

School Site Leadership Team Minutes

12.12.12

Arcadia High School

Conference Room 1, Administration Building

Chairperson: Oliver Beckwith obeckwith@ausd.net

Members Present: Oliver Beckwith, Linda Mackessey, Alex Ye, Vania Fong, Katherine Chen, Caroline Lefever, Christa Heinrich-Josteis, John Tung, Winnie Chin, Jennifer Oku, Brent Forsee, Sue Ramirez, Michael Feraco-Eberle, Vicky Stiles, Julie Curry, Catherine Merel, Niroo Dev, Jennifer Lashier, Joan Petersilge (from 3:35 on).

Minutes from November were distributed via email, approved by consensus, and posted by Alex Ye.

Meeting called to order: 3:05pm

3:05-3:08: Updates: Students in teacher lot issue: Bill Citrin's APN feature and the PTSA newsletter feature for parents.

3:08-3:13: Holiday Assembly – Proposed Schedule and Information (John Tung)

This will be the first assembly in the PAC and there will be new challenges. Unlike the gym we need to go in by class so we need more time for unloading and loading / transition time, and more time for the 2C assembly because they can't bring any backpacks – absolutely no food and drinks. Anything we can do to protect the space. The proposed Schedule was distributed; classes are down to 32 minutes on assembly days. Classes will not be allowed to enter unless the teachers are present; all adults will sit in assigned seating with their classes (no longer responsible for areas). Other than a date correction on the proposal draft, no changes suggested. Admin will be seeking feedback from SSLT following the assembly.

3:13-3:29, and 3:51-4:03: Dress Code Concerns (Brought by Julie Curry and Joan Petersilge,

respectively) Julie: Students will enter classes even as late as fifth or sixth period with inappropriate logos/cut/length on apparel – we're looking for consistency, and some male teachers are uncomfortable pointing out problems/issues with female wardrobe choices.

Niroo: Parents, especially of female students, are on board with some stronger restrictions.

Beckwith: When I spoke with Kerney, the issue may lie with communication. I think we have a fairly good policy as written – it's pretty general, and we tend to get more issues when we try to get more specific – and he'll support teachers who need to send students up to the dean's office. Some people are uncomfortable addressing the topic, or perhaps even focusing on the class content too much to notice

Forsee: Dress code is probably an issue at every American high school. Honestly, as a male, it can be uncomfortable – it's just a lose-lose in our day and age/culture to point out things – something that's offensive to one isn't to another. You want to be vigilant, but what is important to that teacher? It's not universal Keith, for his part, isn't out there targeting specific dress code violations

Mackessey – A lot of the time, the girls are changing after Mom and Dad leave, and the parents don't even realize their children dress this way. We need to be able to say "You know what? You're a distraction to learning in my classroom."

Forsee: Egregious is egregious; fix it immediately. On the borderline, which is at hand, sometimes you can intervene with a warning, rather than directly sending to the dean – tell them to avoid wearing that again. If progress gets made on this issue, it's via conversations – respectful – about school appropriateness. As adults, we have tremendous influence, but only through those thoughtful conversations – and that takes all of us doing it, not just Keith.

Tung: We also had a bunch of spirit shirts – if they get sent up to the dean's, we do have solutions.

Merel: I think it's difficult in this day and age to be a teacher making that call – I've been in meetings with parents complaining to teachers about their pointing out the length of their daughters' shorts – so I can understand why professionals would be reluctant.

Beckwith: I think our policy is working, but it might help for Keith to send out "timely reminder" e-mails to everyone – consistency helps.

Stiles: What are the consequences for repeat offenders?

Forsee: I don't think we're even there yet – it's an issue, obviously, but I think if we're vigilant and getting to that point, we'll have to re-examine it. It comes down, oftentimes, to opinion.

Curry: I judge often by how distracted my class gets – if no one's paying attention to it, I'm not going to make a big deal about it.

Merel: It (the dress code) is on Page 7 – "the discretion of the school authority will prevail."

3:51-: Dress Code Concerns (Brought by Joan Petersilge in Person)

I know there's a policy, but when a girl walks into a room with this (holds up see-through shirt), how is a male supposed to comment on it without blowback? To me, I know these things are in fashion – I have daughters, so I know this is current. But there are things that are appropriate to wear, and things that are not – things you would wear elsewhere, but not here. People assume that it's up to parents to teach kids what's appropriate, but it's also up to us – our responsibility – to set a standard that's consistent and doesn't allow for some of what we're seeing on campus. I've spoken with at least 25 or 30 others on campus who agree with me, so I'm just putting this out there: I think we need a more specific dress code, and I think it's highly unreasonable to ask one male dean and a few male proctors to police 3000+ students on this issue. People feel powerless to address the issue as well, so we need to do something. We wouldn't have to use words like "inappropriate" if we're specific

Beckwith: Once you've spelled it out, then people will take specific steps to avoid what you spelled out. I think people sometimes just forget to enforce, and we're trying to open avenues of communication to remind people to do so – to remind them of the policy.

Lashier: Joan, from the people you spoke with, did they have feedback about enforcement, or ideas?

One suggestion was to have a health-office-type slip where you fill out a name and number, then drop off the slip to the student – you don't have to say anything specific, it just says "dress code violation"

Stiles: Can you do that now under the policy?

Petersilge: I think that sometimes people aren't even necessarily aware that something is a violation

Tung: If people aren't aware they can use that to enforce, then that's another reason to increase communication.

Keith Kerney appears, reiterates that he's informed teachers they can send violators his way

Niroom: Let's talk to the teachers, let some time pass, and see if things begin to improve post-education/-communication.

Forsee: I don't think we can put it all on Keith; I think it has to come from all of us, but something like a non-specific slip leads to something of a disconnect – will it change behavior?

Beckwith: We're able to communicate through Keith's e-mail, through our minutes – a lot of what we're charged with is raising awareness about things like this that can slip through the cracks.

3:29-3:51: Update: Needs for Collaboration and Fulfilling Common Core Standards (Oliver Beckwith and Brent Forsee)

Beckwith, to Students: Would it be helpful for you to have 8 minutes, rather than 7, as a passing period? We now have multiple multi-story buildings, and we've always struggled to get kids in and out of J-building on time.

Alex: It's a little easier now that the PAC and Admin buildings have cleared up...

Forsee: ...but the quad's going to be shuttered next

Beckwith: Students seem to like the longer passing period, but not the idea of getting out of school later (this isn't surprising). We have a need for collaboration – there's just no way around it. If we simply add five passing minutes (1 minute per passing period), we wouldn't have to worry about adding instructional

minutes, and we'd still be able to get time (180 x 5 over the course of a year) for teachers to use for collaboration (teacher-driven collaborative time, specifically). A late start on certain days would likely meet with student approval (students on SSLT seem to agree). I think sometimes we can get comfortable with our own methods, but we never fully arrive – we can always grow.

Stiles: This proposal would not be in effect until next school year?

Forsee: This isn't a proposal – this is a discussion

Stiles: Would it be occasional?

Beckwith: 900 minutes = 15 hours – it would be occasional.

Curry: I think teachers appreciate having choices and I'd like us to be able to gather more ideas and proposals so people feel like they can have a choice.

Beckwith: One comment I received was “If we're going to do this, we have to realize that's 900 minutes that students *aren't* in class – if we're not doing something effective that has a noticeable impact on the classroom, we're kind of wasting that time.”

Forsee: The way we're structured, we have *no* additional time – heaven forbid there's some sort of days. Legally, the state should've forced us to make up the days we lost to the windstorm – we're lucky they didn't. In our current structure, we're dependent on both staff and departments meeting after school for any structured communication time. Our current structure doesn't really respect teachers' time – we're always asking you to stay late, and pretending you're at your freshest from 3-4. We can do nothing, continue using our model, and depend on the collaboration we have now (which requires meetings by happenstance, giving up lunches, etc.) – is that really most effective? I know there's a history here, but I believe banking minutes respects teachers' time more. We can bank a few minutes, in which case we may still have to meet after school. We can bank more and never meet after school, and even with that I have no interest in dictating what the schedule looks like, what collaboration looks like – it has to be what the faculty wants and decides. Teachers and faculty are at their best when they have time and can interact. I cannot see how our current structure allows that to happen in any meaningful way. Let me repeat: I have no interest in dictating what teachers do or how they do it. Would I like to have input? As a professional, of course, but I think that the professionals on staff are at their best when they have structured time to sit down and work together. I don't want to mandate or dictate any of that, lest it change into something else. You don't want to map out what every meeting will be from June through the next year – we can be flexible, and this shouldn't come from the top down. It's important to remember that the best ideas from high school do not come from me. My job – our job – is to support the best ideas, which come from the ground up. But we don't have a structure that allows that to happen because our time together is so compacted.

ACTION ITEMS: NEXT MEETING (January 9th, 2013)

- Pending...

Oliver Beckwith adjourned meeting at 4:03pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Feraco-Eberle
Secretary, SSLT