

APP Advisory Committee Community Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2008

The community meeting of the APP Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at Garfield High School at Lincoln by APP AC Parent Representative for Garfield Val Morris-Lent. In attendance were Advisory Committee members Stacey Devenney and Kathy Tanaka. Also present were Advanced Learning Director Dr. Robert Vaughan and number of members of the APP community. Garfield High School Principal Ted Howard arrived during the meeting.

Val began by discussing the Advisory Committee's plans for a response to the Evaluation Report Accelerated Progress Program (the "Report"). She said that members of the Advisory Committee had been asked to respond to committee Chair Stephanie Bower with a list of the top 5-10 items from the Report that they support, the top 5-10 items that they disagree with and the items requiring follow-up. The comments will be crafted into a response to the District regarding the Report, and will highlight recommendations that dovetail with past requests made by the Advisory Committee. Inaccuracies contained in the Report will be included only if rising to a level requiring attention. Val asked the APP community to send their comments on the Report to Stephanie (stbower@comcast.net).

The floor was then opened up for the community to speak.

Superintendent's Response to Advisory Committee's Year End Report

APP parent, Charlie Mas raised points he has with Superintendent Dr. Maria Goodloe-Johnson's response dated November 30, 2007 to the Advisory Committee's 2006-07 Annual Report and Recommendations (the "Annual Report"). Dr. Vaughan asked that issues deemed critical in the Annual Report be directed to him, and he will address them with the Superintendent. Stacey suggested that the Superintendent's response be taken up at the next meeting, and an official response drafted.

The Report

Parent Mike Meyer asked Dr. Vaughan how the APP community can support the District's next steps following the review. Dr. Vaughan stated that the Report "compels us to address insufficiencies," and that money is needed to implement changes. Improvements are needed in curriculum, scope and sequence and teachers need time to work together. He stressed the need for professional development.

Dr. Vaughan noted that his office has already begun addressing some concerns, like the rigor of the middle school science program. The goal is to improve the science program at Washington so that students are prepared to take advanced courses at Garfield.

Dr. Vaughan acknowledged that the Report suffers from unscientific samples and inaccuracies, such as the comments about the music program. However, he feels the Report points to insufficiencies in the program that cannot be ignored. Some examples are that the lack of a well-specified curriculum and ways of assessing academic outcomes. He stressed the need for district-wide support of "talent development."

Val commented that the provision for professional development of teachers is lacking within the District, and that the District should make a (financial) commitment to training district-wide. She added that professional development funding should come from the District, not from the advanced learning grant.

Dr. Vaughan stated that he is excited about the District's new administration. In meetings with the Superintendent, he says it is clear that providing advanced curriculum across the District is high on her list of priorities, and that there is reason to be optimistic. He is mindful of the Report's recommendation not to replicate the program until foundational pieces are in place. Lastly, Dr. Vaughan added that in his opinion, it is not the time for the community to be adversarial, but time to move forward.

Assessing Academic Outcomes and the PSAT

Dr. Vaughan noted that Garfield is the only school in the District that administered the PSAT to 9th, 10th and 11th grade students this year. He will try to have Garfield administer the test more broadly in a month. This is important because the PSAT outcomes can be linked to Advanced Placement test outcomes, and can show that freshmen are ready to take AP classes.

He says that PSAT data is statistically useful, and hopes to use it to broaden the range of AP classes offered at Garfield, and to allow students to take AP classes earlier. He says the data can also serve as a “springboard” to align curriculum from sixth – 12th grade. Dr. Vaughan stated that this information will immediately help APP students, but admits intensive staff development will be needed to deliver the curriculum. Val mentioned that Garfield teachers have developed ways to mentor colleagues to teach courses and asked if the District could give them recognition.

Dr. Vaughan is also working to offer mentor programs to students. He is enthusiastic about the District’s new Director of High Schools, Michael Tolley stating that he brings a wealth of AP experience. He feels the District is poised to embark on great things.

Cross-Representational Committee

Kathy asked for an update on the status of the cross-representational committee recommended in the Report to define a vision and mission for Advanced Learning. Dr. Vaughan said that he is working on the formation of the committee, and offered two slots to members of the Advisory Committee. There was some discussion regarding the District’s penchant to request parent input, only to disregard feedback. Dr. Vaughan stated APP is only a part of the continuum of services, and that a committee is needed to address the creation and support of a range of programs to serve more students.

APP parent Molly Seaverns asked how parents can work with school administrators saddled with so many responsibilities unrelated to advanced learning achievement. After some discussion, Molly suggested that advanced learning be part of an administrator’s official mandate in schools with multiple concerns.

Garfield Report

Mr. Howard gave the report for Garfield.

Cross-enrollment/Occupational Education: He announced that Garfield students will receive Occupational Education credit for the following courses (if enrolled in 2007-08): AP Studio Art, Symphony Orchestra, Advanced Journalism, Annual and Jazz Ensemble. He thanked Garfield parents for their persistence in making this happen.

Enrollment: Garfield’s enrollment stands at 1,650 students, with 300 students in Running Start. Mr. Howard noted that enrollment is up in spite of the fact that Garfield is housed at an interim site.

AP Course Audit: Mr. Howard passed out a list of Garfield AP teachers whose courses had been authorized by the College Board. Dr. Vaughan stated that the AP certification process will allow teacher by teacher analysis, allowing them to know what’s working and what’s not. Mr. Howard added that the audit lets teachers know what’s missing from a course. He said that ten Garfield teachers are undergoing national board certification.

PSAT Testing: Mr. Howard stated that because every student took the PSAT this year, Garfield will be working on “vertical aligning or mapping.” Molly asked if this information will be communicated to Washington.

Summer Program: Garfield also hopes to host a summer school program next summer. Courses in language arts, science and math will be taught by University of Washington interns to strengthen the skills of students who would like to take AP classes.

Student Assignment Plan

In answer to questions regarding student assignment, Dr. Vaughan stated that he is a member of the student assignment plan committee, and that there are “no plans to send (APP) students to anywhere other than Lowell, Washington and Garfield.”

A question was directed to Mr. Howard regarding student assignment and the enrollment influx that may occur when Garfield returns to a remodeled building. Mr. Howard said he anticipates a sizeable waiting list, and that in discussions with School Board Director Mary Bass, has pledged that neighborhood students will “get into Garfield.”

He also noted that with the new weighted staffing formula that Garfield may receive an additional \$250,000. With that he plans to add a counselor, history, math and science teachers.

APP parent Chuck Sawyer asked if advanced learning opportunities were meant to create or identify (talented) students. Dr. Vaughan responded it is a way for the highest performing students to be served at their neighborhood schools. The hope is if the most capable are pushed, then they will develop into the most talented.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by Kathy Tanaka, Secretary