

Minutes
Provo High School Community Council
2009/2010

Instructions: Please review the minutes for each meeting, make any changes you feel are required to make them accurate. Indicate any changes you make by italicizing them and putting your name in parentheses afterward. Finally, put an "x" by your name at the end of the minutes to show you approve them.

Notes from Community Council Meeting 13 Jan 2009

Four department chairs were in attendance. They were welcomed and asked to report. The Committee wished to hear from departments to know what “pressing academic needs” the school has to define the Council’s common vision of what we can do to help. Members referred to the print-out of the googles.doc response from several department chairs.

English (LuAnn March) went first.

1. English department’s largest concern was the “regular good kid” with high class sizes. Even the Fresh Success classes, designed to help the struggling 9th grader, were especially high in English. One parent told of the problem with her student in an honors English class who was thinking of moving out, but felt the problems she was encountering in the honors class were bearable compared to moving into a huge regular class. Mrs. March has classes of 41 and 42. Other English teachers have classes of 40.

Class sizes were discussed extensively. Sam Ray reviewed the funding formula, in which the state says 26 students per teacher per class x 8 classes = 208 per teacher, but spread out over 6 classes, the average class will be at least 34.67 students! When some of the classes are smaller (IB, AP, or Gateway), other classes can easily get over this number. Several things have created the problem of class size – less seminary students to reduce the load with release time (only 50% students are currently taking seminary, down from what used to be about 90%), the budget cuts from the state, in which even with a “hold harmless” the number of teachers, will mandate another 8.8% cut next year, and the changing demographics. Sam also explained that the Trustlands budget is only about 1% of the teacher salary budget, so we cannot do anything to directly impact the class size. Even if the Community Council decided to use all their \$78,000 for buying up teacher preps, they could only buy up about 8, and then have no money to fund other important programs or requests.

Questions were asked from the council about accreditation issues with so many large classes. We were informed at the beginning of the year 20 teachers had more than 210 students, but now there is only one. Another committee member asked if administration cuts, particularly on the state level could alleviate the crunch, but Utah is currently 60% below the national average of the number of administration in the state, so this would

probably not make a difference. Another question was asked about what kind of cuts, and Sam addressed the issue by saying reduction of electives means cutting programs, some of which are unique to Provo High, and we are currently trying to build up programs. We currently have only about 100 students from outlying areas choosing to come to PHS for these programs, but we could use 200 to 300, particularly with our declining enrollment. The counselor, Lori Rich, also explained that programs and students need to reach a “critical mass” and we are working hard (*I thought she was saying that the teachers should be working hard...--Marsha Judkins*) to ensure these programs are not cut. An example was ROTC – we currently offer a good program, but if it were cut, we would have to start all over building it up. Once gone, programs cannot be easily added back on good years. Boundary issues also came up with the talk of numbers. Sam explained that when we lost a feeder school to Timpview a few years ago, it balanced the k-6 populations, but not the older students, since there are not as many large homes on the west side of the city.

2. Science also discussed class size as the most pressing academic issue – but more than that, large class sizes are a safety issue. Mr. Mayntz, the Science Dept. chair explained that national organizations recommend 24-28 students per class, especially in labs. He also expressed a need for consumable supplies that need to be replenished every year. We also talked briefly about having parent volunteers to help. Although Marcus welcomes any parent to come, the numbers of students are not solved by a couple of volunteers. One person on the committee remarked that the TOPS volunteers (BYU students who come for an hour each week to an assigned teacher), but many are hesitant to work in physics, and volunteers are not always the best answer.
3. World Languages reported next. Dr. Lilian Fodermaier as the department chair voiced her concern about the “pie getting sliced thinner and thinner with more options and levels of languages, so that students are often grouped all together in one class. For example, she stated that you may have a beginning class, but the other levels, including IB are grouped together in one class. Chinese has a first year class, but levels 2-5 and the AP Chinese students are then in one class to accommodate class size and scheduling demands. It becomes very difficult to teach when there are five levels all in the same class.
4. Social Studies headed by Mr. Murphy also reported. He prefaced his remarks by agreeing that class size is also a concern in his department. Mr. Murphy brought several books from the social studies reading room that the Council has previously funded and reported on the success of that. He stated that because literacy is a department goal, they try to fit the texts to the reading level of the student. The classroom set of texts need to be augmented with these books, with as many as 6 or 7 copies of each title, as well as more classroom texts, particularly when a few students need to check them out. He also stated that he would like to have funding for videos, since each teacher uses videos and they must often use their own money to purchase these.

The rest of the departments wrote their needs on the google.docs site, with English, Special Ed., Business, Science, Counseling, Math, Family and Consumer Science, Visual Arts, P.E., and Performing Arts all writing paragraphs about their most pressing academic needs and their successes with currently enacted programs, interventions, and enrichments.

A statement was made that when we evaluate this year's requests, we need to review this discussion of most pressing academic needs and tie them in as reading, writing, and math.

Sam Ray then reported that when making out the Trustlands report, he cites the previous goal of reading, writing, and math as the most serious academic needs, but we have been funding things that may not directly match that goal. He reported that he has taken the heat for that.

Sam also reported that with the upcoming accreditation, we need parent input, particularly as we create our long term professional development plan. Todd Smith is in charge of the accreditation, and is currently devising the committees necessary for that.

We reviewed the last school newsletter and complimented *Cynthia Gaddis (Marsha Judkins)* for her column. Pictures in the newsletter showed different phases of improving the area between D-Wing and the main building. Basketball courts with a timer for lighting, an amphitheater with new metal chairs, and a new project of up-lighting and bricks for pavers around the trees are the three phases. We are currently asking for donations by buying bricks (\$40 or \$80) to finish the third phase. This area is important to improve, since it is the only area students can congregate without facing a busy street.

We decided that by next meeting we should be able to review requests. We will send out the same form that Lisa used last year, *Marsha Judkins has volunteered to update the form (Cynthia Gaddis)* and with a preliminary deadline (February 3rd) a week before the next meeting (February 10th), we should be able to discuss these. Sam will send this information to the faculty for these requests.

Other assignments were also made: Kelly Wing will write up the column of the Council's news for the February newsletter. Lori Rich will post the audio recording that Russ Ridgeway made in this meeting, and Sam will send out an email with everyone's email address.

The meeting was done by 4:30.

Please put an X after your name to indicate approval.

McPherron	x	Judkins	x	Ridgeway		Thomas	x
Shepherd		Roper	x	Ray	x	Gaddis	x
Theobald	x	Rich		Wing	x	Fodermaier	
Hill							

