

ACCESS Academy Site Council Agenda  
Location: ACCESS Academy, Rm 103  
April 27, 2015, 3:15 pm

Attending:     Srule Brachman, ACCESS Teacher  
                   Amy MacKinnon, ACCESS Teacher  
                   Michael Rocha, ACCESS Classified Staff (Paraeducator)  
                   Michael Diltz, ACCESS Teacher  
                   David Wood, ACCESS Administrator  
                   Kristen Sheeran, ACCESS Parent  
                   Kelly Cutler, ACCESS Parent  
                   Jonathan Dubay, ACCESS Parent

AGENDA and MINUTES

1.       2015-16 Staffing Update

Access is in process of hiring for .5 FTE music, full-time fifth grade teacher, and .6 middle school humanities/advanced math teacher.

Next year, Egan and Wiesner will team-teach 4th grade; Byrkit and the new hire will team teach 5th grade. Fourth and fifth will no longer be blended. The current plan is to have the team teachers “loop” with each class. So, next year’s fourth grade teachers move with that group the following year to fifth grade.

2.       2015-16 Admissions Update [D. Wood]

We received 268 applications for ACCESS. Committee meets the 30th through the 4th. Will report out on the applicant pool and admission offers - who they are, where they come from, etc. at the May meeting. Acceptances will be mailed out the second week of May.

Of the 268, we will accept about 90. So, we anticipate 170 on the waiting list. Beverly Cleary currently has 208 students at RCP. It was noted that the building technically is large enough to accommodate all of the qualified students who applied, except that we are sharing the building with Beverly Cleary.

3.       Communications Committee Update → Revisiting ACCESS Mission and Vision

Mr. Wood would like to update our vision and mission statements, to improve our outreach and to prepare for the District review of alternative and focus option programs.

Board created ACCESS with limited specifications: 99th percentile, grades 1-12, and 500 students. Changing anyone of these things would require Board approval. Mr. Wood thinks we have many degrees of freedom to define our mission within these parameters.

Staff and parents are talking in parallel tracks about mission and vision. Need to get everyone together in the same visioning exercise. Site Council should be the mechanism for reconciling these processes, since this is the one place where families and staff get together monthly. Mr. Wood has proposed three questions for parents and staff to answer to start this visioning exercise: 1) What are the 3 core values of our school? 2) What is our elevator pitch? and 3) What are 3 misperceptions of ACCESS and how do you counter them? Mr. Wood will lead the faculty and staff through this exercise at the next late start.

This will be a major focus of Site Council for next year. We need to get our community together behind the vision and then we can create different versions for targeted outreach to different communities.

#### 4. Grant HS

Kristyn Westphal is Vice-Principal at Grant High School and visited the Site Council meeting to answer specific questions about ACCESS at Grant.

Background: ACCESS students are granted admission to Grant. Founding documents for ACCESS call it a 1-12 program. The 9-12 is theoretically at Grant, but there has never been focused attention or resources to create that program or experience and insure that it fulfills the mission of ACCESS. We clarified, there is no real active ACCESS program at Grant. Our students get automatic entry. (Ms. Mackinnon remembers that there used to be a freshman writing class for ACCESS students once upon a time).

Parent representative to the Site Council, Jonathan Dubay, shared his son's experience at Grant. His son struggled to get into appropriate classes in English/Lit and in Science. In math, he was able to start at the appropriate (advanced level).

David Wood explained that there is a PPS process to qualify any class for high school credit. ACCESS currently follows that process for math, science, and world languages. (The process for science is new). Any student coming to Grant from ACCESS or any other school with high school credit is automatically placed in the appropriate next level class. ACCESS does not offer English/Lit for high school credit. Grant also does not "track" students. Students may begin to access dual-credit, AP, CTE, courses by junior year - sophomore year if there is space.

All students in PPS high schools must have 4 years of English credit. So, even if they do not come from a credit bearing program, they must take 4 years at the high school level. Kristyn offered that they rarely find a student who is advanced beyond grade level in writing - including ACCESS and tag kids. So, Grant finds it to be to the student's benefit to take the double high school block of English. Additional differentiation within the class is sometimes possible, but depends on the teacher.

The double English block is key to the freshman community experience. This is an important way to help them transition and integrate into the community. The concept of a freshman community is increasingly embraced across PPS high schools. A parent asked if ACCESS kids can be part of their own freshman community. VP responded that this could further isolate ACCESS students. They don't think it is beneficial to have a largely white, high performing group of students separated out in a community. We talked about freshman communities as being a place of social support; learning supports are also available for dual identified students.

We talked about sharing information about our incoming freshman with Grant teachers/counselors to smooth the transition. We also talked about the need for data to see how our students were doing at Grant compared to other schools. Since Grant is the ACCESS feeder, does their experience at Grant differ than experience of ACCESS students at other high schools?

David looked at some past data and found that GPAs were not significantly different for ACCESS students at Grant compared to other schools. What other data would we like to collect from Grant and other high schools that our students attend?