

6/3/16 Academic Choice Advisory Council (ACAC) Meeting
June 3, 2016, 7:30-8:35AM Berkeley High School Conference Room B

Minutes

In Attendance:

Who	Role	E-mail address
Amanda Green	ACAC Co-Chair and AC Lead English Teacher	amandagreen@berkeley. net
Felicia Phillips	AC Vice Principal	feliciaphillips@berkeley. net
Alex Angell	AC History Teacher	currently on leave
Avi Peltz	ACAC Student Representative	avipeltz@students.berkeley.edu
Sam Arriola	AC Webmaster	sarriola@gmail.com
Caroline Bettendorf	AC Parent	crbettendorf@gmail.com
Kathleen Crandall	AC Parent	kcrand1111@aol.com
Sheryl Drinkwater	AC Parent	
Alan Dyck	AC Parent	alan@dyck.net
Catherine Ference	ACAC Parent Rep at Large	candsfer@gmail.com
Peter Kozelka	AC Parent	
Rene Kvidahl	AC Parent	
Rani Marx	AC Parent	
Lisa Miller	AC Parent	lisa@classroommatters.com
Rakhi Rao	ACAC Treasurer	rahkiprao@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

Christine Staples	AC Parent	christineannestaples@gmail.com
Donna Storey	ACAC Secretary	donnageorgestorey@gmail.com

Academic Choice VP Felicia Phillips chaired this meeting.

Public Comments

Ms. Phillips announced that the time for public comments was limited because we had eleven funding requests to consider.

Rani Marx reported on the Student Voice Subcommittee’s meeting with Mr. Poppas and Ms. Rigley on May 24, 2016. The complete notes of the meeting are appended at the end of these minutes. In summary, AC parents met with these teachers to discuss the lack of student ability to address an unhealthy classroom environment. The teachers agreed that the administration needs to get involved because peer-to-peer teacher feedback is tricky. They liked the idea of building on the AC survey to increase student feedback and thought the Bridge Program was a good model. They also thought appointing a Professional Development teacher as an ombudsperson who could act as a coach for teachers and help administer surveys and build relationships with students was a possible solution. Next steps would include preparing a proposal and having a student presentation to the AC staff including examples and possible solutions. Push back should be expected.

Sheryl Drinkwater agreed that there were many problems with the classroom environment, especially with long-term substitutes, which was brought her to the meeting.

Alex Angell introduced himself as an AC parent and AC history teacher who has taught at Berkeley High for the last 14 years. Mr. Angell is on leave this year but will teach next year. Mr. Angell urged parents to participate in the discussion of the future of AP classes in the new school redesign. He said colleges look at AP classes and test results and if part of the redesign involves the reduction of AP classes, or possibly limiting them to math and science and getting rid of English and history AP classes, parents should make their opinions known in the feedback sessions.

Treasurer’s Report

ACAC Treasurer Rakhi Rao provided copies of the latest Statement of Activities as of June 1, 2016. Academic Choice has a balance of \$80,743. Through fundraising efforts, we brought in \$27,650 in donations this year. Some of the approved funding does not yet appear on the statement such as stipends for the junior and senior English readers and history readers. The transportation costs for the Cal Shakespeare field trip would also be higher than budgeted.

Ms. Phillips reminded us that we have an extra \$10,000 with BUSD that is not reflected in our Berkeley High Development Group account. Any expense for a BUSD employee can be paid from this fund, that was money they said the ACAC owed them, but was later reevaluated.

Vote: Revision of Bylaws

Ms. Storey proposed an email vote on May 31 that we amend our bylaws to reflect our vote on December 4, 2015 to require that teachers submit a written grant request form at least one week before our meeting and that anyone requesting funds must leave the room during the vote on his/her request. The exact wording to be added to Section IV, #4 would be: "A member of the AC community who requests funding from the ACAC must submit a completed ACAC grant request form at least one week in advance of the meeting. A member requesting funds must leave the meeting room during the vote on her/his request." Johanna Reneke moved that we vote on Ms. Storey's proposal. Sam Arriola seconded the motion.

Action: The proposal was unanimously approved by email by all members on Wednesday, June 1.

Curriculum Development Funding Requests

Amanda Green asked that we first consider the six requests for funding for curriculum development from AC teachers. The text of these proposals is available upon request. Outside sources of funding were limited this year, in particular because the ACAC has a surplus of funds.

Christine Staples said that teachers were asking for a lot of money, and it was the duty of the ACAC to take care of our resources. She asked if the AC teachers had a vision and if this was part of a master plan, especially since the curriculum would be redesigned. Ms. Green elaborated on the goals of each proposal.

Ms. Green asked for \$1700 to develop materials for a ninth-grade advisory, which would be held during English classes on late-start Mondays. Traditionally this period was devoted to silent reading or silent writing. That would still be part of next year's activities, but AC would also work on a pilot for a universal ninth grade curriculum for an advisory. Next year's incoming ninth-grade class has double the amount of literacy issues and more cases of mental illness. AC has been called out for not providing personalization and they need to do something to support these students.

Jennifer Campbell asked for \$2384 to do a cross-departmental collaboration with African American Studies to make AP US Government more diverse and more relevant to students.

Crystal Rigley requested \$1200 to make special education modifications to World History. When teachers do this kind of work, it builds their capacity to adapt other courses for special education students in the future.

Angel Coppola requested \$700 to collaborate with Rosa Guzman on bringing Latino perspectives to the junior history curriculum. If AC goes away in the redesign, there will be a need to diversify the IB curriculum in this way.

Matt Carton requested \$582 to coordinate tenth-grade English teachers and scaffold them to prepare sophomores for AP Language and Literature in eleventh grade. Mr.

Carton traditionally taught AP classes. World Literature is a weak link and not as diverse in curriculum as they'd like.

Deborah Godner requested \$1200 to develop an eleventh-grade history unit on the Harlem Renaissance that integrates LGBTQ history as part of the implementation of the California Fair Education Act.

Alan Dyck asked how these new courses fit into the redesign beyond supporting students in the old format. Ms. Phillips said there has been a push to be culturally responsive and these efforts will roll over to the new organization. Ms. Storey asked about the differing amounts of time requested. Why did developing one unit on the Harlem Renaissance in junior history cost more than redesigning all of sophomore English? Also, how can we be sure teachers are actually doing this work?

Ms. Green said that the different amounts of time represent how much time teachers have in their summer schedules. Teachers will probably work many more hours than they are requesting payment for. She also said we should ask teachers to prepare a grant report and show how other classes are using this material. She also would like to invite them to give oral presentations at ACAC meetings in the fall.

Lisa Miller agreed we should require a report and incorporate this into our process. Candy Rupp agreed and wanted a written as well as verbal report.

In response to the question about developing one unit versus an entire course, Ms. Green offered that we could change the amounts and give less or more. She proposed that we give both Mr. Carton and Ms. Godner \$1000 each. Ms. Storey proposed we move and second the entire slate of all eleven requests (including supplies and retreat below) because we were running out of time.

Ms. Phillips moved that we vote on the six curriculum development funding proposals, giving \$1000 each to Mr. Carton and Ms. Godner. Catherine Ference seconded the motion.

Action: Each request was voted on separately, but all were unanimously approved. Mr. Zolezzi voted in the affirmative by email on Ms. Green's request.

AC Teachers' Retreat in August

Ms. requested \$4190 for a back-to-school retreat for AC teachers on August 25, 2016. This includes renting a space, stipends for teachers, refreshments and payment for a trauma-sensitive classroom trainer.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved. Mr. Zolezzi voted in the affirmative by email on Ms. Green's request.

Mr. Poppas' Maps for History Classes

Joe Poppas requested \$2244 for new, high-quality, markable maps for the history classrooms as a resource for geographic literacy. The plan is to share these maps among the history teachers to supplement their lesson presentations.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved.

Materials for Mr. Colon's History Classes

Jose Colon requested funds for \$280 worth of books and videos for AP Macroeconomics.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved.

"Save Our Students" Play Expenses

Ms. Campbell requested \$293 to pay for the expenses of producing a play by safety officer Johnna Quist. Her play directly benefitted at-risk AC students. Ms. Green said it was an amazing effort and would be performed on June 15 after finals in the Little Theater.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved.

Testmaker for Ms. Rigley

Ms. Rigley requested \$45 for a subscription fee to Easy Test Maker to produce new AP Macroeconomics exams because she found students cheating on old exams.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zolezzi voted in the affirmative by email on Ms. Green's request.

AC Graduation Ceremony (Elisabeth Ross)

Elisabeth Ross reminded us that the AC graduation celebration would take place on Tuesday, June 7 at 6 pm (when graduates should be at the Community Theater to begin the ceremony). The graduation committee was focusing on last-minute promotion to make sure all senior families knew about the event. Avi Peltz said he posted about the event on the senior class Facebook page and Ms. Phillips was going to send emails to all seniors and possibly do a robo-call to senior families. Next year, Ms. Phillips said we should hand out postcards about the event like BIHS did this year.

Technology Report (Sam Arriola)

Mr. Arriola announced that Mr. Dyck would be taking over as AC webmaster next year. Rene Kvidahl turned over the outstanding requests from this past year's Sign-Up Genious teacher wish list to be renewed next year.

Field Trip Report (Catherine Ference)

Ms. Ference will take on the role of field trip coordinator next year again.

Welcome-Back AC Picnic

Ms. Phillips said that although welcome-back picnics have traditionally been sponsored by Berkeley High's small learning communities in August, this year the school is planning events that will happen after school starts in the fall.

Next ACAC Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Friday, September 2, 2016, 7:30-8:35 a.m. in BHS Conference Room B in the D Building.

Preliminary BHS Student Voice discussion (Rani Marx)

5/24/16

Present: Joe Poppas, Crystal Rigley, Donna Storey, Christine Staples, Rani Marx, Zev Marx-Kahn

Brief recap of student voice issue:

Plenty of commendable teaching at BHS and lots of work this past year on changing the school environment to be more inclusive at BHS.

However, one of the most persistent problems is how to address an unhealthy classroom environment.

What can students do? Who will listen to them? What will happen?

A rare student can address a problem with a problem teacher.

BUSD policy does not require this, but students and parents continue to be directed to the teacher in question or told to file a grievance.

A formal grievance should be the last resort.

Union protections are not a viable excuse; plenty of administrators in BUSD do not tolerate egregious teacher conduct in the classroom; entire schools have been transformed with the same union.

The short & long-term consequences of negative classroom culture & directing students to teachers is discounting of student experience, more rather than less disruptive classroom behavior, turning off to learning, and students burdening other teachers with problems. Fallout is especially acute for students with fewer resources, less grit, lower self-esteem.

Goal: work together to create a more positive environment and open communication between students and teachers. Pilot interventions in AC.

Discussion highlights:

Difficult teachers are difficult for other teachers. Can't call them out, no standing to do anything, generally practice avoidance, these teachers tend to assert that they are doing everything right.

Administration needs to get in on the act because peer-to-peer feedback is tricky.

Interested in hearing about creating positive classroom culture, hearing from Robert Ithurnburn how this was accomplished within BUSD.

Having a student bill of rights is insufficient if no consequences.

Build on the current student survey to make it more effective; which questions do students want to see on the survey? Would be ideal to use an instrument that has been tested/validated (Rani has done considerable research and proposed 2 excellent open source options to SSC, PD, Math Dept., BFT, Student Leadership, etc.).

Bridge Program is a good model.

Ombudsperson from PD ideal (.2 FTE?). Someone who has the skills but keeps things private, who acts as a teacher coach and builds relationships between students and teachers.

Ombudsperson could bring around Chromebooks, implement survey in classrooms, use PD time to discuss results confidentially with individual teachers and provide some basis for anonymous comparison to department totals, share issues with administration. Qualitative check ins with teachers and with students also needed.

Missing piece: admin engagement and dept chair engagement.

Excellent opportunity to pilot and incorporate into redesign.

Next steps: prepare proposal, student presentation to AC staff. Include examples and possible solutions. Expect pushback.