

Site Council Minutes, February 8, 2016

Present: D. Wood, A. Garcia, D. Clarke, T. Fadel, K. Cutler, J. Dubay (Chair)

Absent: K. Sheeran

Meeting began at 3:20pm.

It was agreed that Mr. Garcia will begin his term as Committee Chair beginning next meeting, March 14.

#### I. Regarding the Site Council High School Improvement Plan:

Mr. Wood updated the committee on his meetings with PPS high school program administrators Shay James (Director of High Schools) and Sasha Parens (PPS Operations Director). Mr. Wood met with them and presented the HS Improvement plan and will have a follow-up discussion later this week. He also met with PPS high school principals from Grant, Cleveland and Lincoln about ACCESS. Cleveland and Lincoln Principals have expressed an interest in hosting the ACCESS HS program, but also note that such a plan is currently not possible due to lack of space.

It was noted that parents are disappointed with Grant Principal Carol Campbell's stance regarding ACCESS students at Grant, that she is reluctant to grow accelerated cohort courses, although she indicates a willingness to discuss "documented" student needs on a case-by-case basis. It was noted that it should not be an option for a Principal to opt out of providing ACCESS students their acknowledged successful accommodations; there are legal requirements for supporting the education of TAG students. Mr. Garcia noted that at one time ACCESS had to fight for ACCESS HS credits obtained in middle school being honored.

It was suggested that the Site Council take up the topic of how to best document middle-school ACCESS student achievement on transcripts.

Mr. Wood will update these minutes to reflect what he learns from his follow-up meeting with Mr. Shay and Mr. Parens.

#### II. Regarding the Ed. Options Self-Evaluation

ACCESS is being asked to complete a self-evaluation that is also being required of Ed. Options schools. Mr. Wood asked for the Site Council's help in approaching several of the survey's questions [indicated below in *italics*].

*How and to what extent does ACCESS "create a sense of community in which racial, economic, and cultural isolation is reduced?"*

One obstacle to increasing diversity in the student population is a lingering perception that ACCESS is not welcoming to all communities/races/ethnicities. Part of the perception may come from a large wait list, which tends to discourage families who are not highly motivated.

*How and to what extent does ACCESS "meet academic, social and behavioral needs of [its] students"?*

Article by Margaret Delacy indicates test scores of students in ACCESS indicated more growth than TAG students out of ACCESS.

*How does our outreach engage students and families from historically underserved groups?*

Obstacles noted were 1) that PPS has not been promoting the ACCESS program until recently, and even some TAG teacher/facilitators for neighborhood school are not familiar with ACCESS, 2) there is evidence that not all 2nd graders are being tested for TAG as is now required, and 3) that although the ACCESS waitlist is currently not as diverse as PPS as a whole, there needs to be more space to accommodate a broader spectrum of race/ethnicity.

Positive data include 1) the high number of neighborhoods that ACCESS currently serves and 2) teacher-, staff- and parent-initiated contacts to underserved communities.

The Site Council agreed with Mr. Wood's idea to create a Google Form for members of the ACCESS community to respond to the above questions. The agreed approach was to break each question down into basic components using a graded response and a text box. Mr. Wood, Mr. Garcia and Mr. Dubay will cull this data to generate a thorough and realistic response that provides a forward direction for the school in the area of equity and diversity.

*Request for change in enrollment?*

The Site Council affirms the need to maintain grades 1 and 2, and acknowledges the structural equity challenge of doing so. The equity issue is that city-wide TAG testing is not done until the end of grade 2, leaving TAG testing for younger students to the discretion of parents. The Committee also affirms the desire for growth that allows for admitting at a minimum those on the waitlist and allowing for increased outreach to underserved communities.

Pre-DRBAC data shows that Focus Option schools do not negatively affect enrollment numbers in neighborhood schools, and may actually lessen overcrowding strain.

Why is Ed Options not being asked to complete the evaluation? Mr. Wood reported that ACCESS is no longer under the umbrella of the PPS Ed. Options, but rather Multiple Pathways to Graduation, and he answers to the Grant Cluster director.

It was suggested that Carol Campbell be brought into the process of completing the Ed. Options self-evaluation, since she is responsible for the 9-12 grades of ACCESS. Mr. Wood indicated that he would ask the HS administrators about that.

III. In the interest of time, the agenda item of beginning the lower- and middle-school improvement plan was tabled until next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.