

Hawthorne High School

Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2011

*In attendance for CVSTA: Tali Sherman and Tania Cabeza; for Administration: Mark Newell
Meeting began at 3:05pm*

Hawthorne High School's Faculty Advisory Committee met at (time) and made its third attempt to resolve these faculty concerns:

I. Overuse of the PA system

Teachers feel that although Mr. Martinez has cut down to using the PA to about twice a day, the yelling is still ineffective and disruptive. Teachers routinely see kids walking late into class after he has ended his threats. Wouldn't it be more effective (and less disruptive to teachers and classrooms) to get out of the office and encourage kids to move to class? Teachers agree that an administrative presence among kids will increase the peace more than saying it from an office. Also, numerous times in the last few weeks he has made inaccurate announcements (i.e. announcing the bell would ring, after it had). Further, some comments seem unnecessary and should not be made as teachers need every moment to communicate with students as class is beginning.

In addition, instruction continues to be interrupted by PA announcements made outside of the designated time period following nutrition. Per the discussion on this topic at the previous FAC meeting, Newell agreed that announcements would no longer be made during 6th period or during the school day to dismiss student athletes. FAC inquired as to why this is continuing?

Lastly, in a correspondence with the district admin, Mr. Newell stated that "Mr. Martinez' passing period announcements have resulted in a decrease in student tardiness and approval from the majority of the staff." FAC requested documentation of each of these claims at the next FAC meeting.

Response: Dr. Newell has discussed these concerns with administrators, students, and faculty advisor monitoring the PA. He says he is committed to continue reminding each party to appropriate use of the PA.

II. Custodians:

Teachers have not seen an improvement in the cleanliness of their rooms despite claims by Dr. Newell that Mr. Knapp is checking classrooms once a week.

Response: Dr. Newell would like more specific information regarding classrooms or buildings that are having this issue for this to be monitored more closely.

III. Keys:

Faculty members still have no keys to faculty workroom where Scantron is, despite being told by Mr. Knapp we would have them in September and despite being told by Dr. Newell that he has communicated this to Mr. Knapp.

Response: Dr. Newell believes this issue is in the middle of being resolved and keys will be provided within the next month.

IV. Faculty Lounge and Bathrooms:

Several teachers have reported the use of the faculty lounge and bathrooms by students when the door is left unlocked. FAC is concerned that this is an invitation for students to trespass in a faculty-only area. Allowing student access to these areas gives them opportunity to vandalize not only the bathrooms, but also machines in the teacher work area. Teachers need keys ASAP.

Response: Dr. Newell will emphasize to teachers that once keys are provided for the upstairs lounge that they should not provide students with access to the lounge or upstairs bathrooms.

V. Tardy Policy:

FAC reported that teachers have not seen a decrease in tardies or increase in students attending assigned detentions.

Response: Dr. Newell will communicate with administration to send out an email to teachers inviting them to share their input in order to revise this and other policies. Dr. Newell will present tardy policy to FAC and explain punishment and timelines as he said he'd do at the last FAC meeting one month ago.

VI. Saturday School:

FAC pointed out that teachers have yet to receive logistical information regarding Saturday School despite Dr. Newell committing to do so two months ago. Teachers still have no idea when it occurs, what academic content is being taught to deem it “effective” by administrators, consequences for not attending, etc.

Response: Dr. Newell assures FAC, for the third time, he will provide teachers with the curriculum used for student instruction during Saturday School and will verify with administration that citations are being issued to those students not attending.

FAC raised the following new items to administration:

VII. Cell Phone Policy:

Teachers are getting mixed messages about the published cell phone policy. Those teachers that confiscate phones from students soon discover that the cell phone was immediately returned either by an administrator or secretary. Those students that refuse to turn over a cell phone to the teacher are not dealt with in a serious disciplinary manner.

FAC requests a copy of the official confiscation policy and an explanation for the concerns of the faculty.

In addition, why is a secretary and not an administrator responsible for collecting, logging and returning the phone? Repeat offenders have often been given phones back the same day. Shouldn't this be handled by a dean or the administrator responsible for discipline? Wouldn't students take the issue more seriously if they had to approach an administrator?

Response: Dr. Newell will ensure that at the very least a parent will call and speak to an administrator in order to release the phone to the student. He will also review the cell phone policy and emphasize this with administration.

VIII. Security:

Faculty has concerns with security's apparent favoritism towards some students (ie. sweeping some kids while chatting with others during tardy sweeps). How can teachers expect a fair discipline policy if those hired to help enforce it pick and choose when and with whom to do so?

Response: Dr. Newell will discuss this with Mr. Eatmon and emphasize that security needs to be more visible.

IX. Classroom furniture:

Classroom furniture for teachers and students should be in safe condition when issued. Student and teacher safety should be a top priority. Issuing broken or damaged furniture simply because it is all that is available communicates a blatant disregard for what happens in the classroom. FAC wonders if the furniture issued to administrators is also in disrepair.

Response: Dr. Newell will address this with administration.