

**Minutes of March 18, 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 (co-Secretary)

Students: Jesse Barber, Sophia Olaya-Hermes (co-Chair)

**Absent:** Iris Grace, Alejandra Nunez, Sophie Andrews, Kevin Flood-Bryzman

**Others Present:** Members of the Safety Committee: Enid Camps (co-Chair), Rolf Bell (co-Chair), Marjorie Alvord, Toni Stein, Ardarius McDonald (Dean of Students), and Cindy Chang

**Call to order:** 4:28 p.m.

**Beginning Business Items (Decision)**

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

Quorum not established until about halfway through the meeting, when a second student arrived

- **Approve agenda**

Agenda approved, moving the EIA/EL vote to the beginning.

**Vote on proposed revision to 2013-2014 EIA/EL budget (Discussion/Decision)**

Moved by Rao and seconded by Ehnle:

“Motion to approve the proposed revision to the 2013-2014 EIA/EL budget”

In favor: 9. Abstaining: 1. Motion passed.

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

There was no public comment.

**Principal’s Report (Information)**

BHS was chosen to be a test school for the new Smarter, Balanced Assessment test that is replacing the CST (Star) test. Even though the test will ultimately be only for 11<sup>th</sup> graders, it will be field-tested on the BHS 9<sup>th</sup> grade as well. It’s unfortunate that it will be administered in the spring of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, since that cuts into the intense class preparation time leading up to the AP and IB exams. He’s hoping that the state will schedule the SBA test at a time each spring that leaves the final month free for review before the AP/IB’s.

The new LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) approach of having more funding decisions happen at the district level is so far not working the way he’d expected. He had expected to get

Berkeley High's share of the supplemental district funds and then allocate them according to the school's priorities. However, in the first pass at this, the District assembled a list of priority projects (a top 20 list) and Berkeley High's priorities were fairly low on that list. The high school would not get close to its per capita share under this approach. It's difficult when there are so many K-8 principals and only one principal who represents a third of the district's students.

BHS BSEP has funded two OCI positions and the school was hoping to shift those to being covered by either base or supplemental funds from the District.

To find out when the LCAP meetings are, go to the District's website.

**Adoption of Minutes from January 7 and March 4 (Decision)**

Corrections made to January 7 minutes.

Moved by Van der Vegt, seconded by Rao.

Motion to approve minutes as amended.

Approved unanimously (10 votes).

Review of the March 7 minutes was deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints.

**Vote on Safety Plan (Discussion/Decision)**

**Presentation of Safety Committee's responses to concerns/suggestions raised by SSC members. Vote on Safety Plan.**

Safety Committee members shared the revisions that had been made to the Goals since the last SSC meeting, based on concerns raised by SSC members.

Rao asked the Committee to add the same incident tracking language to the bullying/harassment goal and to the goal addressing use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Dean of Students agreed that such tracking would not be unduly burdensome.

Concern underlying new strategies 3.15 and 3.16 is that District Safety meetings have for years been scheduled at same time as BHS admin team meetings and therefore we don't have an administrator at those district meetings. Also, because most of the subjects discussed at the weekly principals' meetings with the Assistant Superintendent are only relevant to the K-8's, we don't have a regular representative who attends those. This means that we miss the annual work and information-sharing on the Safety and Disaster Plans that occurs at those meetings during the winter.

Solutions: Scuderi believes it is more feasible to change the time of the district safety meeting than to change the time of the high school admin team meeting. He agrees to work that out with the district so that McDonald can attend the district meetings. In the meantime, Mark Griffin (BHS Safety Officer) does attend those meetings. Further, Scuderi will arrange for District to give advance notice of when the principals' meetings will address Safety Plans so that McDonald can attend those as well.

Bell explained that Goal 8 is new since last month's meeting. It aims to restore the funding for an OCI clerical position (lost when that position was moved to the attendance office). It also aims to move the OCI staff positions away from BSEP funding and into the general budget. Rao asked what clerical work needs to be done. McDonald noted that even very small events must be

properly documented when reported because small things can blow up later. Also, non-disciplinary incidents are the bulk of the work in OCI –kids come to OCI looking for help with health, mental health, hunger, or other issues – in part because OCI is so centrally located that it’s easier for the students to come there than to go elsewhere such as to their counselors. Those types of interactions are not logged into the disciplinary record but take someone’s time. Also, the nature of the disciplinary work handled by OCI is such that, if not done well or thoroughly, can result in legal exposure. And David Luu has specialized training that could be better used if he were freed up by some help. Rao believes that it would be better then for OCI to have additional counselor time rather than clerical, since it’s probably better to have counselors doing their own intake.

Moved by Rao; seconded by Hunt.

Motion to approve the BHS Safety Plan, as amended, with the addition of the tracking strategy from Goal One to Goals Two and Four.

In favor: 10. Abstaining: 1

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

Roos-Collins asked about status of student reviews of teachers, which is in the SPSA for implementation this school year, mid-year. Scuderi attended a meeting with Student Leadership at which a teacher, Mr. Campisi, presented a review form he’d developed with 89 questions and psychometric questions. The school as a whole has not yet tried student reviews. Busacca-Ryan explained that Academic Choice did develop and distribute student reviews in the history and English classes. The teachers got to add questions that were specific to a particular class – whatever they felt would be most useful to them. The results were private to the teacher but in a format that could be shared electronically if the teacher chose to do so. She felt that the privacy was very important to the use of this. Scuderi plans to take the Campesi questions and those used by Academic Choice and blend them and present a general model to the Berkeley Federation of Teachers for their input. One question is who will ultimately decide what the questions should be. Scuderi will report back to the SSC on this.

### **SSC Member Topics relating to WASC Categories and SPSA Goals (Discussion)**

Rao spoke on the subject of stereotype threat and several experiments that have demonstrated interventions that reduced its impact. His talk was accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation. In the experiment at the college level, the experimenters created matched groups using SAT scores and then looked at the effects of the intervention on African American [AA] students and on European American [EA] students relative to control groups. Stereotype threat occurs when a member of a group knows the negative stereotype about his/her group, and believes that others know and believe it. When engaged in a challenging task that relates to the stereotype, the member is less likely to succeed because of self-doubts connected to the stereotype. The interventions that worked to reduce the impact of these stereotypes had to do with creating a greater sense of agency (in middle school) and reducing the perceived connection of the task to the stereotype (at the college level). Middle schoolers were assigned to choose a value from a list. The intervention group was asked to write about a value that is of importance to them. The control group was asked to choose a value that is not important to them but is important to someone else and then write about why it might be important to that person.

Over the course of the school year, the AA students who'd written about a value they cared about did significantly better, gradewise, than the AA students in the control group. In fact, it closed the achievement gap in grades between AA and EA students by half. The grades of the EA students were not affected by which group they were in.

Rao noted that when AA students arrive at Berkeley High, their CST scores drop dramatically (comparing 8th grade to 9th grade results). There is no such drop for EA students coming to Berkeley High. There is also no such drop for AA students at a number of high schools he's looked at, including the Oakland schools and those of Culver City (which he chose because Scuderi and others from BHS had visited it). He believes that there's something destructive in the approach taken at BHS that is producing these drops.

Busacca-Ryan wondered if it could be caused by so many AA students attending very segregated small schools. Rao noted that AC's ethnic diversity reflects the school's and yet its AA students demonstrate the same drop.

Griffin wondered if the problem is partly that there are not as many AA teachers at BHS as he remembers from earlier.

Ehnle and Hunt noted that their students (in AHA and IHS) had both had assignments that sounded similar in which they wrote about values. Hunt noted that IHS has an entire course on values.

Scuderi has spoken with Frank Worrell about this particular set of studies and this intervention. He's thinking about using it for a pull-out group of the students with the greatest number of risk factors, in a context in which they would have an advisor/mentor working with them. He would also have them hear about the brain's plasticity and how it's a muscle that grows with us, among other interventions. Roos-Collins asked if the school could use this intervention more broadly than for that high risk group alone. Seems worth trying on some portion of the school. Discussion ensued about whether or not to include control groups and if so, how to structure the experiment. No conclusion was reached.

Van der Vegt is concerned that AA students may underperform in many classrooms at BHS because they respond best to clear expectations about behavior and very clear feedback. Her students know when they've hit her limits and they behave. She worries that a student of color is more likely to run into trouble because of not being ready for a teacher who is not focused on setting clear behavioral expectations. Roos-Collins asked about professional development about classroom behavior management. Scuderi did not think there's been much of it, if any. Griffin noted that many students improve their behavior quickly IF the teacher and/or OCI counselor call the parents, but not enough teachers actually do it. Barber thinks teachers need to know more about cultural differences among their students so they can teach them more effectively. He believes the highly personal relationships students have with their teachers in CAS reduces discipline/behavioral issues. Ehnle supported the importance of relationships with teachers to the successful learning of AA students. Scuderi noted the need to balance a teacher's emphasis on friendship with ensuring adequate content delivery and how he's observed students getting inadequate content sometimes in classrooms heavily focused on relationships. He noted that

when he was a beginning teacher, some of his students reported that he was a great guy but not teaching them enough.

There was a brief discussion, initiated by Hunt, of the problem of teacher/student match. There is currently no real safety valve for students who don't respond well to a particular teacher – specifically, the process requires that the student file a formal complaint about the teacher's behavior with the district, and even then, the student is not removed from the class. Because of the stringency of the process students are left in classes that don't work for them, and lost educational opportunity. Scuderi commented that without a strict, formal process that complies with the union agreement, class sizes will become very unbalanced. The discussion was continued to the next meeting.

**Data/Implementation Questions from the SSC (Discussion/Decision)**

Deferred due to time constraints.

**Discuss topics for next meeting, on April 15**

Not discussed due to time constraints.

**The meeting ended about 6:20.**