

5/6/16 Academic Choice Advisory Council (ACAC) Meeting

May 6, 2016, 7:30-8:35AM Berkeley High School Conference Room G-109

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
Avi Peltz	ACAC Student Representative	avipeltz@students.berkeley.edu
Sam Arriola	AC Webmaster	sarriola@gmail.com
Veronique Anxolabeuere	AC Parent	anxolabeuere@me.com
Catherine Ference	ACAC Parent Rep at Large	candsfer@gmail.com
Peter Kozelka	AC Parent	
Rene Kvidahl	AC Parent	
Jodi Levin	AC Parent	jodi@sweetpickle.com
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. It was held in Ms. Green's

room, G-109.

Because no students were present at our April 8 meeting, we voted on the month's funding requests by email.

Email Vote: Holocaust Guest Speaker Funding

Joe Poppas submitted a funding request to the ACAC for \$67.65 for transportation for a guest speaker to present the perspective of a Holocaust survivor.

Donna Storey moved by email on April 8 that we approve up to \$67.65 to fund the visit of the guest speaker. Sam Arriola seconded the motion.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved by email on Sunday, April 10, 2016.

Email Vote: Readers for AC 10th Grade Research Papers

Joe Poppas submitted a funding request for \$675 to hire a reader or readers to give feedback on the research papers of 90 AC sophomores in his history class.

Donna Storey moved by email that we approve \$675 to hire readers for Mr. Poppas. Mr. Arriola seconded the motion.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved by email by all members on Sunday, April 10.

Email Vote: Angela Coppola's AP History Class at Fordham University

Ms. Coppola submitted a funding request for \$899 for tuition to attend the AP US History Summer Institute at Fordham University during the summer of 2016.

Ms. Storey moved by an email vote on April 8 that we \$899 for tuition for Ms. Coppola to attend the AP US History Summer Institute at Fordham, but only if funds cannot be obtained from BUSD to cover the cost of the course. Ms. Miller seconded the motion.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved by email by all members on Sunday, April 10.

Email Vote: Rosa Guzman's Muralism Field Trip

Ms. Guzman submitted a funding request for \$786.80 for transportation expenses for herself and Mr. Carton's classes to go to the Mission District in San Francisco to view murals on Wednesday, May 18 and Wednesday, June 1.

Ms. Storey moved by an email vote on April 8 that we approve \$786.80 for Ms. Guzman and Mr. Carton to take students on the field trip to San Francisco. Elisabeth Ross seconded the motion.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved by email by all members on Sunday, April 10.

Treasurer's Report

ACAC Treasurer Rakhi Rao provided copies of the latest Statement of Activities as of May 1, 2016. Academic Choice has a balance of \$79,745. We brought in \$27,124 in donations this year so far. Ms. Phillips announced that the BUSD will fund Ms. Coppola's summer course at Fordham and the stoles for AC graduation. She said we want to make sure our donations are used for AC field trips and enrichment for students.

Public Comments

Candy Rupp asked what was happening with the AC history teachers for freshmen. Ms. Sheikh's long-term substitute, Mr. Jenks, resigned in the middle of the year. Ms. Phillips said that there would be someone to cover his Social Living classes by May 13. She also said that there had been some issues with Ms. Beard's first and second period Social Living classes. Second-period had a restorative justice session, and Ms. Phillips was working with Ms. Beard to update PowerSchool more often and have three components weekly. The teachers in Social Living and Ethnic Studies meet weekly to discuss content in the classes.

Rani Marx expressed concern about some teachers' ability to teach enough AP material to prepare students for the AP test. Her older son had learned only a small portion of what was needed to pass the AP US History exam. Catherine Ference questioned whether a teacher should only teach to the test. Avi Peltz said that since you can only get college credit for a score of 5 at most places, the tests were not that important. Ms. Storey said that if a course is advertised as AP, a student should be prepared for the test. Amanda Green said that the future of AP classes was an issue for the Redesign Team.

Christine Staples said that she and Caroline Bettendorf had helped plan the college fair which took place on a Sunday. They hoped they could make case studies of college applications more accessible to all students by having it take place in class during the day. Ms. Green said that this meant teachers would have to give up classroom time, but Ms. Phillips said they were looking into the possibility.

Ms. Phillips announced that juniors will be taking the Smart Balance Assessment online state test in May. There will be four days of testing in English testing in English class from May 19-24, and four days of math in history classes, May 25-31. Families can opt out of the testing.

Vote: Glenn Wolkenfeld's Request for Funds for a Set of AP Biology Textbooks

Mr. Wolkenfeld submitted a funding request for \$1200 to buy a classroom set of textbooks for AP Biology. The regular teacher of the class, Ms. Haber, will be on sabbatical next year and Mr. Wolkenfeld will be teaching the class. He will use the books during down time as a go-to activity when students can "take notes on the next chapter."

Some parents supported this as a way to decrease homework. Ms. Storey wondered if it was a good idea to buy an old edition of the book, since biology textbooks were updated regularly. It was decided that we would vote on the proposal pending Mr.

Wolkenfeld's explanation as to when BUSD was going to buy new books. (Mr. Wolkenfeld explained by email that the edition he is purchasing has a lot of the same material as the current edition).

Ms. Ference moved that we approve \$1200 for Mr. Wolkenfeld to buy a set of AP Biology textbooks. Ms. Staples seconded the motion.

Action: Nine people voted yes, three abstained; the motion was approved.

Vote: Amanda Green's Request for the Year-End AC Teacher Breakfast

Ms. Green said that in the past AC has funded an end-of-the-year teacher reflection and celebration. She is asking the ACAC for \$250 to take the AC team out to breakfast for their last Small Learning Community meeting of the year.

Jodi Levin moved that we approve the \$250 for the teacher breakfast. Ms. Staples seconded the motion.

Action: The funding request was unanimously approved.

Vote: ACAC Student Voice Subcommittee Request for Teacher Reimbursement

Ms. Storey asked that the ACAC approve funds to reimburse teachers who consulted with the Student Voice Subcommittee, which was formed at our ACAC meeting on March 4, 2016 in order to improve procedures for students to address classroom issues at Berkeley High. Because teachers are overloaded, we would like to show that we value their time and advice by providing payment at the same level as extra hours for curriculum development—around \$30 an hour with a cap of \$600.

Some parents felt the problem was not that important, but others felt it was a step in the right direction.

Mr. Peltz moved that we fund the reimbursement for teachers who consult with the Student Voice Subcommittee. Ms. Levin seconded the motion.

Action: Twelve people voted yes, three voted no; the motion was approved.

Field Trip Update

The ACAC Field Trip Coordinator, Ms. Ference, said that we had not yet voted on Mr. Colon's field trip for his junior history class to the Rosie the Riveter Museum on May 17. The ACAC decided to vote on the May 17 trip by email.

Ms. Ference also said that the busses for the Cal Shakespeare field trip would cost more than anticipated because we needed one bus with wheelchair access.

Results of AC Parent Survey

Ms. Staples reported the results of the Academic Choice Parents Survey that was given in April 2016. The full report is available at the AC Governance page.

Some of the highlights include:

79% of respondents said their students were not getting enough sleep.

83% of students were stressed.

The majority felt stress in two classes.

53% tried to address it with the teacher, but it usually didn't make a difference.

Stress ramps up in tenth grade.

63% of students in all grades use an outside tutor. Of those 82% use private tutoring services.

Concerning Dead Week, the feedback Ms. Staples got from teachers was that they never agreed to suspend covering new material the week before finals and there was no official policy. Ms. Staples wondered if there was actually a policy.

Parents also wanted a better understanding of where to go to get help as the procedure at Berkeley High was unclear.

Ms. Green said that AC has been criticized for being impersonal. It is hard to achieve personalization in AC when a teacher has 150 student contacts a day. She suggested we have student advisory periods and pull back from the overload of AP classes.

Ms. Staples also discussed her "Homework: FAQ'S" handout with information about national surveys on homework that show many students are being assigned more homework than they can handle and studies that show no evidence of an academic benefit to students.

Ms. Phillips said one way they were trying to address this was through Lisa Miller's Classroom Matters workshops for AC families. Ms. Miller said the next workshop focuses on test preparation and she provides a concrete plan to follow for prep time. She said she would be happy to share her materials and process with teachers. Ms. Phillips hoped we could reach more families with this information. Ms. Marx suggested the AC newsletter or include it in the Social Living curriculum. Ms. Phillips said some of the material was already available on the Classroom Matters website (www.classroommatters.com). She thanked Ms. Miller for giving us the materials and workshops.

AC Graduation Celebration Plans

Ms. Ross, the parent coordinator for the 2016 AC graduation celebration, said the planning is going well. Bill Choy of Travelin' Joe Espresso was providing waffles and hot drinks for 500 for \$500, a favorable discount. Twenty juniors were signed up to help. Two sheet cakes with a yellow jacket design were ordered from Virginia Bakery. She was trying to get more donations and was working on the ceremony and awards. Ms. Staples asked how the award recipients were selected. Ms. Green replied there was no precedent. Each teacher made the decision about which awards s/he wanted to give to students. The awards would be mostly academic, but there would also be some community service awards.

Next ACAC Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Friday, June 3, 2016, 7:30-8:35 a.m. in BHS Conference Room B in the D Building.