

Hawthorne High School

10/20/2009 Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting notes taken by D. Barnes. Minutes written by Daniel Barnes
CVSTA Representatives Present: D. Barnes, K. Stack
Administrators Present: M. Martinez, M. Newell, K. Nicolis (Hirata at district office)

1. CUSTODIAN COMPLAINTS: Last year, the most common issue on FAC agendas was teachers complaining about custodians not doing their job or doing their jobs incorrectly/inappropriately. True to form, during this FAC cycle, a teacher complained about rooms not getting swept on the west side of campus. Another complained about an east side custodian who disrupts class with his noisy cart & stink eye, and who, of course, also under-cleans rooms. Dr. Newell said that our school board is guaranteed, at its next meeting, to vote in favor of the creation of a new management position on the HHS campus. The person hired for this job will keep regular tabs on custodian performance, in part by fielding feedback from teachers, in part by showing up in person, with a clipboard, to inspect performance firsthand. Dr. Newell said that this new "plant manager/supervisor", once hired, will e-mail all faculty various information, such as an official custodial performance expectation list, and a "run map" showing which buildings are covered by which custodians (so complaining teachers can identify their locations as vaguely as possible to avoid custodians determining complainers' identities and exacting revenge upon them).

2. THE RULES: Teachers complained that Mr. Martinez and Dr. Newell had been returning cell phones to parents prematurely in violation of our official confiscation penalty policies. Dr. Newell pointed out that the system for determining confiscation duration has changed since last year. It is now, indeed, official policy that the first confiscation offense for a given student results in same-day return of the device to the parent. Further offenses by that student will increase the duration of contraband retention, and will trigger additional penalties such as detention and suspension. Newell and Martinez both affirmed that in all recent instances where parents have picked up contraband on the same day as its confiscation, it was the student's first offense. Teachers also complained that we still don't have an official discipline policy, even though we're eight weeks into the school year. Mr. Martinez was, on the very day after the FAC meeting, scheduled to meet with the new deans to hammer out the specifics of our official discipline policies & procedures. Admin cited numerous stumbling blocks that have delayed this event, such as our awkward transition from SASI to PowerSchool and personnel changes (deans, AP's, guidance room supervisor). Mr. Martinez admitted that we have not been following everything that is printed in the Cougar Handbook. K. Stack suggested that mandatory tutoring be spliced onto penalties for misuse of cell phones & texting devices, since the kinds of kids who abuse communications devices are the very kids who need tutoring the most.

3. EXTRA DUTY ASSIGNMENT EQUITY: More than one teacher complained that a certain classroom teacher has been given an inordinate number of duties beyond classroom instruction, and that these extra duty assignments should have been flown to all staff so that all staff could apply. M. Newell said that this teacher is not

getting paid any extra for these duties, but, if those duties had involved extra pay, admin would have been required by law to float/fly/flip(?) the positions so that all teachers could apply. [error 8734zq: jargon/lingo malfunction] Teachers also complained that this specific individual was being given too much administrator-like authority beyond the scope of his job and credential. Admin replied that whenever this individual has voiced concern or offered opinions that were eventually manifested in the form of binding dicta, it was actually due to admin concurrence and admin fiat, not solely due to the opinion of the individual in question. K. Nicolis did clarify that while this person appears as "AP coordinator" or something in print, he has no authority over AP teachers, but merely over ordering AP tests and coordinating the logistics of AP test administration. (This teacher has informed the FAC chair that if anyone has any questions about his role or responsibilities, they should feel free to see him in person.) Teachers also complained about a former HHS teacher who has been hired on as a sub to do extra duties. Admin claimed that he does those duties for sub pay during normal school hours, when other teachers are busy teaching. Therefore, flying these assignments before the faculty at large wasn't necessary. It was counterclaimed to the FAC chair, after the FAC meeting had already ended, that this individual had indeed been hired to work after-hours parent meetings. FAC chair would like admin to comment on this.

4. P.A. P-U: Several teachers complained about excessive PA announcements interrupting classroom instructions. In response to teacher complaints/suggestions and other considerations, Dr. Newell would like to alter the bell schedule slightly to shift daily student-read announcements to the beginning of the class right after nutrition. The first class of the day would be twelve minutes shorter. Six minutes would be transplanted to the 2nd class of the day (for regular announcements) and six minutes to sixth period (to lessen the impact of end-of-day announcements). Dr. Newell understands that teachers have been overwhelmed by PA announcements and acknowledges the need for restraint. He will keep his end-of-day announcements to the last three minutes of sixth period, in acknowledgement of their disruptive effect upon instruction, including the difficulty to get kids back on task once they've been knocked into the black hole of ADHD by PA interruptions. The teacher who suggested that the main daily announcements occur at the end of the period rather than the beginning, since many kids seemed to him to be arriving extra late to class because they don't care about the announcements, may not be happy about the placement of the main announcements at the beginning of the 2nd class of the day rather than at the end.

5. BUGS: They're back. Complaints about crickets, spiders, and other vermin have arisen from teachers in the 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 19, and other buildings. Admin has been aware of this problem, but one stumbling block has been confusion between custodial and maintenance staff over

just which of them is supposed to carry out the task of fumigation. It has to be done correctly and by the right personnel because fumigation involves using toxic substances in areas frequented by students. Admin also cited personnel shortages. For instance, one maintenance worker was given an entire month off during the summer, which slowed down things immensely.

6. ATTENDANCE FEVER! More than one teacher complained about the recently publicized requirement that teachers enter attendance into PowerTeacher during the first 15 minutes of class, claiming that it interrupted the proper flow of lesson plans. Admin did not disagree with teachers' desire to prioritize instruction above bureaucracy. Admin indicated that this rule was handed down from the district, not from site leadership. Dr. Newell called the D.O. on the phone during the FAC meeting, and the person on the other end kept repeating the catch phrase "real-time attendance data" or something. They really want to know IMMEDIATELY who's shown up and who's absent from any given class, but no reason was given as to why this was so urgent that instruction was to yield the right-of-way.

7. INVISIBLE ADMIN: One teacher complained that the only administrator he/she ever sees around the place is Dr. Newell. Another said that he/she never saw E. Hirata leave her office. M. Newell elected not to dignify these complaints with a response. M. Martinez countered that if a teacher is in his/her classroom most of the day teaching, there's no way to know just how often E. Hirata leaves her office. K. Nicolis said that M. Martinez is out and about so much that he is rarely in his office, and many at the meeting concurred that he is very visible outside in the eating area during lunchtime. M. Martinez admitted that he hasn't perhaps made it around to every corner of the campus.

8. COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION: One parent told one teacher that the automated home-calling technology we use is working pretty well.

9. PARKING FOR PARENTS: That same parent complained that at Back to School Night, parking was so overbooked that even the post office lot was full. K. Stack concurred. M. Newell said that several policemen helped run BTSN (barbecuing?), and that their cruisers may have taken up a large number of the spots. Dr. Newell informed the committee that Bally's, as of last Friday, is no longer parking their customers' cars in our lot. As it turns out, we were getting paid nearly nothing for it (\$150/month). FAC chair could swear he saw one of the valets lurking around our gate last night though . . .

10. REGISTRATION SNAFU: The same parent also complained that the employees running registration this year didn't seem to know what they were doing, and that parents had to wait for hours in line to get registered. M. Martinez and M. Newell said that registration this year was a big mess, thanks to a lot of the same factors that have been screwing other things up. Lawndale was here during the summer. We lost half our counselors. We switched from SASI to PowerSchool. Admin said that registration

would be MUCH better next year, as most of these stumbling blocks were one-time events.

11. HHS PHONE LIST ERRORS: More than one teacher has been interrupted by wrong # calls during class stemming from somebody's failure to update the HHS phone directory. E. Hirata did not mess up the list (ID of perp withheld buy M. Newell), but she will fix it this Saturday (10/24).

12. SAT RR VANDALISM: For some reason, it's been a tradition here for teacher bathrooms to be opened up for student use during administration of the SAT. This has frequently facilitated vandalism of the teachers' rest rooms, and the most recent administration of the SAT was no exception. Brand new vandalism was discovered by one teacher in the men's room in the 18 building on the Monday morning following an SAT administration weekend. (Thankfully, it was in #2 pencil.) M. Newell said there was really no reason, in general, why student restrooms can't be opened on SAT weekends, but that on one of the most recent weekends, the west boy's room was physically out of order. That restroom is fixed now, so future administrations of the exams will be serviced by student restrooms, not faculty restrooms.

13. UNDERSTOCKED FACULTY RESTROOMS: The men's room in the 22 building is "constantly" out of towels. Mr. Newell will be referring this complaint to the new site manager once he/she is installed. This issue will roll over into next month's FAC agenda, to insure that it is dealt with by the new supervisor.

14. DUPLOS BROKEN - FOREVER: In spite of one teacher's impassioned pleas that the duplos upstairs in the cafeteria be fixed (citing their superior speed in particular), Mr. Newell forlornly shook his head and informed the committee that these machines are just too expensive to fix and are awaiting disposal. No date was given for when they'll be removed and trashed, but their death certificate has been signed. Many in the committee corroborated the claim that Tupou Leo does a great job in the copy room next to the nurse's office and that staff should make as much use of her as possible. Despite this rosy round of head-nodding, it is a dark day for wet ink.

15. FACULTY MEETINGS COME HOME!: One teacher bemoaned the lack of faculty meetings, complaining that the administrators are not able to adequately communicate without them. Because it has been newly bargained into our contract that faculty meetings must now occur during the school day, we just can't have them like we used to. However, Dr. Newell did offer to make faculty meeting-style announcements in person during collab time. He was generally nervous about this issue because of his pledge to not violate teacher's right to actually collaborate during collaboration time.

16. (FW:) E-MAIL SUBJECT HEADINGS: A brief look at the list of e-mails Dr. Newell has sent in recent days will show that he has adopted the habit of using subject heading in his emails. Obama said he would bring change, didn't he?

If you have any complaints, suggestions, or praise that you would like added to the next FAC meeting's agenda, please email misterbarneshhs@socal.rr.com, or, if you want to remain anonymous, leave a note in Dan Barnes' box. Also, please let Mr. Barnes know your observations of how well the promises made in these minutes are being enacted.