

Redwood High School

Department Chair Council

Minutes of the September 20, 2006 DCC Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 p.m. Present: Karen Barrett, Erik Berkowitz, Peggy Bogason, Fran Bozdech, Heather Curtaz, Tara Donoghue, David Goldsmith, Steve Hettleman, Jennifer Labovich, Skip Lovelady, Nancy Neu, David Plescia, Gino Pomilia, LaSandra White. Parents: Elaine Bengle, Suman Vyas. Students: Sarah Barr, Sara DaMert, Beau Shaw. Guests: Donna Tranchina, and two students who attended for one hour: Benjamin Natter and Steven Wright. Peggy Bogason took minutes.

Approval of the 9/06/06 Minutes (Nancy Neu)

Fran Bozdech clarified that per the DCC Bylaws, the total student votes and parent votes shall be determined at a ratio of 1:200 students. The minutes of the September 6, 2006 DCC meeting stand as clarified.

Department Budgets (Nancy Neu and Donna Tranchina)

Donna Tranchina distributed copies of department budgets, carryovers, and book bill reports. She explained expense claim procedures, purchase order requisitions, ASB reimbursement forms, budgets, and book bill reports.

Field Trip Moratorium in May – Feedback (Nancy Neu)

At the last DCC meeting, it was decided to discuss a possible May-June field trip moratorium or come up with some suggestions, ideas, and/or decisions to discuss at today's meeting. Nancy Neu explained that no field trips are allowed during STAR testing or other school-wide events, and she also said that the moratorium would apply to any off-campus trips that take students out of more than the supervising teacher's classes. She said that field trip attendance is mandatory for students unless the student's grade in another class is at risk. Mrs. Neu said that field trips should be linked to an assignment. Each department chair shared feedback. In addition to those who were either for or against the moratorium, some suggestions included:

- Limit the number of field trips to those which would be culminating or one-time events, with only a few field trips approved for the entire school.
- If there are teachers who tend to take a lot of field trips, set limits for those people.
- Limit teachers to one or two field trips per year.
- Do not allow AP classes to take field trips after their tests have been taken.
- Encourage teachers to take field trips earlier in the year.
- Add a "once in a lifetime" check box to the *Field Trip Advisement* form, with the understanding that if another teacher has an important classroom event, that student would need to remain on campus. Nancy Neu explained that field trip forms are Board Policy documents; she will investigate whether anything can be added to them.
- Limit the number of field trips a student can take.

Nancy Neu said that she does not approve all field trips, but she will be more vigilant about field trips in May and June. She suggested that teachers monitor the attendance of their AP students prior to their tests. Mrs. Neu will also check last year's May attendance figures. She also said that improved communication between teachers would help the field trip situation. Mrs. Neu suggested e-mailing staff prior to setting the date for a field trip to determine if there would be a conflict. She asked the DCC to discuss this with their departments.

Cost of Dance Tickets (Steve Hettleman)

Steve Hettleman said that school dances are an important part of the high school experience, but the \$20 tickets for the homecoming dance may be too expensive for a portion of the Redwood student body. LaSandra White explained that students who find the price prohibitive may be eligible for free tickets if they demonstrate need. The school sponsors three school dances (not including the boat dance and prom); the tickets for the three dances cost a total of \$40. Scholarships are also available for the yearbook, prom, and other school events. Mrs. White said that at the students' request, this year's homecoming dance will be more formal than in previous years; the price of the tickets covers the cost of decorations, campus security, police officers, and the DJ. Nancy Neu suggested that teachers and counselors let the administration know about students who might need financial assistance. Mrs. Neu will also check with other sources. It was suggested that the Leadership class do more fundraising to lower ticket prices as well as raise the price of spirit shirts. The DCC should discuss this with their departments and report back.

Minutes on the Redwood Website (Nancy Neu)

Nancy Neu said that the approved minutes from DCC and Site Council meetings will be posted on our website to improve communication between the school and the community.

Modernization Projects (Nancy Neu)

Nancy Neu said some of our new modernization projects include improvements to the west parking lot, and a new swimming pool, tennis courts, and mini-gym. Mrs. Neu had provided all staff with the opportunity for input on these designs. Two people expressed an interest in the west parking lot design, and they will be included in a planning meeting. The preliminary plan for the parking lot shows an increase in the number of parking spaces and an added drop-off lane. The new 40-meter swimming pool will be located behind the current one. Two more tennis courts will be added. Mrs. Neu asked the DCC to let their departments know that she has the architect's schematics in her office if anyone would like to look at them. Twelve staff members will participate on the planning committee for the pool, tennis courts, and mini-gym.

Spanish Position Update (Nancy Neu)

Nancy Neu said that the interview committee was unable to find a suitable candidate for the .8 FTE position, so two Spanish teachers, Debbie McCrea and Greg Stevens, have increased their workloads to 1.2 FTE. In addition, Jude Phelps, a retired teacher from Ross School, and Barbara Patten, a retired teacher from the Reed School District, will each teach one period of Spanish. Peter Dunkle, who did an excellent job as the substitute, will work through the end of the semester to help alleviate some of the workload by assisting in classrooms, working with small groups of students, and helping in the ELD class. Mrs. Neu emphasized that there will be plenty of support for both the teachers and the students.

Additional Items

Nancy Neu reminded the DCC that tomorrow's meeting time will be with WASC focus groups. Monday will be a Staff Development Day, with district meetings in the morning and site meetings in the afternoon. Mrs. Neu will have the Staff Development calendar updated to include the WASC meeting schedule.

Meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.