

Redwood High School

Department Chair Council

Minutes of the September 3, 2008 DCC Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. Present: Kim Stiffler, Greg Stevens, Nancy Malcolm, Erik Berkowitz, Fran Bozdech, Julianne Schrick, Chris Gilmore, David Goldsmith, Jennifer Harris, Ann Jaime, Skip Lovelady, Keith Murray, Nancy Neu, Steve Hettleman. Parents: Elaine Bengle, Ashu Sikand, Suman Vyas. Students: Amy Bettencourt, Anders Miltner, and Jill Waxman. Minutes were taken by Sam Miller.

Introductions (N. Neu)

Nancy Neu began the meeting by welcoming new and returning members and asked that everyone introduce themselves.

Minutes from the 5/21/08 DCC Meeting (N. Neu)

The minutes stand as submitted.

Select DCC Chair (N. Neu)

Nancy Neu announced that in accordance with the DCC bylaws the position of a DCC Chair for a 2-year term was open. She also commended Erik Berkowitz on the job he has done as the DCC Chair over the last two years. Nominations were made for Erik Berkowitz to continue as the Chair. There were no other nominations and none opposed. Erik graciously accepted the position for another two years.

Master Schedule Feedback/Opening of School (N. Neu)

Nancy Neu said that the current enrollment at Redwood is 1442 students. The grade level count is as follows.

Grade	Male	Female	Total
8 th	5	0	5
9 th	170	181	351
10 th	183	203	386
11 th	193	161	354
12 th	184	162	346
Total	735	707	1442

Nancy said that we have had a slight reduction in enrollment this year over that past four to five years. Nancy talked about taking this opportunity to dispel any rumors regarding class sizes, teaching assignments, etc. She said that when building the master schedule the goal is to meet the students' needs while trying to also honor the teachers' requests. Building the master schedule begins in the spring and each department's needs are looked at. The schedule is critical and is not entirely left to ESchool to build. The majority of part-time teachers will end up with an even or odd schedule. We have 17 full-time teachers that have 1st and 7th period teaching assignments. We do not have any teachers that teach 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th period classes. A teacher with a 2nd, 4th, and 6th period teaching assignment is not common, but it can happen. The biggest request of teachers is to have a 1st or 7th period prep. We currently have 24 teachers with a 1st period prep and 36 teachers with a 7th period prep. Nancy talked about all the good in ESchool, but that the scheduling module is fairly cumbersome. Nancy also said that the classes are balanced and this is possibly the best it has been in years. We do not have over 30 students in any class with the exception of P.E., Journalism, and some math classes. Honors Geometry has 33 students, one section of Precalculus Math has 31 students, and Honors Advanced Algebra has 32 students. The average class size is under 26.

Summer School Issues (N. Neu)

Nancy Neu reported that Summer School went smoothly and Cory DeMars did a great job as the Summer School Principal. Nancy also commended Kim Stiffler as one of the Summer School Assistant Principal. No complaints or issues from any teachers were brought to Nancy regarding the use of their rooms. Nancy asked that the department chairs bring this item back to their departments and if anything needs to be replaced from Summer School that they

let her know as soon as possible. Nancy said that although there have been conversations about moving the Drama/Theater group to Drake, Summer School will continue to be held at Redwood.

Textbook Check-Out Procedures (N. Neu)

Nancy Neu restated the importance of scanning books prior to checking them out to students. We have a new person in the Service Center, DeeAnn Ezcurra, who is currently being trained on the textbook tracking system, but can help answer any questions you may have. Accountability needs to start with the departments. Not following the correct procedure means a big loss of money each year. Nancy asked that department chairs explain the importance of following correct procedure when checking out and checking back in textbooks. She also asked that she be informed if there is any resistance on the part of teachers. One department chair reported that she was having difficulty logging into the system. She was directed to speak with DeeAnn in the Service Center. Nancy said that Sam will be setting up one-to-one meetings with each department chair and this will be part of that discussion. The idea of a central book depository with one person in charge was brought up. This is an idea that has been discussed before. Nancy talked about another school site that has their textbooks checked into the library at the end of the year where they are stored until they are checked out again to students at the beginning of each year. Nancy would like to continue this discussion and asked that departments brainstorm ideas to bring back.

Department Budgets (N. Neu)

Nancy Neu asked each department chair if they had received a copy of their budget from Donna. Everyone agreed that they did receive a copy. Nancy said that she met with Donna at the beginning of the year to review the budgets. The Redwood Foundation has generously offered to pay for “educational expenses” such as copy charges for each department for the fall semester. This frees up additional money for the departments to spend on other miscellaneous expenses. Nancy said that if any department has an expense that is a one-time need to let Nancy know. There was a question about carryover from last year. Nancy clarified that last year’s carry-over was put into this year’s budget.

Cell Phone Policy (N. Neu)

Sam handed-out copies of the Cell Phone Policy. This policy along with the dress code and parking pass policies will be talked about when Louise, LaSandra, and Keith go out into the classrooms to talk with students, so there is no confusion on the part of the students. Some changes have been made to the Cell Phone policy. For the first offense, the phone will be taken away and brought to appropriate grade level assistant principal secretary where it will then be logged into the computer. For the second offense, the confiscated cell phone will be brought to the appropriate office and the parents will be called to come and pick it up. For the third offense, the student will be suspended. The changes in the policy were made because it became too confusing which office the student could retrieve their cell phone in and from which administrator. There was also some concern about teachers having their T.A.’s bring the cell phones to the office and issues with confidentiality. With regards to the use of cell phones, a comment was made that this should be a school-wide policy. Since this is Ed. Code, it would only apply to students, not staff. However, teachers should be more sensitive to the policy and not make personal phone calls in the hallways during class time. This policy will be revised and reminded to students during homeroom later in the year.

Use of T.A.’s (with regards to confidential material) (N. Neu)

Nancy reminded the chairs that we never give confidential material, such as IEP paperwork or grade change forms, to T.A.’s to pick-up or deliver. This also includes classroom keys and confiscated cell phones. If any teacher is in a situation where they are stuck in the classroom and need assistance, they can call the office and someone will come to their room. Nancy also said that since we now have less staff meetings, she is depending on the chairs to disseminate this information with their department. T.A.’s should also not be allowed to use the teacher’s computers that are in the classroom. Students should have their own account and use the computers that available in the library and computer labs only.

Parent Allocation Grants (N. Neu)

Nancy Neu said that the Redwood Foundation Allocation Panel applications have been delivered to all the staff mailboxes. Nancy encourages everyone to submit a request. The applications are due by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 23rd. The goal of the Foundation is to raise \$750,000. Nancy would like the group to think about one big request that can be funded. She suggested submitting a request to bring the computer lab (182) up to date. The computer

lab was initially funded with Digital H.S. funds nine years ago. Today it would cost approximately \$65,000 to bring the lab up to date. Nancy suggested redoing both labs, but maybe one lab this year and the other one next year. This update would also include new chairs. Nancy asked the chairs for feedback regarding this idea and would be happy to hear about any other suggestions. There was a question regarding reimbursement from the Foundation for items that were already purchased using department funds. Nancy said that's not an appropriate request from the Foundation as the purchase was already made. Elaine Bengle asked that at Back-to-School Night tomorrow, everyone talk about the 2.5 million dollars that the Foundation has already funded to the school and identify those things by posting a card to them. The cards will be available in room 114 on the counter. Elaine reminded everyone that this is the time that the parents are able to see where the money goes. Jennifer reported that the P.E. department would be doing a presentation in the gym addressing how the Foundation has supported that department. Skip asked about air conditioning for the upstairs as a possible grant submission. Skip said that the situation with the heat upstairs is tragic and needs to be addressed. He reported that his students in the afternoon are not able to focus on their work due to the heat. Skip said that there is new technology with regards to air conditioners. He has seen portable air conditioners that include no intake and recirculate the air from the room. Erik Berkowitz asked Elaine Bengle if it was possible to use the Foundation logo to make t-shirts for the people in their department. Elaine said that she would check on it. A suggestion from one of the students was to purchase some water spritzer bottles for the crowd at graduation or large portable fans.

Student Elections for DCC (N. Neu)

Nancy asked the department to think about student elections for next year. Rather than having the students chosen from Leadership, Nancy suggested that, like with the Site Council, the students need to be elected to the DCC. Site Council is governed by Ed. Code, so their represented body needs to be elected. The DCC is not governed by the Ed. Code, so therefore, can select its members. Nancy said the concern was that there was not a broad cross-section of students because they were from Leadership and not elected. There tends to be some overlap between the two bodies when the students are reporting out. Some of the students commented that it still be the same group of students who would run for the positions, as those are the students that are most involved. Nancy asked to get feedback from the departments.

Announcements:

Skip said that he took a poll among his students they reported that only 15% of those students have the TWIG read to them in Homeroom. Skip suggested that Nancy come on the loud speaker at the beginning of homeroom and announce that the TWIG will now be read to them. Another suggestion was to have a student read the TWIG over the loudspeaker. A comment was made that if the TWIG was read over the loudspeaker then there would be no time to discuss any of the items that were announced. Nancy asked that this item be brought back to the departments for feedback and that the chairs remind the teachers to read the TWIG.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.