

# Redwood High School

## Department Chair Council

### Minutes of the November 19, 2008 DCC Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. Present: Dave Plescia, Fran Bozdech, Julianne Schrick, David Goldsmith, Jennifer Harris, Ann Jaime, Skip Lovelady, Keith Murray, Nancy Neu, Chris Gilmore, and Steve Hettleman. Parents: Elaine Bengle, Ashu Sikand, Suman Vyas. Students: Anders Miltner. Minutes taken by Sam Miller.

#### **Minutes of 11/5/08 DCC Meeting (N. Neu)**

Minutes were accepted as amended.

#### **Rotating Final Exam Schedule (N. Neu)**

A mocked-up version of a final exam schedule that started with a 1<sup>st</sup> period final and ended with a 7<sup>th</sup> period final was distributed. Julianne asked that the 7<sup>th</sup> period final exam be moved to 1<sup>st</sup> period to avoid having the 7<sup>th</sup> period final given last. She commented that not all teachers give final exams and we should be asking each teacher honestly if they do. Julianne also commented that the math department is usually here until the end of the day on the last day of finals, so in order to make it equitable for everyone it would be nice to look at making a change going forward. Dave Plescia pointed out that the reason why the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> period finals are historically given at those times is because those periods have the fewest students taking final exams. He proposed moving the 7<sup>th</sup> period final as the first final given. One of the issues is having seniors take their finals with everyone else. If that was the case then we would have to look at a schedule change where seniors are not scheduled twice for finals. Steve Hettleman suggested having three ninety-minute final exams each day. One concern with changing to ninety-minute finals is to make sure that we are meeting our instructional minutes. Elaine Bengle addressed the concern of student stress with taking three final exams on the same day, especially for those students in rigorous courses. Chris Gilmore agreed. Three final exams on one day would be too much stress for Special Ed. students and how would that schedule allow for extended time? We need to be mindful of students who need extended time. Skip said the science department would agree to a final exam schedule that had ninety-minute finals exams and moving the graduation to the Friday. The graduation and teacher work day would both be on that Friday and the Thursday before would follow a 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> period schedule to allow time for reflection, instruction, etc. That Friday could also be a minimum day. Julianne commented that having three ninety-minute finals on the Monday would be fine, but that day only as it gives students the time to study the weekend prior. Julianne also liked the idea of making the Thursday a minimum day schedule. Another concern was that there was time built into the senior finals for students who needed extended time if we have the senior frolic day on a final exam day. Nancy Neu said that any decision regarding changing the final exam schedule would take time to process and would need to include input from the parents, as well. It would be a philosophical change, as the perception and belief is that each teacher is currently giving a final exam on those days for the two-hour period. It is something of significance to change to the ninety-minute periods because that would affect our instructional minutes. Nancy reminded everyone that this is not something that can be done for this year. We also need to be mindful of how each final is weighted, students that may need extended time, the stress level for students if switching to a three ninety-minute finals exam schedule, and meeting instructional minutes. Dave Goldsmith commented that he does not want the extra day at the end. He believes this issue should be addressed to the entire staff before any new schedule is created. Everyone agreed to a rotating final exam schedule, but there was no agreement at the last meeting with regards to an extra day. There was agreement to flip flop the block days and re-work the rotation of periods so that we start with a 7<sup>th</sup> period final exam. Ann Jaime suggested having a group of people mock up several different final exam schedules to bring back. Ann, Julianne, Nancy, and Fran offered to work on various schedules. Nancy Neu said that at this time we are not looking at ninety-minute periods or three final exams per day or a day of reflection. Julianne commented that she does not want to take the day of reflection off the table. She believes this is something that should be considered. Skip commented that he does not want separate finals. Most science classes are mixed grade level and he would like to have the seniors take their finals with everyone else. Greg Stevens commented that his department in the past has actually sent their seniors to Kreps and had one teacher from their department proctor the test to them altogether. This has been an option for his department and some teachers choose to participate and some don't.

#### **STAR (N. Neu)**

Nancy is asking that each department chair to discuss with their department what they are doing with regards to STAR preparation. How did you do in your Cluster Groups and your STAR results? Talk about what you did last year. Practice test taking techniques. Look at any students who need assistance now. Nancy, Louise, LaSandra, and Keith will start going out to classes in March to talk about the importance of taking the STAR tests with students. Nancy said that we also need to celebrate the Blue Ribbon Award with the students. She wants to do something for them prior to the STAR testing in March. She will be meeting with some of the parents to talk about some ideas for a celebration in the spring. Nancy said that she will also be meeting with Todd Samet and Admin to make sure that students are taking the correct science tests. Nancy asked that you let her know if you need any information on any individual scores for students in any particular class.

### **Guest Speaker Forms (N. Neu)**

Nancy reminded everyone about using the Guest Speaker forms. If any teacher plans on having a guest speaker in their class, they need to fill-out one of these forms prior to having them come on campus. It is Board Policy to fill-out this form in advance, but it is more important for us to know who is on campus and when. Especially, if we get an emergency phone call for the guest speaker, it's good to know where to find them. Guest Speaker forms are located in the metal file cabinet in room 114.

### **Data Director Training (N. Neu)**

Nancy said that she is waiting to hear back from Joel regarding a date for the Data Director Training (DDT). Up to thirty teachers can attend the training at one time. The training takes about an hour and is easy to understand and use. Some suggested dates were a Thursday in January or early February when there wasn't a scheduled staff meeting. Another suggestion was having a training session during 7<sup>th</sup> period. Most teachers have a 7<sup>th</sup> period prep and those teachers that don't can get a sub for the 7<sup>th</sup> period. Nancy said that this was not mandatory training. If there is enough interest, Nancy will come back with the dates. If you are interested let Nancy know.

### **Trash at Lunch (F. Bozdech)**

Fran brought up the issue of litter in the lunch plaza because of student comments she heard in her office. There was a poster campaign last year, but it didn't seem to help the situation. Fran said that she heard of an incident where a student threw their chocolate milk carton against the wall and it exploded all over the wall. When the student was confronted by a teacher, the student pointed at the custodian and said that it was his job to clean it up. The students know that the mess will be cleaned up by the custodians, so they feel that it's their responsibility to clean up after themselves. How can we send the correct message to students? How can we change their minds and make them care? One major concern is that there is not enough supervision at lunchtime. Anders said the only way to make students stop littering is to just take away the privilege of eating in the lunch plaza. Maybe the lunch plaza should be roped off little by little until the litter situation improves. It should be read about and talked about in homeroom, although it has in the past. The Leadership class might be able to help spread the word. Anders offered to address it at Leadership class. Students who are given school service hours for littering are told that they have to pick up trash. School service hours are the only consequence that is currently given. It could also be a culture thing. Some students don't think it's cool to pick up their trash. There isn't enough staff out at lunch to watch all the kids and once the weather changes it will get worse, as all the students will be in either the CEA or main building. It was brought up that there currently is no outdoor recycling program, only trash receptacles. There needs to be follow through on threats made, so maybe now's the time to start restricting access into the lunch plaza until the problem gets better.

### **Student Involvement (N. Neu)**

Nancy said that she has been spending time working with the other admin and counselors identifying students that appear not to be involved in a club, athletics, or social group. She will also be checking in with departments and asks that if you know any students that are not involved, to let her or a counselor know. She said that Link Crew does a good job. The goal is to have every student engaged and involved.

### **Announcements**

Steve Hettleman would like to see a change in the way the budgets are presented to the chairs. He would like to see a simpler format; one that's easier to read and understand. He said that his budget seems to change each month. Skip said that it was changed for the better years ago. Lori Parrish came and did a workshop last year. Lori Parrish told Fran about budget online accessibility. Steve will talk to Donna about it and Nancy Neu will talk to Lori Parrish, too.

*Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.*