

**Re: Minutes, Academics Advisory Committee  
Meeting on November 13, 2013**

From: Tom Armbruster

To: Distribution

Date: January 12, 2014

The meeting started at 7:06 pm in the High School's conference room, Shelley Enger presiding.

Present, clockwise around the table: Betsy Felix, Shelley Ryan, Strefan Fauble, Brinton Young, Jason Kurtenbach, Shelley Enger, Ananth Natarajan, Sally Buckley, Chris Norgaard, Mary Johnson, Loren Kleinrock, Tom Armbruster.

We congratulated Shelley Ryan and Joseph Chang on their election to the Board of Trustees.

The minutes of the meeting of October 17, 2013 were approved, with the proviso that the correct spelling of the name of the Pasadena City College Director of Outreach, Degrees, and Transfer is Dina Chase.

District update:

Loren reported it is unclear what the state wants with respect to appropriating school funding at this time. We do not know what the funding will be for 2013–14, though we are substantially into the 13–14 year. We won't know for sure until June how much money the state will give us for the preceding 11 months. There will be no windfall from Proposition 30. We'll receive about as much as under the old system.

Dismal news is that the promises made over the last several years, "We cannot give you all the money you're legally owed this year, but we'll make it up to you when the economy improves," have been wiped out. On the brighter side, there will be no earmarking of funds, and there probably will be no current measure for achievement that can be used. Tom asked if we had carried this "money owed" on our books as an asset; Loren said that we did not.

Both elementary schools have submitted nominations to be California Distinguished Schools.

### High School update:

Mary reported: We are staging a “Challenge Day,” to build resistance to bullying. Brinton asked about our experiences with bullying at the high school, Mary replied that a lot goes on in cyberspace. Loren said that District Psychologist Jenifer Lozano went to a conference on “threat assessment.” There is a risk assessment team at each school.

Girls tennis won the CIF semi-finals 10–8, and are going to finals on Friday.

Betsy Felix said that a couple of times, students have come to the administration to report concerns.

There is something called the Student Mental Health Initiative. It involves protecting one’s Facebook presence, coping skills, and response skills<sup>1</sup>.

We are considering implementing an anonymous tip line at the high school. In general, we need a culture of people sharing what they know.

### Board member update:

Joseph Chang thanked the community for the continuing opportunity to serve.

### Huntington update:

Jason reported that there is an anonymous on-line bullying report capability that has been put onto the HEH web site.

This week we have worked on disaster preparedness.

Professional development this week is diversified in specifics but unified in the long-range goal of supporting Common Core. The English Department is studying “Six Traits of Writing.” The English department wants to support other departments in developing writing skills for other content areas<sup>2</sup>. The social sciences are working on document-based question answering.

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<sup>1</sup>This is organized under the California Mental Health Services Authority. Further information can be found at <http://calmhsa.org/programs/student-mental-health-initiative-smhi/>.

<sup>2</sup>These six traits are: idea and content, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions. A Google search on <six traits of writing> produces several links to lessons and curriculum development. One is <http://so024.k12.sd.us/6%20+%201%20Traits.htm>.

Science teachers are going with Gary McGuigan in three weeks to attend an overview of the “integrated science” approach.

We want to move as many assessments as possible to an on-line format. Tom asked whether keyboarding is now taught as a separate subject: It is not. There are a number of on-line packages that support keyboarding instruction.

#### PCC and Counseling update:

Mary has not heard back from the Linda Wah and Dina Chase team. Mary thinks that PCC’s budget priorities may have shifted.

#### Update on AAC membership:

The Board intends to fill AAC vacancies as they occur. Chris said that he misses the extent to which we had university faculty on the AAC a few years ago. The Board will make a posting of three current AAC vacancies.

#### Data collection:

We discussed the prospect of collecting data on matriculation, GPA, SAT scores, and AP enrollment and results, carried out in a way that protects student confidentiality. Tom will meet with Eric Negroe, and Mary agreed to help with the effort.

#### Common Core:

We discussed the relatively lower performance of Asians at SMHS in ELA. Is this the result of cultural differences? What is the next step in addressing this? Chris said the Board needs to discuss this.

Loren said he has not seen as much Common Core instruction as he wishes he had.

Seven-period days: This will take considerable effort, and might cost as much as one million to implement. One big question is whether teachers would teach five or six periods. It was again asserted that there are more AP opportunities at other schools.

Adjournment:

At 9:00, we adjourned to the 17th of December, 2013, 7:00 pm<sup>3</sup>.

Remaining action items from prior meetings: Mary will investigate getting a catalog list of our college preparation services together, and getting it up on the web site. Loren or someone he designates will assemble information on students who have left the district at the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition levels.

The AAC's On-Going List of Possible Topics: (1) Follow-up on the implementation of the recently adopted AP and Honors course access policy. (2) Assembling and reviewing data regarding improved instruction. (3) Making better use of parent volunteers to support instruction, broadly. (4) Follow-up on improving students' interviewing/oral communication skills. (5) Student retention when moving to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. (6) Partnerships with other institutions. (7) Internship and career presentations and opportunities for students. (8) Assemble and review data on the impact of scheduling on programs and college placement.

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<sup>3</sup>In December, we cancelled the December meeting. The next meeting will be Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 7:00 pm.

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