

Redwood High School

Department Chair Council

Minutes of the September 19, 2007 DCC Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:36 p.m. Present: Karen Barrett, Erik Berkowitz, Peggy Bogason, Frances Bozdech, Heather Curtaz, Chris Gilmore, David Goldsmith, Jennifer Harris, Ann Jaime, Skip Lovelady, Keith Murray, Nancy Neu, David Plescia, Greg Stevens. Parents: Elaine Bengle, Ashu Sikand, Suman Vyas. Students: Sarah Barr, Danielle Magaline, Beau Shaw. Guests: Lori Parrish, Emily Satterstrom, Ann Tepovich, Nancy Westreich. Peggy Bogason took minutes.

Minutes from the 9/5/07 DCC Meeting (Nancy Neu)

The minutes stand as submitted.

School-to-Career (Nancy Westreich)

Nancy Westreich is the new School-to-Career liaison and will be at Redwood on Mondays and Wednesdays. She enjoys working with a variety of students, including at-risk students. Fall internships are starting in October. Upcoming internship opportunities will be in health careers, and there will also be job shadows with architects, engineers, and construction jobs. The Bar Association will be presenting information about a variety of legal and law-enforcement related careers. Mrs. Westreich told the DCC that she can provide classroom speakers, and will be sending out a request form soon.

Everything you've ever wanted to know about budgets (Lori Parrish)

Nancy Neu introduced Lori Parrish. Ms. Parrish is the Chief Business Official for TUHSD. She distributed sample spreadsheets and financial activity reports for the DCC to use as reference materials as she explained budget procedures. She also provided all departments (except for Special Ed.) with copies of their budgets. Ms. Parrish explained the terminology used in the reports and reviewed all parts of the budget spreadsheets. She answered a variety of questions from the DCC. Ms. Parrish gave the DCC her telephone extension, and invited anyone to call her or Elson Lee with additional questions about the budget. Nancy Neu reminded the DCC that our budgets are a matter of public record.

Appropriate use of TAs (Nancy Neu)

Nancy Neu said that although TAs were discussed at the last DCC meeting, she wanted to make sure that specific concerns were discussed within each department. Mrs. Neu said that it is critical to remind teachers to be thoughtful of what they allow TAs to have access to. For instance, do not have TAs deliver grade verification reports or lists of students at risk of failing. This is highly confidential information and should be delivered by the teacher to the appropriate person. TAs should not have access to any confidential information, including 504s and discipline or behavior referrals. Additionally, Mrs. Neu said that TAs should not deliver confiscated cell phones, iPods, etc. Teachers should deliver these items to the administration, or ask for an administrator or designee to get the items. Last year, a teacher confiscated an iPod but did not deliver it to administration (or ask an administrator to pick it up). The device was apparently lost or stolen from the teacher's room, and because of that, the school replaced the \$400 item. Mrs. Neu said that we have a responsibility to keep confiscated items in secure locations. She reminded the DCC to deliver confiscated items to administrators or ask them to come get the items; if these items aren't given to administration, make sure that they are put in a secure location until they can be given to administration. Mrs. Neu asked the DCC to discuss these concerns with their department members.

Keeping students after class (Emily Satterstrom for Steve Hettleman)

The English department believes that some teachers keep students after class to finish tests, causing these students to be tardy to their next classes. This impacts other teachers and causes disruptions. Ms. Satterstrom asked to have students make up tests during Office Hours or at another time. Chris Gilmore reminded the DCC that many Special Ed. students need extended time for tests. She said that stopping students midway through an exam might give them opportunities to review the subject matter before completing the exam. A student representative said that some tests are too long, with none of the students finishing within the 50-minute period. Another student representative said most teachers make adjustments if most students are unable to complete exams within a class period. One department chair noted that common sense dictates that if students are late because of an earlier class, contact those teachers individually and ask them to be considerate of others. Nancy Neu said that this is an excellent discussion to have with department members. If a student says s/he is late because of a long test but doesn't have a note from the teacher, mark the student tardy

or absent (if more than ten minutes late). Mrs. Neu said to talk to the teachers who are causing students to be late because they should not be keeping students after class.

Fran Bozdech spoke about classroom interruptions, suggesting that clips be installed inside classrooms for TAs to put call slips so they wouldn't interrupt the teachers. The call slips could be reviewed at the teacher's convenience. Teachers could also put outgoing messages on the clips. Mrs. Bozdech said that the counseling office tries to limit the delivery of call slips to the beginning of each period.

Additional Items

- Nancy Neu said that the administrators are liaisons for the departments (see the organizational chart e-mailed to all staff by Peggy Bogason on August 15, 2007). Mrs. Neu attended a recent English department meeting. She said that the department discussed ways to promote the teaching of vocabulary, suggesting the idea of a school-wide word of the day. After some discussion at DCC, it was decided to have departments create lists of vocabulary words that relate to their subject matter. These lists should be submitted to Steve Hettleman. The "word of the day" will be included in the Twig. Teachers will read the words to their students; this might help promote the learning of vocabulary. Leadership students could also post the words in the display cases, so that students see them throughout the day. Mrs. Neu noted that in the Action Plan and other reports, reading analysis/vocabulary has surfaced as an area for focus. One department member said that she keeps a running list of vocabulary words on her white board; whenever a student doesn't know a word, it goes on the board, and the teacher defines it.
- Because Steve Hettleman will miss the next DCC meeting, he and Chris Gilmore will switch snack days.
- Fran Bozdech said she has U.C. reference guides if anyone would like one.

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.