

Redwood High School

Department Chair Council

Minutes of the March 7, 2007 DCC Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. Present: Karen Barrett, Erik Berkowitz, Peggy Bogason, Frances Bozdech, Heather Curtaz, Tara Donoghue, David Goldsmith, Steve Hettleman, Skip Lovelady, Nancy Neu, Gino Pomilia, Sue Shirley, Kim Stiffler, LaSandra White. Parents: Elaine Bengle, Carol Kuhn, Suman Vyas. Students: Sarah Barr, Sara DaMert, Beau Shaw. Guests: Camille Borgo, Debbie McCrea. Peggy Bogason took minutes.

Minutes of the January 17, 2007 Meeting

The minutes of the January 17, 2007 DCC meeting stand as submitted.

School-to-Career (Camille Borgo)

Nancy Neu introduced Redwood's School-to-Career liaison, Camille Borgo. Ms. Borgo would like to be more "visible" at Redwood. She discussed the variety of after school and summer internships available for students. Ms. Borgo said that she is also working with some Tamalpais High School teachers to help them find guest speakers for their classes, and would welcome the opportunity to assist Redwood teachers as well. Ms. Borgo asked the department chairs to let their departments know that she is available to help them in a number of ways. She offered to attend department meetings (at least once per year) to discuss the resources she has available. She would also like to have short classroom visits to let students know about internships, job shadows, informational interviews, and other career exploration events.

- The Math department would like Ms. Borgo to arrange speakers for dates after the AP tests.
- Fine Arts, specifically Drama, arranges their guest speakers a year in advance.
- Leadership class is interested in having Ms. Borgo speak in class, as well as arrange for guest speakers.
- PTSA would probably be interested in having Ms. Borgo speak at a meeting.

Department Feedback – CHKS (Nancy Neu)

At the last meeting, Nancy Neu had asked the DCC to let their departments know about the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and the recent Board report discussing the CHKS results. Mrs. Neu had asked the DCC to bring the feedback to today's meeting. Some of the feedback included:

- The Leadership representatives discussed CHKS at an ASB meeting. The students noted that their peers believe that "safe" and "very safe" are very similar. The student representatives also said that most students don't understand the point of CHKS, and that it might be beneficial to explain why the survey is being taken and what it means.
- A parent representative said that because the survey questions and answers are open to interpretation, the value of the survey is questionable.
- A suggestion was made to provide staff development opportunities to help teachers know how to handle odd/inappropriate behavior.
- A suggestion was made to concentrate on teaching specific behavior topics each year, including what types of things are inappropriate to bring to school.
- A concern was expressed about the fire drill process and how the school evacuates to one specific place. It was suggested that a consultant be hired to develop a different plan.
- A suggestion was made to offer CPR training every two years, so that the staff would be better equipped to deal with emergencies. The PE department has the resources for CPR training and certification.
- Some departments discussed drug and alcohol issues and the perceived increase in their use by students, noting that this is a definite concern particularly if use has increased during the school day and in the classroom.

In response to a concern about student behavior in the parking lot, Nancy Neu reminded the DCC that anyone can call concerns into the tip line (415-945-3693); it is anonymous and the administration can take action if they get the information.

WASC (Nancy Neu)

Nancy Neu explained that we have two very busy weeks coming up with the California Distinguished School validation visit on March 14, and then the WASC visit on March 25-28. She will discuss these visits at tomorrow's staff meeting. Mrs. Neu distributed schedules for both visits. She reminded the department chairs that she needs them to provide

support for these visits with the staff and in focus groups.

Mrs. Neu said that all staff and some students and parents will receive a copy of our WASC self-study. She noted that the staff spent more than one year preparing the report; she is very proud of it and said we have done a stellar job on the self-study. She emphasized that the WASC visit is one of the most important and serious events for any high school. It must be taken seriously, but it is also important for staff to be positive and excited. Mrs. Neu is hoping for another six-year accreditation, but noted that we won't know until May or June. She noted that the parents and students who read the WASC report provided great feedback. Mrs. Neu explained that all focus groups will meet with the visiting team during the WASC visit. The team is validating that what was written in our self-study is accurate. Substitute coverage will be provided for the focus group meetings and details will be given to staff as soon as possible. Teachers who cover for others during their conference periods will be compensated. Each classroom and office should display the new Vision Statement posters that were created by William Crabtree and laminated by Roland Ruesch, as well as the laminated graduation outcome lists. A WASC quiz will be given in next Monday's homeroom period. Mrs. Neu will also have WASC posters created to be posted in the hallways, and more information will be listed in the *Twig*.

Members of the WASC visiting team are:

- Shelly Moreira (Chair of the visiting team), RSP teacher from Lincoln High School, Stockton
- Janet Carlson, Associate Principal from Acalanes High School, Lafayette
- Sondra Lee Dovell, Principal from Las Plumas High School, Oroville
- Debbi Holmerud, Principal from Lincoln High School, Stockton
- Dana Johnston, English teacher from Freedom High School, Oakley
- Jim Rallis, Director of Assessment and Evaluation, Pleasanton

Mrs. Neu discussed next Wednesday's California Distinguished School (CDS) visit. She said it is an honor to be nominated and thanked Steve Hettleman, Ann Tepovich, and Stephannie Haver for writing the CDS application, which used a lot of the material also used in the WASC report. Mrs. Neu reviewed the validation process. She said that the validation team will spend the day at Redwood. They will use student guides and make classroom visits, they will meet with students and some staff members. At the end of the visit, there will be a brief staff meeting for the CDS team to share their findings. Jack O'Connell, the State Superintendent for Public Instruction, will make the official announcement of CDS awards on April 17.

Members of the CDS validation team are:

- Mary Buttler (Chair of validation team), Assistant Superintendent, MCOE
- Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent, MCOE
- Chris Carter, Superintendent, Reed School District
- Greg Myers, Assistant Principal, Ross School
- Megan Pettis, Assistant Principal, San Marin High School
- Valerie Pitts, Superintendent, Larkspur School District
- Vicki Romero, Director of Secondary Education, Novato School District

AP/Honors (Nancy Neu)

Nancy Neu said that AP/Honors matrix has been posted on the Redwood website. During Monday's Instructional Council meeting, the criteria were reviewed. Mrs. Neu reminded the DCC to get all testing dates to Peggy Bogason as soon as possible. Mrs. Bogason will send out a second set of list submittal guidelines. Mrs. Neu emphasized that we would like to have as many lists as possible before spring break.

STAR Test Schedule (LaSandra White)

Nancy Neu told the DCC that she contacted other schools whose API scores surpassed ours to find out what they did to help get those results. She said that these schools all tested over three or more days and provided incentives for the students. Most of these schools kept the students in their own classes for testing. LaSandra White contacted seven schools to get their STAR testing schedules, noting that most of these schools started with the English/Language Arts test first. Mrs. White distributed drafts of the STAR testing schedule and asked the DCC to review it, check for mistakes, and get back to her by Monday. Mrs. White said that the tests will not start until the second week after spring break.

Discussion ensued. Some comments included:

- One representative asked, "When are we going to try what our own teachers suggested rather than what other schools are doing?" Nancy Neu responded that all the schools whose students did better than ours tested over

three or more days. A two-day testing schedule might be better for staff but students seem to do better when the tests are spread out over more days. She noted that it would be nice to get the tests over with as quickly as possible, but it doesn't seem like a viable solution

- Another representative said that he doesn't believe students become fatigued from the STAR test. He feels it is more important to think about class programs because shorter instructional days because of STAR testing mean that not much class work gets done.
- A student representative said most of her peers would prefer that STAR testing be spread out over more days because five hours of testing would be difficult for juniors--they are already taking AP tests, SATs, and other tests.
- A concern was raised by one department chair that the STAR test is being given two weeks before the AP tests and valuable AP preparation time is being lost.

Mrs. White asked the DCC to share the STAR test schedule with their departments. She will e-mail the final version to all staff and have it posted online.

2007-2008 Student Planner (LaSandra White)

LaSandra White said that a former Tamalpais High School teacher, Leslie Schwartz, created Tam's current student planner. The planner has gotten great reviews from their students and staff. Mrs. White formed a committee of students and it was decided to go with this planner for next year. One advantage of this planner is that the reference pages can be customized. She had shared the Tam planner with the DCC and then distributed reference pages. Mrs. White asked the DCC to share the reference pages with their departments and let her know what information they would like included on those pages.

Students Loitering During Class Time (LaSandra White)

LaSandra White said that every month the administration and campus assistants discuss security issues. One issue that surfaced was that after the bell has rung, there are still lots of students in the halls. Many of them say they are going to their cars to get binders and books. Mrs. White asked that staff hold students accountable; students should be prepared when they come to class. Tardiness continues to be a problem, particularly at the beginning of fifth period. It was noted that Redwood does not have a school-wide tardy policy. Several ideas included:

- Develop a school-wide tardy policy with clear consequences.
- Have students check in with attendance if they are tardy. They would be given a newly-created tardy slip and then it would be easier to track the tardies.
- A suggestion was made to have teachers "lock" their classrooms after the bell rings and then tardy students would need to get a pass from the attendance office. Nancy Neu will check the Ed. Code to see if rooms can be locked during the school day. It was noted that locking doors and then letting in tardy students would be very disruptive.
- A student representative reported that some students leave class when a substitute teacher is present and smoke marijuana. Mrs. White encouraged students to report such behavior on the tip line if they aren't comfortable reporting it in person.
- A suggestion was made to target teachers who are lax about tardies.

Mrs. Neu asked the DCC to discuss a possible school-wide tardy policy with their departments and report back at the next meeting.

Make-ups of Final Exams (Jennifer Labovich)

Due to Jennifer Labovich's absence, this item will be tabled until the next meeting.

Recommendations of Students for Summer School (Skip Lovelady)

Skip Lovelady said that this topic was discussed last spring and reviewed the concerns. He wanted to know what progress had been made to change the summer school process. Nancy Neu said that the suggestion was made, per the April 19, 2006 DCC Minutes, to have this topic brought to the attention of the facilitators for discussion in the Instructional Council. Mr. Lovelady said it would be stronger if the DCC had a collective feeling about summer school recommendations. Mrs. Neu said to bring up the discussion at the March 19 district department meetings, put it on the agenda, and make an appointment to speak with Steve Butler. The counseling representative said that students who live in the district but don't go to TUHSD schools might be taking classes for original credit during summer school.

Additional Items

Fran Bozdech told the DCC that student scheduling for the 2007-2008 school year is happening right now. She listed the

important dates and asked the DCC to remind their departments about the scheduling process. She will e-mail the dates to staff again.

Meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.