaws, funding votes can be conducted by email and must be reported in the minutes of the following ACAC meeting.

Funding request #1: A sum of up to \$850 for the Teacher Appreciation lunch on November 10 to which 70 AC-affiliated teachers and staff were invited.

Action: 12 members voted yes, 3 did not reply which counts as an abstention. The funding request was approved.

Funding request #2: A sum of up to \$410 Mr. Poppas to take 100 students to the Oakland Museum by BART, including paying for museum guides.

Action: 15 members voted yes, 3 did not reply. The funding request was approved.

Next ACAC Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Friday, December 4, 2015, 7:30-8:35 a.m. in BHS Conference Room B in the D Building.