

# **Redwood High School**

## *Department Chair Council*

### Minutes of the March 19, 2007 DCC Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. Present: Karen Barrett, Erik Berkowitz, Fran Bozdech, Heather Curtaz, Chris Gilmore, David Goldsmith, Jennifer Harris, Ann Jaime, Skip Lovelady, Keith Murray, Nancy Neu, Steve Hettleman. Parents: Elaine Bengle. Students: none present. Sam Miller took minutes.

#### **Minutes from the 3/5/08 DCC Meeting (Nancy Neu)**

Postponed until next meeting.

#### **Master Schedule Scheduling (N. Neu)**

Nancy told the group that registration is currently taking place. The counselors will be holding to the times lines. The only difference with the process this year is the date for incoming freshman will already know their status with the private school eligibility. The notification from the private schools was the Monday prior to our registration. The counselors will be contacting the middle schools prior to the spring break for any straggling math placement recommendation forms. Nancy has a staffing meeting with Kathy Bennett and Steve Butler on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Nancy will meet with the department chairs prior to that meeting with preliminary numbers. The department chairs should be thinking and talking about any changes in their departments, who's teaching what, and what's being taught. Schedule preference sheets went out into all the teacher's boxes. They are due back to Nancy on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The information on these sheets is helpful to Nancy when making changes towards the end of the year. Nancy advised the chairs to check the TUHSD website ([tamdistrict.org](http://tamdistrict.org)) to stay abreast of openings in their departments at other sites. Some postings have already gone out. Nancy will start deciding on sections in April and can then begin to look at hiring. Letters from Human Resources have already gone out to teachers regarding status (if temp hire), openings in the district, non-relects, thank you anyway, etc. Nancy asked that if there is a non-relect or a no-but-thank-you-anyway teacher in any of the departments to please keep that information confidential, as that information may not be public.

#### **Feedback on PLC's (B. Block)**

Britt asked each department for their feedback on the PLC's:

- Fine Arts – Yes! Go ahead and reorganize. They liked the idea of a PLC3 as a whole staff, but “fluid” when it happens.
- AP Tech – The department had some concerns about the reduced amount of staff and department meeting time, as those meetings can be important and useful at times. They would also like more specifics and what to know what's expected and the details. They like the idea, but want a more finely laid out plan. Britt responded by suggesting that the group has their own accountability and sets their own time. There will have to be accountability for time, but it will be based on their own goals and needs. Britt is working with Tam and Drake to have more counterpart time (i.e. Joe Downey).
- English – They thought it looked good and suggested to choose a PLC1 or a PLC2. Having two different groups may take away the focus and not accomplish as much. Steve suggested more time for IB course development.
- Math – There was some concern about only having two scheduled staff meetings. Having a PLC1 with 9/10 focus is hard because of teaching different levels of students. It could be a time struggle. There was also some concern about cross-curriculum with a PLC2. Math department would also like an IB PLC, especially for next year.
- Social Studies – It was unanimous about having an IB PLC. They also felt that there should only be one PLC or another and put all the time into one group to do it right, but if not an IB PLC than will have to fit in PLC2.
- P.E. – The P.E. department would like some clarification with regards to the difference between PLC1 and a department meeting. They also believe that it would be more beneficial to focus on only one PLC. There was some concern about enough time for department meetings.
- Special Ed. – There was a question about who is monitoring and the set-up goals. If all this time is given up then when is there time to take care of all the other stuff?
- Science – They believe that the loss of staff meeting time is a non-issue. They also think that starting with a PLC1 and then later exploring a PLC2 possibly in the spring semester would be a better idea.
- Counselors – There was some concern about the loss of staff meeting time because they believe it is valuable time. There was also some question about what exactly was being done in that time and if it was worth it. The counselors also thought that focusing on one PLC was a better idea than having two groups.

Britt asked the department chairs if they feel like they are spread too thin if all three types of meetings were going on.

Some teachers want to be involved in more than one group, so maybe we should just start with one PLC. People can propose a PLC2 later at some point, but it's best to first establish a PLC1. This will also lessen any confusion if the focus is on only one PLC. Britt also mentioned that we can change PLC time to staff meeting time if needed. Everyone agreed. Britt asked how people would feel about coming back at the end of the day where the departments share out to each other. There was some concern about it becoming like a check-in for attendance. At the next staff development day, the morning time will be used to talk about the Shadow-a-Student and then focus on PLC's. Britt asked the department chairs to send her email letting her know what their department PLC groups should be. Chris Gilmore said that this would be difficult for her department and wanted to know how this would look for the Special Ed. department, as they are involved in common assessments. Britt asked that the teachers give a course name to their PLC. Teachers will have to be in just one PLC and work as a team; setting goals and looking at benchmarks. The minimum size of any PLC would be two people. People will need to be flexible and work on what's going to do the most good for the common.

### **RHS Website (D. Goldsmith)**

Last semester a student updated and revised the intro page to the RHS website. He also said that the inner pages of the website can also be revised. Dave previously solicited feedback from the staff and people responded. He will again ask that suggestions and/or feedback be emailed to him directly and instead of having the departments report to, he would like individual feedback. Fran said that the counselor's page is old and asked for a list of resources in order to update the page. He told Fran there are some external sites that he can put a link to. Dave also suggested using Netscape Composer as a resource. There were some suggestions for the intro page to have more school spirit by displaying sport pictures (of the appropriate season) and a banner saying, "Home of the Giants". Dave said that Joel Hames is working on developing a resource to help find other sites behind our homepage.

### **Staff Development Requests (N. Neu)**

Nancy reminded everyone about the budget cutbacks and that there is no more money for newly requested conferences. All staff development requests that have already been approved have been budgeted for. Money for curriculum development has been set aside now for the rest of this year. Department budgets can pay for subs if there is money available.

### **Black Out Shades (N. Neu)**

The Social Studies department initiated a request through the PTSA Foundation for black out shades. We went through the classrooms counting the number of windows and it totaled 203 windows. Some classrooms need them more than others. It comes to \$45,000 to install black out shades in all the classrooms. At the same time, another big request was put through the Foundation for a new sound system in the gym. There is not enough money to pay for both items. The sound system bids ranged from \$60,000 - \$90,000. There will be a sound system specialist coming to look at the set-up and will give us an idea of exactly what our needs are for a new sound system. We will wait on the black out shades for now and ask departments if they really want to spend on them. Nancy asked that departments come back to her with feedback. Some teachers didn't feel that they needed them. We will revisit them for next year.

Another item that the parents have agreed to fund, in addition to the sound system for the gym and library, is \$23,000 in copy charges for next year. When discussing thoughts on what some future "big ideas" would be, the English department suggested setting up a sister school in an impoverished area. Another idea was having a built-in philanthropy project for leadership such as an ongoing community project that would include parents, kids, and the community. Discussion turned to the lunch plaza that is currently in development. The cost for the lunch plaza is approximately \$300,000. Some of the funds are coming from Redwood Rocks, so encourage people to come to that event. All staff, plus one guest, are invited to attend for free.

### **Revised STAR Testing Schedule (K. Murray)**

Keith distributed the revised and finalized STAR schedule. Testing begins on Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> through Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.