

**Minutes of January 7, 2014**  
**BHS School Site Council**  
**Conference Room B, D Building**  
**4:15 – 6:00pm**

**Present:**

BHS Staff: Pasquale Scuderi, Anne Busacca-Ryan, Mark Griffin, Dharini Rasiah, Robin van der Vegt

Parents: Landi Ehnle, Sandi Hunt, Satish Rao, Margit Roos-Collins, Alejandra Nuñez

Students: Sophie Andrews, Jesse Barber, Kevin Flood-Bryzman, Sophia Olaya-Hermes (serving as Chair)

**Absent:** Iris Grace

**Others Present:** Tamara Friedman and David Stevens, BHS Professional Development Team Leads

**Call to order:** 4:25 p.m.

**Beginning Business Items (Decision)**

- **SGC Members sign in**
- **Establish a quorum**
- **Approve agenda**

Agenda approved without changes.

**Comments from members of the BHS Community (Information)**

There was no public comment

**Principal's Report (Information)**

The California Interscholastic Foundation [CIF] plans to honor Charles Biedenbach, who served as the Principal of Berkeley High from 1917 to 1937, for his service to CIF. He is credited with inventing the idea of middle school.

Construction is going well and they expect to move into the new building in a few weeks.

As to discipline data, there continues to be a reduction in suspensions, especially for disruption and defiance. However, the school is still struggling with disproportionality (African American students are suspended at a higher rate than those of other ethnic backgrounds), especially for fighting.

The BHS BSEP committee met yesterday. Their budget will likely come to the SSC much later this spring than normal (possibly as late as May) because of the uncertainties associated with the new local funding rules. Under the new state rules, the District may be able/willing to pick up

some of the positions that BSEP has funded, but the District won't be finalizing its budget until June, after the BSEP budget has to be completed. The committee wants to invite new proposals but doesn't know if it will have funds for them. The expectation is that the total BSEP funding will be about the same as last year's.

Ethnic studies: the administration has asked all teachers to look at their courses with an eye to where students of color see themselves in the curriculum. Recommended: the TED talk on "The Danger of a Single Story." Trying to get away from just having African Americans discussed in relation to slavery and Latinos in relation to immigration. They are considering what ideas should be embedded in the general curriculum and what should be explicit and what should be taught in an African American studies course. They've considered a required course for all students in African American issues and history, but with only about 22% African American students in the school's population, they'd be a minority in the required class. There are advantages to having such a class with an affinity group – being surrounded by other kids of color.

Career Technical Education [CTE]: The administration, Leadership, and the Superintendent all want to find ways to expand this program. As an example, students will be able to take the BHS Fire Science course coupled with EMT training at the Berkeley Adult School and some courses at Berkeley City College [BCC] and earn a certificate in Fire Science.

Ehnle asked about a partnership for taking sign language at BCC.

Griffin mentioned the need to look at the mentoring of African American students and whether it is happening adequately.

### **Principal's Question and Answer (Information)**

Hunt raised concern over making sure some oral questions could be taken along with all the written ones submitted by Roos-Collins in advance. [Attached, dated Jan. 4]

Principal had read the ideas submitted in advance, but had not had the opportunity to think about all of them. Decision to take two of them for this Q&A and save the rest till subsequent meeting(s).

Q on strengthening the Long-Term English Learner interventions: Principal made one correction – the Summer Bridge iMentor group discussed in May 21 2013 SSC minutes had a 100% CAHSEE pass rate in Math. In English Language Arts, the pass rate was in the high 70's. School is indeed pursuing funding opportunities to expand access to that approach. As to the pace at which the school mainstreams its English Learners, the people who need to be in that discussion would include Heidi Ramirez-Weber [BHS] and Heather Tugwell [BUSD].

Q 9) on math and how to increase the pace at which the instructional improvements associated with the Common Core are introduced to the school. Principal said the BHS math department heads, Mike Weitz and Amy Burke, were meeting with Cathy Campbell, head of teachers' union, today to discuss topics related to this and that there's an upcoming meeting with the Superintendent to discuss this transition as well. They don't plan to just wait until current middle schoolers get to BHS before implementing the Common Core in math: aspects are being

brought into unit and lesson plans already. But the lack of textbooks and instructional materials is currently an issue. Need to see what materials will end up being available and recommended. A discussion is underway with Neil Smith (Asst. Superintendent for Instruction) regarding offering a pilot class of the integrated math.

Busacca-Ryan offered to meet with Roos-Collins to decide which of her questions went best with which WASC categories for purposes of allocating them among the remaining SSC meetings.

### **Adoption of Minutes (Decision)**

Rao moved, Ehnle seconded, and group voted unanimously to adopt minutes from December 3, 2013, without any further changes.

### **Accountability and Assessment (Information/Discussion)**

**Information on school's assessment activities and plans. Provide feedback to the principal relating to implementation of the school's commitments to account for and assess outcomes covered by the WASC plan.**

Busacca-Ryan introduced the topic, circulating the Category D, Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability materials from the WASC plan. She explained that one document was the school's own self-study in that area and the second was the WASC committee's feedback to the school. Focusing on the areas that the committee listed as needing attention, she noted that most of the five were well underway. The fifth item, raising concern about Datawise, has been met through switching to Illuminate for the staff's data analysis needs.

Tamara Friedman presented on the topic of how the professional development team assesses progress on the WASC goals, especially Goal One relating to language. She used a Powerpoint, attached, and distributed folders containing "borrowed learning" resources and a bibliography of research references that the BHS staff relied on in developing the school's approach to English language development. [Note – the minutes do not summarize all the points made in the Powerpoint or in the presentation].

They believe that the Constructed Meaning/Constructed Response [CM/CR] work should lead to gains in the CAHSEE pass rate, per Goal One. Principal noted that unfortunately, a number of the students most at risk were absent when the CR was administered, thereby reinforcing the importance of the work being done to reduce absences.

CM/CR were originally developed by Dutro and Levy. In addition to using published research, the school has learned from the experiences at two schools that have successfully improved writing skills: Brockton High (connected with Harvard's Achievement Gap Initiative) and Salinas, where CR has been helping the English Learners.

They've given all teachers a set of three answers to the question in the CR, one weak, one strong, and one middling. The sample essays were used for norming the grading of the students' essays, demonstrating to the teachers how to apply the grading rubric. Teachers grade each others' students, not their own.

Explaining the sample scores on the Illuminate page in the Powerpoint and how a student can have a higher score on the pre-assessment than on the CR. The pre-assessment is a pure writing test administered in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The Constructed Response essay requires embedding evidence in the arguments, and some students struggle with that skill.

While the CR essays have only a single reader for each, the CAHSEE English Language Arts test has multiple readers, so they will use the students' CAHSEE ELA results to validate how well the CR grading is normed, as well as how well the CR effort is working to raise ELA skills. Rao recommended that they take a few hundred CR responses and assign each to multiple teachers to grade as a way to test the norming. Friedman responded that this was a good idea.

If CR helps students across a wide range of academic preparedness, then school should see an increase in scores on the SAT's, AP's, and IB's. And when the state's Smarter, Balanced Assessment is developed for 11<sup>th</sup> graders, the school should be able to use that also to check the impacts of instructional language arts strategies on a wider range of learners. But for now, they plan to use just the CAHSEE results to determine whether they are meeting WASC Goal One.

Some of the additional points mentioned:

- Fourteen common assessments have been developed so far at BHS.
- Part of the goal is a gradual release of responsibility; Marlo Warburton at Longfellow made a good video demonstrating this concept.
- All Academic Choice seniors will be taking AP Government this year.
- Friedman works with groups of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders in Saturday sessions with iMentor. The program gives them immediate feedback as they work at computers. Algebra 1 students who are in 10<sup>th</sup> grade are getting half-day sessions to do iMentor for math.

Following the presentation, concern raised that the time allotted for accountability had been completely taken up with a staff presentation and members' questions about it, and that there was again no time for independent SSC discussion of and feedback to administration on these or other accountability/implementation issues.

#### **Discuss topics for next meeting, on February 4:**

In addition to any topics the Superintendent wishes to discuss with the SSC at the February 4 meeting, the group agreed to put School Culture (WASC Category E) and Governance (WASC Category A) on the agenda, since several members have raised topics related to School Culture and since the future of or alternative to the SSC is a logical subject to discuss with the Superintendent. It was agreed that the group needs a second meeting on Accountability and Assessment but that that would best be postponed until after February.

With regard to a second SSC meeting in February for presentation of the Safety Plan, those who have conflicts on Tuesdays did not indicate that Monday would be better and there are conflicts with the other days of the week, so the plan will probably be presented on Tuesday, Feb. 18.

**Adjournment:** 6:10 p.m.

