School Site Leadership Team Minutes
March 13, 2013
Arcadia High School, Room C1
Chairperson: Oliver Beckwith   obeckwith@ausd.net

Members Present: Oliver Beckwith, Vania Fong, Alex Ye, Vicky Stiles, Francisca Araiza-Kasama, John Tung, Brent Forsee, Michael Feraco-Eberle, Christa Heinrich-Josties, Jennifer Lashier, Catherine Merel, Julianne Curry, Kathy Yamane

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

Meeting called to order: 3:09pm

3:09-3:21: Welcome/Updates (Oliver Beckwith)

- The four Cs were Critical Thinking, Creativity. Collaboration, Communication – plus Citizenship and Character (so six Cs now)
- Another situation similar to Robin's arose, and the administration's response was swift and to the satisfaction of the affected teacher
- The camera situation was discussed years ago, but it's easy to forget things like that over the years at a large school (next communication piece is to parents and students to explain what they're for)
- Francisca: In the forms parents are supposed to read and sign, we should remind/acknowledge that nothing on school grounds is necessarily expressly private; also, colleges are revoking admissions for conduct online, and your conduct online can spill over into the school arena
- Regarding the temporary locks that are meant to be a fix until AUSD can repair all the doors: Dr. Forsee has received two requests.

3:21- : WASC Goals Evaluation at the Halfway Point: Review and Recommendations (Oliver Beckwith)

Beckwith: We have three big goals; we want to look at where we're at today. We're halfway through the WASC process; we evaluated ourselves in 2010, and I don't know what already happened to those three years. We waited too long last time to take some action, to get someone put in charge of the WASC process. A reminder to Dr. Forsee: for year four we need to select someone, to conduct a search that also yields someone…brave enough to run the WASC program.

We don't want to do nothing; that means we must do something. We've made progress on some of these goals. If you will direct your attention to the Single Plan for Student achievement "2012-13 Updates" fields, we can start this review.

For the first task (*Evaluate current services available to support students*) from Goal 1**: Support Students who enter AUSD after the Fifth Grade**, we've added AVID and initiated the Hispanic/Latino Task Force. For the next one *(Identify incoming AHS students who transferred to AUSD after 5th grade and/or students that have been in the district, left and then returned),* we held our first annual parent meeting on 8/27/12 – we're making progress. In the third task *(Evaluate identified students to determine individual needs)*, we have AVID, Skills for Academic Success, the aforementioned task force…

Curry: Shouldn't Link Crew qualify as well?

Beckwith: Yes, we can add that in the next version of the document. For the fourth *(Create collaborative Student Study Teams (SSTs) to identify which level of intervention is most appropriate for each student),* we're working on levels of intervention and identification. For the fifth *(Evaluate and review current AHS Plan for Intervention),* we identified enough students to initiate the AVID program. How's that one coming? It's a pretty limited program thus far, yes?

Merel: The plan is to make a presentation to the staff on AVID next year.

Beckwith: Excellent.

Note: Minutes missing for the sixth [Goal: Establish an intensive transition support program to be offered the first month of school for identified transfer students (or within one month if arriving later)] – I took part in the discussion and forgot to write what was said – MFE

For the seventh *[Investigate existing homeroom/ advisories currently operating at other schools (evaluate needs for our school site)],* investigations took place, and the evidence indicated the model was not effective for us. For the eighth *(Increase support for existing orientation programs/ SCOC),* Link Crew and ASB began working together, and the MS orientation held training together in fall of 2012. For the ninth *(Evaluate and improve current support services offered to parents of transfer students),* no committee has been formed to evaluate and improve current support services offered to parents of transfer students – do we want to do that?

Brent: We did the night with John Finn this year, which seemed successful.

Merel: There's no more team – we had talked about forming a committee.

Curry: We're doing things to improve, but I don't know that we ever did the evaluation portion – we just did more.
Beckwith: How do we contact parents?

Tung: Parent-student survey, or parent polling.

Stiles: How many transfer students are we talking about?

Tung: We started the year with about 100 transfer students. Since, we've probably added about 20 to 30 more families.

Beckwith: Who's the admin?

Tung: John Finn.

Beckwith: We'll ask him to come by and share his findings as well.

Forsee: That's the kind of evaluation we need to continue.

Beckwith: For Goal Two: **Address the rate of D/F grades.**

Curry: *Has* there been any change over the past two years for Task One *(A list of students receiving one or more Ds or Fs will be compiled and given to the staff each quarter)*?

Tung: I have data compiled that I can bring to the next meeting.

Merel: Yes – it goes to the counselors.

Tung: We piloted with social science in Q1, but the data was not useful to them because it mixed different subjects together – there was no meaning differentiation.

Beckwith: It'd be interesting if you could break it down by subject.

Tung: Yes – that was the feedback we received.

Francisca: Would it be beneficial for the committee to see, percentage-wise, how things have changed grade-wise?

Merel: It's been consistent, almost scarily so.

Tung: Although it was on our WASC goals of concern, it's an area where we'd like to improve, not representative of an epidemic of Ds and Fs.

Francisca: Is there any sort of information on gender, ethnicity…

Tung: No, we haven't broken down the data that way yet.

Curry: I think one of the reasons it's difficult to move the list – that it's so consistent – is that we're already doing a lot. Whatever we're doing now on top of all that is either not necessarily targeting what they need to target, or we've reached the limits of what we can do with those students.

Beckwith: We're consistent, but not reducing the problem.

Stiles: As administrators, do you share data with other administrators at other schools pertaining to these issues?

Forsee: Our levels are lower than they are at other schools, particularly given our rigor.

Francisca: And a student may have a low grade in one class, but that's not replicated in other classes – it may even be something of an aberration.

Forsee: For a lot of our kids who are struggling here, they've struggled at school for a long time – school has been hard for them, not necessarily just Arcadia High School is hard for them. It's not necessarily something where we need to focus on how we're failing, but where we need to focus instead on whether we can take other, more effective steps to help them – we may not be doing anything wrong, but that doesn't mean we can't do other things better.

Programs are only as effective as the kids they help, so it may be better to get down to the nitty-gritty with these kids to better identify which resources can more effectively help them. It's hard to get kids who struggle to stay late or come early, but those are the times in the day when we're likeliest able to meet with them. Without that time, and without that willingness, it's tough.

Francisca: There's also been some success with mentorship programs – Upward Bound, Brothers and Sisters – that focus less on the student's past struggles and more on getting through what's directly ahead of them.

Curry: I have a little concern with the statement that these kids are struggling year after year. If the student is trying year after year and struggling, that seems like a prime candidate for the SST and the like They may not qualify for services, but most of the ones who struggle for years ultimately do.

Forsee: Very true. I guess what I'm saying is that when school's hard for someone, they're less apt to try. But we don't necessarily understand *why* they stop trying – which particular aspects of school are so hard for them for so long. It may not be all subjects, and it's not that we can't offer more services. But kids will stop trying when they keep going at something and it never stops being hard.

Curry: I just know a couple of kids who have come in and been diagnosed with the need for special educational services. They should've been found in 4th grade. We're finding them at 11th grade, and now they're not going to graduate. That's tragic.

Forsee: I agree. And that can't continue happening.

Beckwith: Let's look at collaboration *(Staff will collaborate on best practices, analyzing data, and intervention strategies to support all students)*. We're doing learning walks, and we can sometimes do that organically at department meetings. I think this is a good place to start. We need to observe each other more. But, from what I could tell from the last School Board meeting, other sites have more participation than we do already. I'm spurring people to come with myself and Dr. Forsee on Learning Walks soon.

For Goal Three: **Promote Connected and Well Balanced Students.**
We've made no steps towards the first task *(Evaluate and develop a plan for identifying and measuring what it means to be balanced and connected to AHS)*. Ever since we've made that goal, people have been struggling with how to quantify that – some sort of "balanced and connected quotient" – how do we do that?

Heinrich-Josties: How about a survey?

Beckwith: We could, but identifying and measuring this is beyond me.

Heinrich-Josties: During the senior exit survey in June, perhaps.

Beckwith: How would we put that in writing? Is that our plan? The survey would say, what – "Did you feel balanced and connected in your years here?"

Forsee: I think we'd have to correlate their responses to GPA, extra-curriculars, etc.

Merel: We studied that during WASC. It was good to be participating in things, but only to a certain degree.

Curry: I think when we wrote that, we were focused on certain populations – the ones who weren't doing anything at all…

Merel: And then the small percentage that was doing everything, all the time.

Curry: In terms of measuring this, we could look at a student's participation in APs/number of them vs. their activities and involvement in non-academic courses or elective courses – the types of classes that focus more on fostering connectivity.

Beckwith: But at the end of the day, is our question "Are you as a student happy? Are you fulfilled?" That seems unquantifiable.

Merel: We were concerned with the kids who didn't do well and weren't connected – we wanted to bring them in, to keep them from being ciphers – and we wanted to urge the kids who were doing too much and burning through their youth to back off a bit.

Stiles: But there's nothing to say that the student who is only focused on academics *isn't* connected and happy at AHS. In our minds, they can seem to lack the right balance, but I don't think we should impose our standards for something like "balance" on them. I think we *should* survey the students to get their actual responses instead of just looking at them from our perspective.

Curry: I think if you asked a student who was in all of these things, they'd say "Life is great!"…but as an adult, we're looking at them with worry. Their opinions are valid, but they may lack perspective.

Forsee: You start to run a danger if you send out ten different surveys – we already have some going out, and we may be able to use that data in more than one way.

Yamane: Is ASB willing to do that survey?

Ye: I can talk to my president.

Beckwith: Good. Moving on to the second *task (Establish advisories and/or homerooms so that teachers can mentor and advise students on creating a balanced connection to AHS)* didn't that just morph into Link Crew?

Merel: Our advisory isn't part of the structure of the school. A few years ago, we met with students who were struggling, but we were doing that as individuals. And one of my little ones is graduating this year, so I'd like to think we were at least somewhat successful!

Beckwith: And it looks like we have no update for Task 3 *(A systematic evaluation of current elective offerings and programs by department)*. Are we just missing this goal? Are any of these discussions ongoing? I know we added an elective in Social Science.

 Forsee: Replaced.

Beckwith: True. Replaced.

Merel: I think we had budget cuts and things just sort of ground to a halt after WASC. It became difficult because…well, we can look at offerings, but do we have the chance to change them? We also got concerned that all we were offering were things to the top students, and that we had comparatively very little for non A-G's. It's our goal to get everyone to a four-year, and if you offer a non-A-G course, what if no one takes them? It's difficult.

Fong: Can we add intermediate classes – not just regular and APs? A lot of my friends and I are taking a bunch of these upper-level courses, even if we're not into the subjects, when it would be better for us to have a middle ground.

Beckwith: Like Honors Gov? Oh my, that would create problems with the big picture…

Merel: Every time we offer more choices, we can restrict the master schedules – and there may not be enough students to take them. And we have a limit, A-G-wise, on the number of Honors/AP we can offer per subject. We have Dev of Civ "Honors," taught at an honors level, but you get no bump in GPA. It's a hard balance.

Beckwith: Looking at Tasks 4 *(Collaboratively revisit the mission and vision statements of AHS so that they reflect our commitment towards helping students establish a balanced connection to AHS)* and 5 *(Collaboratively investigate whether an official limit in AP classes/ Academic Teams is necessary and appropriate)* – it seems like we've been discussing these controversial topics for 15 years…

Curry: One of the reasons we waited on it last year was that we were waiting on the new principal…

Forsee: Be careful what you wish for!

Beckwith: The culture of our school…we have a policy where students *can* take more…

Merel: But we recommend they don't take more than 3.

Beckwith: That's the wording. But we know kids who have 4, even 5 AP classes. It depends on how well the individual can handle the load. We have been looking at this issue for a decade and a half – is policy even a solution here? Is this worth pursuing, or just doing what we have? Do we have consensus on maintaining our system?

Stiles: I do think we need to keep doing what we are.

Beckwith: We do have a system. It's not perfect, but it is what we use.

And this last one *[Explicitly communicate Expected Student Learning Results (ESLRs) and goals in multiple avenues (web, handbook, graphics, etc.) and how they are integrated into all aspects of the AHS program]* looks pretty simple. The visiting team wanted to know where our ESLRs were. We explained they were embedded in the curriculum, etc., so we're already doing this. It's on the high school webpage now; click-click and you can find it – so now we're happy.

Curry: Yeah…now we can just memorize them before the next time!

4:26-4:28: Vision & Mission Statement Committee Formation (Oliver Beckwith)

This is something we've been needing to do for a very long time *(Collaboratively revisit the mission and vision statements of AHS so that they reflect our commitment towards helping students establish a balanced connection to AHS)* – it's been, what, fifteen years since we redid ours? We need to set up a group that's representative of everyone – faculty, students, etc. Since we don't have our full

group for this month, let's table this and revisit it next month. Let's just get this on the radar that we will be working on this collaboratively. Do we have consensus?

Committee Formation tabled by consensus at 4:28pm.

4:28- : Collaborative Time Opportunity (Oliver Beckwith)
The school district has a vision, and part of their vision includes collaboration and communication. When we discussed safety last month you might remember that one of the hallmarks of a high-performing school is collaboration and communication. I've written down some of the issues here in this proposal. As you can see there are five minutes added to each day in the form of an extra minute for each passing period. In one year that gives us 900 minutes. Two-thirds of the time would be used for staff meetings and the rest would be used for structured collaborative or professional time by teachers. The ideal of trust and professionalism is written into the document.

Forsee: Do I think collaboration easier when it's structured? No, not really. However, I think that in order for anything to be successful, the staff has to have a say in it. I intend to hold some prep-period meetings where people will come in and share their thoughts, their ideas – even move some of the history out of the way. I think this is a solid plan, but I want to give people their say, and I think this is the fairest, most transparent way to communicate that. Our staff is intelligent, and they may even have alternative plans. If you're passionate about this, come to these meetings. If they don't work for you, re-arrange some things to get there – I think they're that important.

Fong: Could we add the five minutes to lunch instead?

Forsee: The issue is that we have no spare instructional time – the passing period addition would give us that.

Tung: To be clear, adding minutes to lunch does *not* qualify as instructional time.

Forsee: Exactly. The state could've forced us to make up time in the case of a natural disaster – we were lucky with last year's windstorms, but we really don't have any wiggle room. I also want to say that the plan is not as important as the buy-in from the staff, so I am fully committed to not having what I necessarily think is the best plan – I want the plan that has the fullest commitment and fullest input from staff.

Curry: I think the meetings are a good idea, but we need to get the input before we put out a proposal.
If we get input first, maybe even put out multiple plans – I'm not saying it's not a good proposal, but I think getting input is the best thing.

Beckwith: I want to say this so I can be clear on this: This is not a truly collaborative proposal. In one sense it is, but in another sense it's not. I've spoken to a lot of people with good ideas that I've incorporated into the document, but at the end of the day I am not wedded to this proposal.

Curry: I do think we need to get some of the issues out on the table with what's been billed as collaboration in the past. If teachers feel like their time is being wasted, they won't buy in.

Forsee: And a plan that fails and angers people is worse than no plan at all.

Beckwith: We're following Appendix E's language here. We'll need to take the temperature of the staff, so to speak, but we need to gain sufficient consensus, and it will likely come down to a vote – 70% + 1 to pass. We teachers would have to come back SSLT and the teachers would have to vote the same way the

teachers voted. The only direction I will request is this: What would you like me to do with the proposal? Table it? Hold off until teachers get a chance to speak with Dr. Forsee?

Proposal tabled by consensus at 4:46pm.

ACTION ITEMS: NEXT MEETING
- Pending…

Oliver Beckwith adjourned meeting at 4:47pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Feraco-Eberle
Secretary, SSLT