

## **CPA Leadership Council Meeting Notes February 1, 2007**

**Present: Alex Freidus, Jamie Knight, Jackie Jenkins, Annie Johnston, Flora Russ, Toby Furash, Ken Yale, Caren Olson, Sandi Hunt, Karen Davis**

### **Constituent reports**

**Parents:** Jackie Jenkins attended the last Parent's Council meeting to discuss her 11th grade classes. She noted that many students are not doing the work, and welcomed parent assistance in her class. The parent's council also discussed the best use of a \$10,000 donation. There was active interest in using the funds for Writer's coaches and for science tutoring. The offering of a 3rd year of science was discussed. Parents expressed an interest in having the 3rd year offering include Physics and Anatomy/Physiology. Many students are interested in taking Environmental Science, and those students could be accommodated through classes offered outside of the Academy. Many colleges are unclear on the content of Environmental Science, and need to have the class explained to them. Parents discussed the Habits of Mind document, and asked that academic achievement be specifically included in the document, with a recommendation that wording to the effect of "students should achieve at their highest level of ability" would address their concern.

### **Teachers:**

Habits of Mind- teachers were surprised that their initial draft was reworked given the amount of effort they put into developing the document and the specific wording. They are still working on aligning the wording with the Whole School Outcomes goals. Questions were raised about the decision-making process regarding the document, and why the Leadership Council would change the document after the effort was put in to create it. (This topic was discussed in more detail later in the agenda).

The Portfolio Subcommittee is progressing, and staff are devoting one staff meeting per month to focus on defining the portfolio. The goal is to have the portfolio provide a representation of a student's work, and to perhaps motivate students to provide the highest quality work to be included in the portfolio. Teachers have really decided to make this their primary focus of the year, and want to pilot in Spring 2007.

### **Students:**

No students were in attendance at the meeting. Jackie provided a report on student leadership meetings. Students are meeting on either Monday or Tuesday (when Monday is a holiday). The ability to provide lunch at the meetings has significantly improved attendance. Most recently, approximately 15 students have been attending the meetings and are actively engaged. The students are planning a number of community-building activities, including a party and sale of CPA hoodies. Jackie was asked to inquire why no students attended today's meeting. She responded that she thought the students simply forgot that it was the first Thursday of the month due to how the calendar fell.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### **Data:**

Grades were submitted on Monday, so there is no new report on data. Once the data are available, the Data Committee will meet to provide a report. The committee will consider requests made at prior meetings to refine the analysis, specifically excluding non-UC eligible courses from the analysis, and attempting to track cohorts of students over time to measure performance. Additionally, the data reports will be used to inform grade-level teacher meetings.

Additional comments: want to have an assembly to honor high-achieving students. Have not decided on definition, but may include students with grade point average of 3.0 or higher, students with all A's and B's, and perhaps students who have improved their personal GPA by at least 10%, as a link to the Whole School outcomes goal.

**Whole School Outcomes document:**

There was significant discussion of the Whole School Outcomes document. The teachers present commented that there needed to be agreement on how to fit the document into an assessment rubric. Annie recommended that teachers finalize the document because they will be responsible for its implementation. There was a lively discussion of the role of the different constituent groups in finalizing the document, and differences of opinion on the purpose of the document. Teachers want to have a rubric for grading, parents want a description of what the program is attempting to accomplish for all students.

The terminology "Habits of Mind" is commonly used to define evaluation rubrics, thus causing confusion with its alternate use in this document.

Students have not yet been asked for their opinion, but should weigh-in before the document is finalized. In developing the document there has been a misunderstanding about process. It is important that all of the constituent groups have a voice.

Ken noted that the discussion was taking up a large percentage of the available time of the Leadership Council, and that when material decisions are to be made, it is important to clearly communicate expectations and responsibility. The LC can define its goals, and needs to keep in mind that there are only about 20 hours of meetings per year.

The next step in moving the document forward will be additional discussion by teachers and students, taking into consideration comments made at the last Parent's Council meeting.

**New Business**

**Spending of \$10,000 grant and other funding for academic support:** The Leadership Council and the Parent's Council have expressed interest in engaging the Writer-Coach Connection, but want additional information. Robert Menzimer from the Community Alliance for Learning will attend the next Parent's Council meeting to provide information. Some work on organization and structure could be completed this year, but full implementation would need to wait until next year.

Karen provided a description of her experience as a Coach - the program trains volunteers to work with students to improve their writing, primarily through asking constructive questions about their work and helping students to think for themselves about how their work can be improved. Generally a coach works with 2 to 3 students in a one-hour time period, and the WCC organizing the timing of volunteers coming in to work with students. For one class, approximately 15 volunteers would be needed. Those same volunteers may work with the second English class at the same grade level on the same day. The coach builds a relationship with their assigned students, so there is consistency over time.

Some organization is needed by participating teachers, as the volunteers generally cannot be rescheduled for another day if the class is not ready. However, the coaching can address anything going on in class, from reviewing an outline to reviewing a draft of a paper.

Some teachers at BHS expressed frustration with prior experience with WCC, perhaps because the coaches were available for any student in the school and there was not close coordination with individual teachers.

The estimated cost of WCC for 2 grades for one year is \$18,000. CPA will apply to BSEP and other grant-making organizations to seek to fund the difference between available funds and this amount. BSEP grants must be completed in about a month.

A question was asked about why all students in a grade level should be coached versus only those most in need of help. Flora responded that all students can improve their writing, particularly at the 9th and 10th grade level. Additionally, academic support should help allow all students to achieve at their highest level of ability.

**Other forms of academic support:** Some funds have already been spent to hire two Cal students to provide Science tutoring. There will be a tutor in almost all Science classes for part of each week. The tutors will also be available at lunch time, and during some after-school hours. Students can sign up for tutoring in Mr. Diab's class. The tutor will follow-up with phone calls home if students sign up for tutoring and don't follow through.

**Closure:**

It was disappointing that no students were able to attend the meeting. Additional reminders should be sent for future meetings, including one reminder a week in advance, and another the day before the meeting. E-mail reminders should have a definitive subject line to the reader can easily identify their purpose.

There was significant confusion about the process and purpose of the Habits of Mind / Whole School Outcomes document, and better clarification is needed.

All attendees participated actively in the meeting.