

# Hawthorne High School

## Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

### Tuesday, December 7, 2010

*Recorded by: Tania Cabeza*

*Attendees: For CVSTA: Tania Cabeza and Tali Sherman*

*For Hawthorne Administration: Mark Newell*

**The PA:** Several teachers expressed concerns over the use of the PA and yelling over the PA by Martinez. It is difficult for teachers to hold conversations with the yelling over the PA. Passing periods are used by teachers to communicate with absentee students, clarify information, to call parents, etc. CVSTA asserts that if administration says that they value teacher instruction, then their actions should be aligned with their statements. We urge the administration to please respect that. The Union reps asked if a short reminder could be made at the beginning of the passing period and the yelling stop for the entire time. Students do not take the yelling seriously. This goes for the music, as well. The music is impossible to talk over and is unnecessary. The faculty believes a more effective use of Martinez's time would be to be out on campus, rather than in his DJ booth. Using a bullhorn is one suggestion to improve this situation.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell committed to starting to address this issue by asking Mr. Martinez to making a quick announcement at the beginning of the passing period (no constant talking/yelling throughout) and ensuring that the music is off when the bell rings to commence the period. We should see improvement by the next FAC., and continue to address further steps to lessen the disruptive misuse of the PA system then.

**Administration's communication:** The way admin has conducted staff development, department meetings (disorganized, shallow presentations...) and the way in which they often communicate procedures through email is very frustrating and confusing. Pattern: They send a memo telling you one thing and then send another contradicting or presenting different info and then send another trying to explain...This frustrates teachers and undermines the credibility of admin. In other words, they need to spend more time preparing and communicating with each other before sending anything to the staff. It's haphazard. In addition, it is clear that admin has not fully prepared staff development days as is evidence by the surprise they showed at the film content and length at the last meeting.

***Response:*** To help improve communication, Dr. Newell assured FAC that if a department would like to have an administrator present during their collaboration meeting then that request would be honored.

**CAHSEE Testing:** Several students have reported to teachers that the CAHSEE testing that has occurred so far this year has not been organized. Students report that seating does not follow testing requirements (spacing). This is not the first time this has happened. In light of concerns about improving test scores, at the least the admin should take procedure as seriously as they want teachers to take preparing students.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell informed FAC that after Winter Break the plan is to invite 10<sup>TH</sup> grade English and Math teachers to meet and work with Revolution Prep to come up with a plan for CAHSEE test prep implementation.

He also assured CVSTA that teacher's will be invited to attend planning meetings starting in January, with administration for actual CAHSEE logistical implementation and would be compensated for their work. These meetings will focus on preparing testing day schedules,

addressing mixed grade level classes, where students will be tested, proctors will be prepped for test and spillover period, etc.

**CAHSEE Diagnostic:** Several teachers are concerned at the lack of planning and organization that was evident during the CAHSEE diagnostic. This can be seen as a strong indicator of what is to come for the actual CAHSEE. A testing team of teachers should be included in the planning process instead of top down decisions that do not include teacher input regarding test administration logistics to avoid the chaos from last year.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell hopes that by collaborating with teachers in the planning and implementation of CAHSEE testing, will be more organized in the future.

**Collaboration:** CVSTA reps asserted that collaboration meetings need to be respected as "Teacher time" as we voted on it. Admin needs to make sure they do not take it upon themselves to dictate how we use the time. If they feel that certain departments are not using the time effectively, then they should work with those individual departments. Each department has its own priorities and just like we need to adapt to our students' needs, the admin needs to respect the different needs of each department.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell is willing to allow each department plan their collaboration according to department and teacher needs. He was hoping that by giving departments a "focus" for each collaboration that this would help support teachers in improving instruction. Therefore, for the remainder of collaboration days, each **department chair** will gather input from teachers in that department in order to create an agenda for collaboration. This agenda is to be sent to the administrator overseeing the department, **one week prior** to the scheduled department collaboration. Department chairs will also be responsible for taking notes during the meeting, and emailing copies to their administrator and all department members. For the English department, this process will be facilitated by Dr. Nicolis, who will gather English department teacher input, create an agenda for department collaboration, facilitate the collaboration day meetings and distribute minutes until a department chair is in place.

**Saturday School:** Several teachers are concerned over student comments about Saturday School such as, "It is fun." and that they are whiling away the time with gift cards from raffles. Saturday School should NOT be fun and students should not be awarded for their bad behavior.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell ensured FAC that these concerns are simply not true. Saturday school is a three period day for students attending. Dr. Newell committed to getting all the logistics regarding Saturday School including schedule, content, and consequences for not attending to teachers ASAP.

**Classroom Use:** Classrooms are being used by student groups, coaches (one teacher reported diagrams on their board), and SAT without notification. Without notification, teachers cannot hold those groups accountable for missing items or damage. We are also wondering who is being issued keys to classrooms.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell is not aware of any student teams or groups using teacher classrooms outside of the school day. He also stated that when Mr. Anderson schedules SAT testing he is consistent with communicating to those teachers when he uses their rooms. Any specific concerns regarding classroom use should be communicated directly to Dr. Newell so he can investigate said unauthorized use and for documentation purposes.

**Security:** Security needs to patrol the 7, 8 and 9 buildings, esp. after lunch in the third block. Groups of students WITHOUT passes are roaming around these buildings, yelling, using profanity and making out in the hallways. Teachers never see any of them with passes and do not see security patrolling during this time period. The making out is also out of control around the 17 bungalows, between the 20 and 21 building during lunch. This concern has already been raised with administration, but nothing has changed.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell will notify security and discuss these areas of concern.

**Tardy Sweeps:** A member suggested that the tardy sweep system will work more efficiently if teachers don't have to wonder whether or not someone's going to be in 16-3 when they send tardy kids to that room. The teacher is no longer sending kids there because she can't remember which periods -sweeps happen versus which ones don't have t-sweeps. She's sent kids to 16-3 too many times only to have them return saying that they knocked but no one is there.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell will follow up with this since several teachers have approached him regarding this concern and will provide more information at the next FAC meeting. He will provide the staff with details on when sweeps occur, why 16-3 is not being staffed and consequences for students who do not attend detention within the required time.

**Tardy Policy:** CVSTA reported that students are given weeks, if not months, to serve an assigned tardy detention. We questioned, "How is this an effective form of punishment?"

***Response:*** Dr. Newell will ask the deans to communicate the tardy policy again to teachers and will get clarification on the process. He admits the long wait period between being assigned detention and actually serving detention makes the system ineffective. He will discuss with deans about the lag between students getting detention and serving it.

**Faculty Cafeteria:** The door is often left locked and teachers still have not been provided with updated keys despite Knapp's promise back in September that they would. This is a place teachers use for the restroom and to eat/meet with colleagues during their prep periods and lunch breaks. What is the point of having it if it cannot be accessed? Moreover, why are student groups holding events in there during teachers' prep periods and duty free lunch periods? The students have access to the cafeteria, gyms, and auditorium in which to host events.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell will ask Mr. Knapp for keys to distribute to teachers.

**Parent Center:** On the reaching out note, what is the status of the Parent Center? How are we connecting to families and the community to help us in the classroom? To underscore the point, I shared an example of a conversation I had with a student. The student asked me why I called her mom. I explained that I was concerned with her work in class (she's failing) and her attitude towards math (she doesn't believe she will ever need it). She said her mom didn't care. She showed her mom her homework. Her mom couldn't understand it, said "whatever," and that was that. Our teachers experience a great deal of difficulty teaching students with this lack of support outside of the classroom. According to the School Action Plan, there are funds for a part time parent center coordinator, but yet no one has been hired. This will also be something needed for WASC.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell understands this area of concern. He communicated that the school action plan may have to be revised to eliminate this, but before that is done he needs more time to address this concern and will follow up at the next FAC meeting.

**Custodians:** Teachers continue to be frustrated by inconsistent janitorial support in the 4 and 9 buildings. CVSTA maintains that their work should be spot-checked. Trash remains on floor after "sweeping". Will rooms ever be cleaned as Mr. Knapp and Mr. Hacker indicated at beginning of year with desks removed and floors mopped? Floors in the 19 building have also not been mopped since the summer.

***Response:*** Dr. Newell will discuss this with Mr. Knapp and will communicate the need for more supervision of work - perhaps once a week building check?

**Open House:** CVSTA reps asked if it is possible to consider canceling the Open House in February since most departments (and now Academies) have their own "Family Night"? If not, we MUST promote and reach out to families much more about it. We would love to see posters and flyers for Open House like those for CSTs.

***Response:*** Open House is a union-bargained event, but academies are encouraged to modify Open House. For example, instead of individual teacher classroom being open for Open House, an academy can host their parent nights the same evening.

The following Items moved to next FAC meeting scheduled for January 11, 2011 – 3:33pm  
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**West Side Drive Way to Parking Lot:** We fear this will just get Mark Knapp to shut the west parking lot for good (he's mentioned that he was thinking about it), but the driveway lip over by the Bally's gate needs to be widened, mostly southward, so that people traveling westbound on El Segundo who turn into the driveway don't have to jump up over the concrete curb when someone else is coming out of the driveway at the same time that they want to go in. And PLEASE don't stop letting teachers park in the west lot. That would be absurdly inconvenient for everyone who teaches over on the west side of campus.

Teachers need to be able to safely enter the driveway without the threat of scraping them/knocking off their rear view mirrors as they enter.

**Custodian on East Side of Campus:** Is there a way we could NOT have custodians wheeling carts back and forth during the last two periods of the day? One custodian wheels his cart by at least 4-5 times during the last two periods of the day. Is there a start time for custodians? Can they clean without rolling carts back and forth DURING class? Can they limit the amount of times they cross teachers' doorways?

**Electronic Sign:** Why is the electronic sign still down and what are the plans to fix it. We really need it to promote ourselves to the community!