

Arcadia High School
School Site Leadership Team Minutes

11.14.12

Arcadia High School

Conference Room 1, Administration Building

Chairperson: Oliver Beckwith obeckwith@ausd.net

Treats: Oliver Beckwith & Linda Mackessey

Members Present: Oliver Beckwith, Linda Mackessey, Alex Ye, Vania Fong, Katherine Chen, Chris Marston, Robert Ilgenfritz, John Tung, Winnie Chin, Jennifer Oku, Brent Forsee, Robin Neuwirth-Bishop, Michael Feraco-Eberle, Vicky Stiles, Julie Curry, Catherine Merel

Minutes from April were distributed via email, corrections by Michael Ferraco, Joan Stevens, Catherine Merel, approved by consensus and posted by Jon Kwok

Meeting called to order: 3:03p.m.

3:03-3:18: School Site Leadership Team: A Brief History and Overview (Oliver Beckwith + Linda Mackessey). PowerPoint presentation outlining the purpose, guidelines, history, and composition of SSLT, particularly pertaining to the current school year, including the Consensus Model vis-à-vis Shared Decision Making (see Appendix E).

3:19-3:32: Dangers of Student Drop-Offs in Unsanctioned Areas (Oliver Beckwith for Christa Heinrich-Josties). Discussion centered around potential dangers for students wandering through the teacher lots. In particular the west El Monte lot is dangerous in the morning with teachers entering to a rising sun. Some of the signage on the lot has degraded or is missing. Oliver asked for suggestions and ideas were offered from all groups to raise awareness of the dangers. Parent Vicky Stiles stated that she could put an article on the PTA website, and students suggested that a story be done on Apache News. Oliver said that he would ask Mr. Citrin to do that and was sure it would be accomplished.

3:33-3:57 Common Core: Pending Arrival and Implementation (Brent Forsee)

Dr. Forsee spoke to SSLT about the need to develop a plan for the upcoming Common Core State Standards. He believes that our school should begin work on creating its own plan, “lest a plan be assigned to you from outside.” This will require a lot of communication between staff members, parents, and students. We need a plan that we can believe in.

Since this is going to be our reality within two years, how are we going to go about this? When are we going to have the time to come to agreements, to disagree, to work things out? One hour, once a month, at every staff meeting, isn’t going to get it done. Dedicating every dept meeting, which wouldn’t be proper or feasible, wouldn’t even get it done.

Dr. Forsee is interested in leading but not in dictating. This will require input in an environment where people feel safe in raising issues and discussing the merits of each idea. The standards we'll be teaching to are much more in-depth, and the standards themselves are more collaborative.

How will we have time to look at standards and assessments, to plan in teams (by subject or by grade level), to prepare for what are theoretically going to be computer-based assessments (very, very different from what's currently being done)?

There isn't a need for panic, but there is a need for urgency. The expectation, for example, is that literacy will be taught in every subject. Does every teacher know that?

We don't currently have a plan, and we want to avoid having a plan assigned to us from the outside. It would be better to have something designed with the collaboration model. In our current structure it would be nearly impossible to achieve it. The basic standards behind Common Core are *national* standards – California's tacking on 15% of its current state standards to the basic Common Core template, but it's otherwise the same. This allows us to compare ourselves nationally to other states, and to be sure that students nationwide are learning from the same standards as we are.

Dr. Forsee suggested we go to our departments and start the conversation. Discussion centered on ways to achieve this collaborative time, such as adopting a similar schedule we used during WASC, or doing meetings after school.

Banking time was mentioned as a possibility. Dr. Forsee said he is aware that banking time is a controversial topic but "we need to be proactive and watchful, and to understand that not adjusting is not an option."

Oliver said that banking minutes has a decade-long history with mixed results. Robin added that the minutes weren't the controversy – the handling felt non-collaborative, and a lot of people felt burned by what seemed to be a non-transparent process, not in the best interest of students.

Dr. Forsee stated that he can't invent more time. "If there's a way to do this without banking time, let's do it. I don't want to extend people's days. But this work needs to get done. We meet after school for staff meetings. We meet after school for department meetings. That doesn't feel like it's respecting people's time. Those meetings could be part of our school day, and feel less removed, if we banked the time to allow for them to be held during those hours. The question then becomes one of whether you want to meet after school for an hour, or whether you want to stay until 2:50pm each day

Oliver stated that we can't be top-down with this – that this is the sort of thing where we need to build trust. In the past, the idea felt violated when the top-down approach was taken too often. Robert added that he believes people will be open and people are willing to get things done. It's just a matter of communicating everything the right way.

Julie suggested using survey monkey for ideas and information gathering, but Dr. Forsee wants to discuss this with different groups and individuals first. Julie replied that there needs to be some discussion about the purpose of this.

Oliver asked if this was being discussed with department heads. Dr. Forsee replied yes, and that “everyone I speak to in the halls is on board.” Oliver said, “Maybe they just don’t want to tell you no. Dr. Forsee replied, “And that’s the thing I don’t know! So I want to have some real discussion of this, so we’ll at least have some inkling of where this is going to go.”

Oliver Beckwith adjourned meeting at 3:58p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Feraco-Eberle
Secretary