

# SAN MARINO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ACADEMICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
San Marino High School College & Career Center  
2701 Huntington Drive, San Marino, CA 91108

## MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2018

7:00 to 9:00 PM

- I. Call to Order - 7:05 PM
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Agenda
  - A. Dr. Thomas Armbruster
  - B. Jason Kurtenbach seconded
- IV. Approval of Minutes – December 20, 2017
  - A. Dr. Thomas Armbruster
  - B. Jason Kurtenbach seconded
- V. Public Comment for Matters on the Agenda

Cards for public comment are available at the back of the room. A card must be filled out and submitted to the committee chairperson, prior to the start of the meeting, in order to address the committee. Each card entitles the speaker to 3 minutes of speaking time. The committee chairperson will invite speakers to address the committee. Comments will be heard at this time, but not responded to by the committee.

- Julie Lin commented regarding STEM and NGSS elementary teachers going to training.
  - 1) Why is only one teacher going rather than all teachers? Why are not some teachers rotating through?
  - 2) Since there was a PD day last week, why didn't teachers (going to the training tomorrow) go to the training on the last PD day?

## VI. New Business

### A. Focus Group Updates

#### 1. Homework Policies – Jason Kurtenbach

- a) <https://goo.gl/qDAqHH>
- b) Mr. Kurtenbach highlighted members of the subcommittee and reviewed the purpose of the subcommittee. The subcommittee members reached out to various districts and found what was posted online was not exactly reflective of what is happening.
- c) The subcommittee also reviewed available research on the topic of homework. The findings appear to be inconclusive. The data is not clear. For example, identifying the time students spend on homework is based on anecdotal responses.
- d) Subcommittee will draft policy revisions in K-3, 4-5, middle, and high school grade levels.
- e) Unexpected Outcomes. Topics expand into standards-based grading, citizenship, work habits, effort, school-wide grading practices.
- f) Questions?

(1) Meredith Sommers commented that Mr. Kurtenbach did a good job summarizing the status of the subcommittee. Ms. Sommers added that homework is tied to other relevant areas where parents need to be educated in. Teachers and staff should also be educated in effectively assigning homework. Discussions are super-rich.

(2) Dr. Alex Cherniss asked if there were any samples of homework policies? Mr. Kurtenbach responded that it is very challenging to find something that works for the school and is school-level appropriate. Dr. Cherniss is interested in identifying meaningful work, and not homework that is repetitive. Dr. Michiko Lee added the discussions have expanded into grading discussions. Mr. Kurtenbach commented that students are very concerned about getting the right answer and have spent a lot of time focused on getting questions correct.

#### 2. STEM / Computer Science – Stephen Choi

- a) <https://goo.gl/vkrsXX>
  - b) Mr. Stephen Choi reviewed the meeting dates of the subcommittee. Mr. Choi highlighted that STEM and CS within the SMUSD were reviewed K-12. Mr. Daniel Lee shared many of his CS projects at the high school. Mr. John Gulick shared his robotics and coding projects at the middle school. Mr. Choi added that a representative from the “Creating Reality Hackathon” event, sponsored by USC, is a great opportunity for high and middle school students. Students are invited to compete or volunteer to learn more about the event.
  - c) Mr. Choi concluded that all are welcome to attend the March and April subcommittee meetings and there is an online option to join the meeting.
3. College Readiness / Applications – Doug Berry
- a) <https://goo.gl/rnRsc3>
    - (1) Mr. Doug Berry reviewed the dates the subcommittee met and emphasized that the subcommittee expands upon the work from 2016-2017.
    - (2) Goal One: Improve Communication. The subcommittee is considering recommending developing a brochure for the community and for counseling services. Mr. Berry added the Media Arts teachers at SMHS will work with students to develop these brochures. Mr. Berry also highlighted a sample brochure (This is Caltech). The brochure is visually engaging and includes data but is not overwhelming. The brochure will include testimonies.
    - (3) Goal Two: Student Inner Exploration. The subcommittee would like to recommend leading students through four years of Inner Exploration. Create new programs for juniors and seniors. Mr. Berry has been working with Ms. Kristine Franco to develop a presentation to highlight Naviance.
    - (4) Questions?
      - (a) Ms. Shelley Ryan asked if the brochures are for students, parents. How are we using these brochures? Mr. Berry responded the brochures are for everybody. The brochures will highlight the amazing things the High School is doing. We currently do it now but it is not presented in an efficient and exciting way. Mr. Berry added the brochures will be posted online.
      - (b) Mr. Matt Morris commented that there should be an emphasis on career readiness. Mr. Morris shared his concern that students do not have sufficient time to experience new things. Dr. Issaic Gates responded there has to be a balance and the high school is searching for it.

## VII. Announcements

### A. School Board Updates – Shelley Ryan

- 1. Ms. Shelley Ryan thanked Dr. Michiko Lee to lead this committee. Ms. Ryan is inspired with the work the subcommittees are doing. Ms. Ryan thanked Dr. Cherniss on his vision and his efforts in implementing the blended learning programs, especially in regard to the recent partnerships with the Huntington and Caltech. Ms. Ryan thanked the parents and volunteers who put their time into this committee. Ms. Ryan is excited about the possibilities and opportunities that come out of this work.
- 2. Ms. Ryan shared the Board continues to investigate facilities and the importance of spaces. Ms. Ryan commented that some schools are looking at classrooms inside out. For example, looking at a classroom in a three-walled space. Ms. Ryan commented that even the chairs look different in these spaces. Ms. Ryan iterated that the Board is interested in looking at how space can improve the student experience.

### B. School District Updates – Dr. Cherniss

- 1. Dr. Cherniss shared the high school hosted the Caltech course information night. There was a major student turnout. The Caltech course will be a blended learning course - students take class here and will travel to Caltech and will use a learning management system. There are only so many spots available. Criteria for the Caltech course is being developed. There will be a writing component. Dr. Cherniss wants the students and parents to know what the criteria will be established ahead of time and will push out the deadline as needed. This is an honors-level, year-long course. Two teachers (math and computer science) were identified to teach this course. Dr. Cherniss is exploring ways to include other disciplines (other sciences such as biology) in this course. Dr. Cherniss is very proud to offer this. So far, all four professors are

parents of San Marino Schools. Dr. Cherniss shared there is excitement and interest to develop more partnerships. Dr. Brian Stoltz added that this is fun opportunity for him. Dr. Stoltz added we should engage more teachers to get input on which students should participate. Dr. Stoltz hoped that biology would be included but is also aware of the concern for starting with too big of a group. Mr. Doug Berry added 155 applications were distributed so far.

2. Dr. Cherniss added school safety is something the District is constantly reviewing. Dr. Cherniss shared the active shooter drill will occur next week. Dr. Cherniss added the elementary levels are also considering doing a drill with staff. Dr. Cherniss shared South Pasadena USD provided a drill for staff on the weekend. Dr. Cherniss concluded we will review all our plans.
3. Dr. Cherniss shared there is interest in looking at spaces. Dr. Cherniss shared Larkspur-Corte Madera School District created spaces that are very open and would be worth visiting to consider modernizing our spaces. Ms. Sommers questioned how would teachers feel if they were put into new innovative spaces but don't know how to use it. Dr. Cherniss responded that a good example of how our teachers would respond is how the District implemented the new curriculum. Dr. Cherniss emphasized SMUSD is one of the few districts who have implemented new curriculum. Dr. Cherniss added that teachers will need training and some of the best trainers are our own teachers here.

#### C. School Updates – Principals

1. Dr. Michael Lin updated the AAC that two new special education teachers will be joining Carver. March 15 will be open house. Grades 3-5 completed their CAASPP interim assessments. The data will be reviewed and disaggregated to create intervention programs.
2. Mr. Jason Kurtenbach shared that Huntington completed their interim assessments. The data is also being reviewed to develop intervention opportunities. The Huntington musical will be Footloose. Students have really taken the lead to create this musical. The Huntington Centennial event will be next week. Past principals, teachers, and staff will be in attendance. Author Jessica Lahey of "Gift of Failure" will be visiting Huntington. Huntington is highlighting successful people who have failed each week. Mr. Kurtenbach emphasized the need to talk about failure with students.
3. Dr. Issaic Gates shared it is an exciting time at San Marino High School. Dr. Gates highlighted the involvement of board members, the superintendent, and community and parents. Dr. Gates praised the willingness of staff to jump on new initiatives. Connectedness is a major theme at SMHS. Dr. Gates added the importance of learning and spaces. Dr. Gates added there are conversations about how students are learning. AP and honors courses are being discussed in an information night. Dr. Gates highlighted there were twelve pages of questions submitted via survey and the high school will respond to them. Dr. Gates added there is articulation between 8th grade and 9th grade English and Math. Dr. Gates also referred to the STEM course and highlighted the serious opportunity the Caltech course offers to our students. Dr. Gates shared his excitement to work with a team that can create something that hasn't been created before. Dr. Gates shared there will be a parent information night on the Active Shooter drill Thursday (2/22/18) to prepare parents and the importance of preparing students for something that may or may not happen. Dr. Gates concluded there is continued work on the Student Wellness Center. The Center would serve as a hub for our students to deal with stress and anxiety.
  - a) Ms. Ryan commented there were three hundred people at the AP information night. How will the questions submitted inform our process?
    - (1) Dr. Gates responded that there were multiple types of questions pertaining to AP and Honors. If there were questions not aligned to AP or Honors, parents should ask the counselors. The responses would serve to inform.

#### VIII. Public Comment for Matters Not on the Agenda

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#### IX. Adjournment - 8:09 PM

*Next Meeting: April 25, 2018; 7:00-9:00pm*