

ACADEMICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 7, 2015

7 p.m.

Present:

Louise Hindle (Chair), Stephen Choi, AP Diaz, Julia Greer, Jeff Hannan, Loretta Hultman, Cesar Larriva, Michiko Lee, Daphne Liu, Charles Norton, Lisa Link, Chris Norgaard, Alex Cherniss, Gary McGuigan, Mary Johnson, Jason Kurtenbach, Liz Hollingsworth, Colleen Shields, Doug Berry, Lettie Aranda, Scott Barton, Andrew Gayl, Christine Sohn-Lee, Christine Franco

Absent:

Tom Armbruster, Babak Hassibi, Ananth Natarajan, Yu-Wen Taylor, Larry Wong

- I. Welcome & Brief Introductions – Louise Hindle
- II. AAC Philosophy & Brief Review of AAC's 2014-2015 Achievements – Louise Hindle, Lisa Link, Alex Cherniss
  - A. The SMUSD Board of Education established the AAC in 2006 in order to obtain the input of community members regarding academic programs and the guidance/counseling program. Since 2006, AAC members have provided input regarding expanded course offerings, AP courses, college admissions/placement, internships, scheduling alternatives, differentiated instruction at the elementary level, computer science/coding, and student achievement, to name a few.
  - B. AAC members are asked to present views in a way that shows mutual respect for different perspectives and to work collaboratively on behalf of all students. The AAC is an advisory body and makes recommendations, not decisions. Individual members of the AAC cannot speak on behalf of the AAC or the Board of Education.
  - C. As a result of the recommendations of the AAC in the past two years, the District has recently created a blended learning Honors Humanities class in partnership with the Huntington Library. Computer science classes have been expanded. SMHS has hired a college counselor who is also responsible for finding internships for students. The District is considering establishing a Chinese community liaison position in response to requests for better communications with the Asian community.

III. Description of 2015-2016 District Focus Groups – Louise Hindle, Doug Berry, Mary Johnson, Jason Kurtenbach, Gary McGuigan

A. Computer Science Focus Group, led by Doug Berry

- a. As a result of the recommendations of the AAC and research by several AAC members, and due to high student demand, SMHS has increased its computer science offerings. Last year, Introduction to Computer Science was offered, and this year Introduction to Coding was added. Currently there are four sections of computer science classes. Next year, AP Computer Science will be added.
- b. At Huntington Middle School, there is a zero period coding class offered to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, but there is greater demand than supply.
- c. At both Valentine and Carver, there is an after school Google CS First program that accommodates 20 students. Again, there is a lot of interest in expanding the computer science opportunities.
- d. There is a lot of interest in computer science among girls. Jamie Linton is advising the “Girls Who Code Club” at SMHS.
- e. Loretta Hultman informed the AAC of the CayberPatriot program used at many LAUSD schools.
- f. The Computer Science Focus Group has been created to (1) offer more computer science/coding classes at all school levels, (2) investigate what other school districts offer in computer science curriculum, and (3) investigate STEM opportunities across all grade levels.

B. High School Scheduling Focus Group, led by Mary Johnson

- a. There are so many classes to take and so many activities to participate in, but because SMHS only has six periods, students are limited in their options. Although there are zero period classes and after school classes, not all students can participate because of athletics or band.
- b. The High School Scheduling Focus Group has been created to investigate (1) different models of block scheduling, (2) ways for students to have increased access to course offerings, and (3) alternative ways to increase professional development time within block scheduling.

C. Middle School Scheduling Focus Group, led by Jason Kurtenbach

- a. Because there are only six periods, middle school students do not have good access to electives and many times have to choose between a foreign language and a performing art. Many students also do not have sufficient time for extra intervention with English/Math and have to get help after school.
- b. The Middle School Scheduling Focus Group has been created to (1) offer a 7 period class schedule, (2) investigate different models of 7 period class schedules, and (3) look at alternative ways to increase professional development time within a 7 period class schedule day.

D. Foreign Language Focus Group, led by Gary McGuigan

- a. Many educators and families recognize the value of learning a second language at an early age, and many school districts are implementing foreign language programs or dual immersions programs in elementary school.
- b. The Foreign Language Focus Group has been created to (1) offer foreign language (i.e. Spanish) instruction at the elementary level, (2) investigate the feasibility of a Dual Immersion Program (Spanish or Mandarin), and (3) investigate the value of on-line foreign language programs.

IV. Focus Group Selection by AAC Membership – Louise Hindle

- A. AAC members were encouraged but not required to serve on a Focus Group sub-committee of their choice. In order to best allocate AAC members to the various Focus Groups, AAC members were asked to rank their interest in serving on a particular focus group subcommittee. AAC members were asked to indicate their first, second, and third choice on a piece of paper or by emailing Louise Hindle.

V. New & Noteworthy – Updates from District & Principals

A. Carver – Liz Hollingsworth

- a. Music program – the elementary schools have increased instrumental music offerings with beginning and intermediate strings once a week, in addition to general music being offered once a week throughout the school year
- b. Everyday Math – with the adoption of this new textbook/curriculum, which is aligned with the Common Core, both students and teachers are experiencing a shift in the way that math is taught. Students receive about 90-120 minutes of math a day in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Liz can see improvements in the math language used by students.

B. Valentine – Colleen Shields

- a. In addition to the music program and Everyday Math program described at Carver, Colleen reported about a Junior School Ambassadors program offered to 40 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in order to help them learn leadership and conflict resolution skills.
- b. All Valentine students participate in the Second Step program, which helps teach students about conflict resolution skills.
- c. As part of their professional development, teachers are focusing on writing and informational text.
- d. Valentine is a National Blue Ribbon school!

- C. Huntington Middle School – Jason Kurtenbach
  - a. Students enjoyed outdoor education programs at Wonder Valley and Catalina
  - b. Rob Miller and Matt Slimp have a great Speech and Debate program going at HMS
  - c. Both the choir and band programs hope to host a competition here in San Marino. The choir hopes to travel to Chicago, and the band hopes to travel to New York.
  - d. The computer coding class is successful...maybe too successful as students have been putting their coding skills to practice.
  - e. Jason is impressed with the academic vocabulary that students are using in math classes.
- D. San Marino High School – Mary Johnson, Doug Berry, Christine Franco, Andrew Gayl
  - a. Three new courses this year
    - i. Marine Biology
    - ii. Introduction to Coding (about 100 kids)
    - iii. Honors Humanities (60% online)
  - b. A new spring college course in partnership with PCC- Anatomy
  - c. College/Career Center has been very busy with college visits, workshops, presentations
    - i. Over 90 colleges have visited SMHS
    - ii. Workshops on essay writing, interviewing, applications for students and parents
  - d. Christine Franco, newly appointed, is seeking internships for students
  - e. Bonnie Hanson is creating an original dance production with an original score
  - f. Rachelle Liu was named a Princess of the Tournament of Roses Royal Court
  - g. Greg Eng received the prestigious Nordstrom scholarship of \$10K
  - h. Andrew Gayl described the new mindfulness component of the Health curriculum in partnership with Inner U (once a week for 25-30 minutes)
- E. District – Alex Cherniss
  - a. There is a focus on mental health for students, parents, and teachers
    - i. Students – mindfulness in Health curriculum
    - ii. Parents – District participated in Partnership for Awareness program “Not in Our Town”
    - iii. Teachers –Student Mental Health Academy (40 teachers signed up to learn how to identify at risk students)

## VI. New Business

- A. SMUSD #1 in California for percentage of students who met or exceeded standards in Math and English Language on the CAASPP!

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.