May 8th, 2013
Arcadia High School, Room C1
Chairperson: Oliver Beckwith   obeckwith@ausd.net

Members Present: Oliver Beckwith, Michael Feraco-Eberle, Julianne Curry, Robert Ilgenfritz, Linda Mackessey, Christa Heinrich-Josties, Brent Forsee, Catherine Merel, John Tung, Winnie Chin, Terri Darr, Vicky Stiles, Niroo Dev, Francisca Araiza-Kasama, Caroline Lefever, Vania Fong, Alex Ye, Patrick Tierney, Leslie Klipstein.

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

Meeting called to order: 3:12pm

3:12-3:13: Welcome/Updates: Oliver Beckwith

3:13-3:14: Vision and Mission Progress: Committee Members

Beckwith: I would like to invite committee members to share what we have been working on. One idea we had was to combine both mission and vision if they're duplicating?

Araiza-Kasama: We using the Wordle idea. Also ideas from students after testing.

Forsee: In the senior seminars, we asked both groups of seniors to propose 5 to 7 words they believed should be added; ASB's either done or almost done entering the data, so we'll be able to see which words resonated with that group.

Beckwith: We're trying to get this done pretty quickly – early fall. This doesn't have to take a long time.

3:15-4:41: Team Time Proposal Choice and May Polling Date: Oliver Beckwith

Beckwith: You might recall that in our 11/14 meeting, this got on the agenda when a teacher approached Mr. Feraco about this idea, along with potential concerns with the issue. As the year went forward, and I spoke to people, I found that some people passionately believe that we should never collaborate, ever. On the other hand, there are teachers who are very unhappy that we don't have structured collaborative time. And there are issues that keep teachers from feeling comfortable discussing these things in the open One of the things I think it's important to do in situations like these is to try to find a win-win.

We've had issues of half-attended afterschool meetings – how do we deal with that? Bank minutes and move it to 8am. We have teachers exhausted the day after Back to School Night – same thing, bank minutes. Some people have said to me about Plan A, if we can do 5 minutes, why not ten? These and other ideas given to me by teachers this year resulted in the proposals you see here. You might note a change – we cannot add four minutes of passing period time to Plan B State laws regulate that if you add a minute to passing periods, you have to add a minute to five passing periods, so ten minutes became eleven.

Merel/Forsee: You can't cherry-pick – they have to be consistent.

Beckwith: So five works. And this would enable us to have a short staff meeting, then follow with structured collaboration, department meetings, etc. Late starts would be on a regular basis, every couple of weeks, and you could minimize the number of affected days through combination.

Proposal C – Ray Mynster's proposal – also allows us to have shorter days during, say, quarterfinals, so teachers would have some time to specifically focus on grading. One teacher even proposed a block schedule – that's Proposal D – but that person said that the Math Department likely wouldn't approve because they tend to plan for consistent daily scheduling.

Some of the critics of collaboration pointed out that the last time we did this, it was top-down and didn't make sense. What do you do about it? "We're not being treated like professionals"; "I don't trust this." That is why a trust and professionalism clause has been added. Comments on this?

Stiles: I have a question on Proposal B – 360 minutes banked. What happens to that time if there is no weather or situation that requires it?

Tung: We just have more school. They don't graduate a day early or anything.

Beckwith: Other comments from teachers?

Curry: I reached out to other teachers in order to make sure I represented them accurately. My own personal view is that I would like to see collaborative time go through – I think the opportunity is here to make some positive change where we can combine these things to more effectively use those avenues. I also think it could be beneficial to teachers to have a consistent "day" rather than having short vs. long. And I think it'd give us more flexibility with our professional choices. We all work beyond our hours to get our job done, but this helps. I talked to over 35 teachers from virtually every department, from 2 years through 25+ - Department Chairs included.

The vast majority of these teachers are not typically negative – I respect them because they do so much for our school, attend everything, volunteer for everything. I don't necessarily agree with everything that's been presented to me, but I wanted to make sure these representative comments made their way onto the record. Most of the comments were fairly negative about the proposals

Selected comments that are representative of the majority:

- What happened to the discussion I thought we were supposed to have?

- Even though I don't feel like I need collaborative time, I'm not opposed to it if that is what a majority of the teachers want, but I haven't heard that, so I would vote against it.

- I feel like we're being railroaded again. We need to have an open discussion first.

- SSLT has not followed the process. They are in violation of appendix E.

- If this comes up for vote without discussion, I can guarantee you that a grievance will be filed.

- What is going on? I heard there were two proposals and now there are four. I don't know what we are supposed to do with these. Comment on them? Vote on them?

- I thought I read in the SSLT minutes that there was a request to post comments. Where is that?

- We haven't had a discussion of the need for collaborative time. What happened to the process?

- This proposal seems underhanded. What is the process supposed to be?

- I request (demand) that SSLT stop what they are doing and follow the process.

- SSLT can not have individual conversations and make assumptions about how the staff feels about adding collaboration time.

- Why hasn't this gone to Dept. Chairs or been discussed in departments?

- Did anyone poll the SSLT members to be sure they were all in favor of this? Next time you poll all the members so it is on record how each person feels.

- There doesn't seem to be any time to discuss this. Steps are being skipped. SSLT needs to slow down.

- What is this time going to be used for exactly?

- One teacher said – Just tell me what to and where to be, I don't care whether we have collab time or not.

- We already had a discussion on the use of collaborative time when we did WASC. Has anyone taken a look at that?

And I agree to an extent. I feel like we've skipped some steps. I feel like we need to have conversations with staff. I would like to see us re-examine Appendix E, because that seems to be a point of contention. I'd like to re-examine past efforts towards collaborative time so that we can have a sense of our history. This was part of the WASC process, but it wasn't originally, and it wasn't put there by teachers – we need to discuss that. And this needs to be something that can be talked about in mixed groups, and to get feedback from more than just the most visible, verbal teachers. We need to get the Google Docs up.

Feraco: Definitely – the failure for that is on me entirely. I'll get it done.

Curry: And I've said my piece.

Araiza-Kasama: It sounds like it's a no-go from your reading of the comments.

Curry: The people seemed more upset about the process than the ultimate goal, but I'm guessing it would fail if we voted on it now.

Araiza-Kasama: To get a win-win situation, we need to work on a more "warm, collaborative" approach procedurally to convince people to buy in, so when we come to our review process, we have people buying in 100% - or at least 80%. We need mutual success, and we have time to get there.

Darr: What exactly in Appendix E was brought to your attention?

Curry: The things that were highlighted for me in appendix E were: Intent, Beliefs, Process, Cooperation, the first part of Decision-Making Model and Consensus, Training for Site-Based Decision-Making. (Highlighted sections read aloud)

Beckwith: First of all, I wrote down about eight different things here – about the alternate proposals. Google Docs didn't happen, but we got some proposals. Discussion? I can tell you – people have been discussing this since last November. It's been discussed constantly.

Curry: Not in departments.

Beckwith: But this isn't an admin-generated thing. This was put together with teachers. You read some of Appendix E. I met with some of those same people. It's an evolving process, but there's really nothing here that we've violated. I have spoken with Mr. Tierney continuously. People are making these allegations, but really, there's not a lot to them.

Darr: Do you have a copy of the grievance report?

Curry: Does Terry have one? I believe Kellie Arroyo (Purcey) was the chair back then.

Curry: No.I was told Terry has one.

Merel: Do you know what year that was?

Darr: We were elected from each of our respective areas to form school-site leadership. Appendix E is our guideline for handling our meetings. But our feedback from our constituents indicates a disconnect. With the level of discontent, confusion – it seems like we need to take a step back and ask what it takes to fix it?

Beckwith: A couple other points. Past efforts. I've sat down with people saying that this wasn't how we did it five years ago. We took a year the last time. We don't have to do it that way again. Truthfully, we have proposals here. Do you really want to talk for a year, or is this just a delaying tactic?

Curry: You know what? I don't think it is. I think people want to be involved. I think we have to have these discussions – I think this is a good thing.

Forsee: I hear the need or the desire, but my question is: How would people feel heard? When I tried to facilitate that conversation – I think we have to have it, regardless of what we choose to do. But I don't know – I heard people say we weren't engaged, but when people don't engage…I suppose I just need some guidance.

Beckwith: Ms. Curry, I'll take your point – let's assume just about everyone reacted negatively. But how do we know? We haven't spoken to all of them – you have talked to more than 35 people, but that means there are over a hundred people we're missing.

Feraco: Again, that's partly the result of there being a missing Google Doc…

Beckwith: But people have had the opportunity to talk to us. We have received feedback and proposals.

Darr: Then what's the process? SurveyMonkey? The blog? Brown-bag lunches? It seems like from what Julie has said, the process is concerning people. It's not about the vote. "We don't need to vote yet because we want more information and discussion." And we gave them options to discuss things last year; it seems like people want that again.

Curry: One suggestion was to take it to departments – far more people there. Another was to have mixed groups at staff meetings so we can talk outside of departments.

Klipstein: There was a proposal that was proposed that isn't on here – something that several people thought was a fantastic idea for collaborative time that had nothing. We have 2 hours set aside for meetings – second and 4th Tuesdays. Instead of having a staff and dept, let's have one hour be staff + dept, and the other be collaborative time. It gives us an hour, and we don't have to change the schedule

Forsee: Using it that way wouldn't be something SSLT would vote on, though. Contractually, it's staff meeting time, which means it's directed time. We could still theoretically choose to do that, but that doesn't fall under SSLT's purview. But why isn't this being presented as an option? Where we wouldn't be changing the schedule? Is it not going to be presented?

Forsee: It just isn't something that would be voted on. There's nothing binding about saying "this time is collaborative" during a staff meeting.

Klipstein: But then doesn't that sound better.

Stiles: Wasn't it pointed out earlier that people aren't showing up to meetings?

Feraco: Maybe they would come if they knew it would be used that way.

Forsee: I would be less inclined to give people an hour to just do what you want – it's contractual time.

Klipstein: How is that different, though? "You can do whatever you want from 8 to 9" vs. "You can do whatever you want from 3 to 4."

Forsee: It may not be.

Araiza-Kasama: As a parent, that sounds more palatable to me.

Dev: That's not how I feel.

Araiza-Kasama: -There are enough days that are being fiddled around with already. If there's a way to create a win-win situation that's more palatable to staff that doesn't interrupt the school day, that sounds better to me.

Beckwith: I want to apologize to Leslie if I let that slip, I don't remember that.

Klipstein: Doesn't matter. I'm here now and presenting it now.

Beckwith: Do all decisions have to be made by consensus? I don't see a problem with polling the staff – we're allowed to do that periodically. So let's put it out there and see what feedback we get before our last meeting on the 12th of June. The threshold in here is 70%. I respect that – I think everyone in here does. I *don't* think it's a good thing to delay.

Darr: Are you saying to preclude having a discussion in staff or department meeting?

Tierney: You could use ATA time at meeting.

Forsee: This was brought forward by staff. I hear you on the grievances, but I just want to have this conversation – you can't have grievances against each other.

Beckwith: In talking to some people, they've told me they've hated collaboration for years, and now they hate the process? Is that credible? Yes, this is a little different than these other programs – those were top-down to begin with. Teachers asked for this…

Klipstein: These meetings are open to anyone. If you choose not to come to meetings, open forums, places where decisions are made – if you choose not to be informed, that's your choice.

Forsee: For that conversation part, I really don't know what else to do. I don't think turning staff meetings into staff brawls over collaboration is a good thing. How can we have the conversation it's said we want to have if people won't engage? So I'm looking for advice here.

Tierney: I have a question about the beginning of the next period of time and the endgame. One: It seems like the common concern on the part of people who have some type of reservation – they don't know what's going on and feel like they're on an island. This can happen to us on ATA with bargaining stuff. But what Terri and Julie are saying is that there has to be some sort of free exchange, participation, to get a sense of this. And with all due respect, Oliver, it's not stalling – some people are skittish. But at the end, I'm just confused as to what happens after the polling. What are you seeking to get? If they vote in favor or reject it, what are the consequences of each? And there are concerns there – is this just to continue things? I think the more you go to meet that concern, the stronger your position will be.

Dev: But how do you get there? What's your process? We've mentioned three ways…

Tierney: I think the best way is in departments. If the department chair brokers this, asks for 100% participation – he or she will be able to talk to the constituent members of this body and bring forth something on behalf of their departments. I think it starts there. You heard Julie read, from Appendix E, "constant communication" – better than sporadic conversation. There has to be comments in the middle of the process about where this is headed, how this helps you, etc. I don't know how it will turn out, but I think the more information one gets in a group of peers they've known for years, the better.

Ilgenfritz: A lot of the teachers, staff, etc. want to be heard. They really do. I don't think there's a passivity or lack of concern – this is a high-stake item that not only affects their schedule, but a lot of what we do on a daily basis. People are stepping up suddenly and realizing that this will have a direct, very big effect. I think this even ties to staff meeting participation. People want to feel like their opinions are heard, and that they have the respect from being willing to participate. When people feel like it's something they have a real stake in, something they can participate in – they want to get involved. So let's tell people we want to hear them – it's something we ought to allow for. It may take a little longer, but we aren't scoffing or accusing them of trying to put it off. We're building a group of concerned people who want to participate.

Forsee: But I feel like we've been talking about this all year. We'll go out, talk to people, share the information we got, only to hear "Oh, no one talked to me." It almost sounds like we need specific assignments – you take that department, you take that department, and so on. It's not about the outcome, but it's not OK to not engage, nor to then say that you're the victim because you're weren't engaged. So maybe we need to be that specific.

Darr: As SSLT, we have to honor and respect anything that was delineated out of that grievance. We have to be more specific and deliberate as SSLT members. If that means we team up, go to department meetings, contact people who don't show – I'm there. But the reality is that we have to do something. We have this whole WASC Action Plan that we need updates on. And if we can figure out which process really feels good to the constituents we represent, then we're good. Right now, everything's kind of confusing, there's a lot of noise, and we're not getting anything done.

Beckwith: The issue here is time. We have one more meeting. How are we going to ever make a decision?

Forsee: Why does it have to be either/or? Can it be both?

Darr: Think about it last year, Oliver. We had to hire a principal. We had to have deliberate processes for things. We had to make sure that we got specific feedback – I have two binders' worth! As an SSLT member, we make time for this – we send e-mails, reach out…

Tierney: I would caution against rushing pell-mell into a decision. There are certain things that will just take time. There have certainly been discussions, but "those conversations are out in the parking lot" – not really where they need to be. Engage the people in their area of strength, with their peers. And yes, it might take a while, but you'd started this, you've initiated it. Don't make a reckless decision.

Beckwith: The end result then is just going to be a delay. Then the question is how long. Again, where does that end? I hope it does.

Klipstein: What is the process that happens in terms of reaching goals? Once the information's been gathered, what do we do?

Lefever: What *is* our role?

Beckwith: Under this scenario, we poll teachers, get feedback. A positive one would be some high percentage of teachers approving, then we could come back during the next meeting and say that we approve, implement for next year…and if it was negative, then the decision's been made not to do it.

Lefever: But what do we actually do?

Klipstein: Yes – regardless of what the teachers want, what does this body do? Does SSLT vote on whether or not to implement these plans? Then what do you do with the conversation? And does the body have the power to make that decision regardless of what teachers say?

Forsee: No.

Klipstein: Then you have to have some sort of documentation that states that X percentage of teachers agree?

Beckwith: As well as the other stakeholders. If counselors, parents, students, etc. hate it, then it doesn't go forward.

Darr: This is supposed to operate on consensus. What do we do? Not hypotheticals. We're not getting anything done, it's 4:20 – what do we do?

Beckwith: I'm getting a feeling from people in here that polling, voting, whatever you'd want to call it, doesn't sound like a go.

Tierney: I get the sense that it's a little too soon. It involves so many people that you'll need to poll eventually, but it seems like there are enough people who don't know, for whatever reason, who need to be gotten on board before you move forward.

Tung: Is this a face to face conversation, digital conversation? If we're talking process, if I was to interpret what I've heard today, it's: SSLT thinks it's a good idea to present things to the staff. Does anyone think that's a *bad* idea? OK, so the next step is to get their opinions. Public? Digital?

Stiles/Dev: Let's do both.

Tierney: Terri's idea, literally assigning departments to SSLT members to approach directly, amass information, ask for input – it seems reasonable.

Darr: And we could do the survey with not yes/no questions, but with actual room for responses.

Merel: We've done that many times over the years.

Darr: And we can solicit feedback based on suggestions from staff. Teachers helped me come up with the questions for the principal survey. So should we split this up?

Beckwith: When's the next department meeting? I'm trying to gauge this, as part of the consensus process. Basically, in order for this to happen even next year, we'd have to have teachers saying this is a good idea by 70%. It sounds to me like this is going to get delayed, at least by a semester.

Tierney: You don't want a vote, by any other name, until and unless you know what the results are going to be. You have to know beforehand, or you don't have a vote, because you don't have the buy-in. I'm not saying you're in that position, but go to the staff, talk to the departments, get that feedback, and be able to speak authoritatively on behalf of the departments, etc.

Forsee: Would you (Beckwith) be comfortable bringing that up at the ATA meeting?

Beckwith: That's fine.

Tierney: I'll say that SSLT has seen fit to go out to your departments and get feedback from you.

Darr: So do we have consensus as to that plan? Do we have consensus on how to build the survey?

Tierney: There's a department meeting late in May. Go out, ask for input, find out whether this is something worth pursuing. Then add the survey data to what you find. You'll be in a far stronger position to take the next step.

Forsee: I can speak to Department Chairs. Something similar has been on agendas before.

Darr: So we have consensus on that process. And on the survey? (Ayes) Caroline will help. And Leslie!

Klipstein: I'm not on SSLT…

Darr: Doesn't matter. Caroline, Vania, Terri, Leslie.

Merel: And I can give you the history.

Tung: Can I recommend that the survey *not* be anonymous?

Mackessey: Yes.

Stiles: Do we need to make assignments based on departments?

Departments and SSLT Member Assignments

Computer Tech & PE – Terri Darr
English Lang Arts, ELD, & – Michael Feraco-Eberle
Math & Special Education – Julianne Curry
Performing Arts & Visual Arts – Robert Ilgenfritz
Science – Linda Mackessey
Social Science – Oliver Beckwith
World Languages – Christa Heinrich-Josties

Lefever: If we get the data, by the next meeting, would we be able to make the presentation to teachers by the end of the year?

Tung: No.

Lefever: Then does the information roll over?

Beckwith: It's a new staff. But a certain point, we're going to have to ask people yes or no.

Lefever: Then aren't we going to have to redo the surveys next year?

Tierney: Well, at least they were engaged.

Dev: You're going to take a vote at some point.

Beckwith: Yes.

Forsee: And if we have to do it again, at least we've laid down a template. We'll cross that bridge.

4:42- SSLT 2013-14 Teacher Elections

Beckwith: We have four second-year teachers. Would you plan on returning for the next school year?
Feraco: Not returning.
Curry: Not returning.
Ilgenfritz: I'd love to return.
Beckwith: The other person is myself – I'm committed to this group, and will be returning. We have three other teachers who are in their first year, and we can leave it at that.

Darr: Classified has had their vote – I'll be coming back.

ACTION ITEMS: NEXT MEETING
• Pending…

Oliver Beckwith adjourned meeting at 4:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Feraco-Eberle
Secretary, SSLT