

**From:** [Camille Townsend](#)  
**To:** [Kevin Skelly](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Confidential - A Challenge  
**Date:** Thursday, April 26, 2012 11:34:21 AM

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Kevin,

The Gunn staff needs to be aware of what's happening at the school board level. PALY's TA system is excellent. I can attest to that. You don't get a lot of parents complaining about it .... You hear a ton of Gunn parents complaining about their students not getting college/high school direction early enough at Gunn ... the latest survey data continues to point out this problem. Why the constant hesitation to move toward TA? I understood Noreen's reluctance given her steeping in the more traditional counseling model. But now It feels like stubborn ness coming through and not much more. Yes, folks need time to move in a direction ... but the conversation is starting to feel more obstructionist then not. I personally have put forth the counseling issue for years now .... comes up at every dinner we have with the high school students at Gunn.

It's really time to feel some movement on this .... While patience may be a virtue and thoughtful planning, yes, that too, but this has gone far beyond that time frame ... even preceded you. I do support the TA system and it's not clear that the current PALY TA teachers have even come over to talk to Gunn teachers. If it has happened, great. If not, it really needs to start happening.

All said with arms around everyone here ...

: )

Camille

On Apr 26, 2012, at 12:11 AM, Kevin Skelly wrote:

> Hi Folks:

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> I wanted you to be aware of how the counseling discussion is playing at Gunn these days.

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> As you know, WCDBPA is portraying the counseling board agenda item discussion as a directive from the board that Gunn must adopt the Paly TA system. Ann Jensen, who met with Ken on this subject, is widely reporting to colleagues that Gunn has been ordered to adopt the TA system and that it would be "political suicide" not to do so.

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> As we look to June, I would urge the board to allow staff to be very thoughtful about guidance changes. Last night's calendar conversation reminded me how much angst there is among next year's senior parents about college support. While Gunn staff have not been engaged in WCDBPA issues, they are keenly aware of what happens at board meetings and what is happening in this regard. They also know that the TA model would mean resources taken out of the classroom in the form of larger classes or fewer electives. Many have read Kelun's report.

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> Liat will be sending you the minutes from our meeting on March 26 on counseling as well as Kelun's email after the meeting. I welcome your thoughts on next steps.

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> From: Kevin Skelly  
> Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2012 11:29 PM  
> To: Kevin Skelly; Katya Villalobos  
> Cc: Liat Baranoff  
> Subject: RE: IC Meeting

>

> Katya and Liat:

>

> Here's a very rough draft of our joint email. As I read it over, I think it might work better if it were just from me. I welcome your thoughts.

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> Dear Gunn Community:

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> As you may know, this year, as part of the district's strategic plan implementation, the district hired Kelun Zhang, a consultant, to "....." On March 26 the board received the summary report from Ms. Zhang and discussed the findings of the report at length. A copy of the report can be found at \_\_\_\_\_ and minutes from the meeting are available at \_\_\_\_\_.

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> Meetings and opportunities for input will be highlighted in PTA newsletter.

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> Thanks.

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> From: Katya Villalobos  
> Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2012 9:08 PM  
> To: Kevin Skelly; Michael Milliken; Charles Young  
> Subject: RE: IC Meeting

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> Kevin, Charles, and Michael,  
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> Thank you to all of you for being here today, it was literally and symbolically important. I did quick  
check in poll, they felt better.  
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> Sent from my iPad  
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> Principal  
> Gunn High School  
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**From:** [Barbara Klausner](#)  
**To:** [Kevin Skelly](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Confidential - A Challenge  
**Date:** Friday, April 27, 2012 12:50:24 AM

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Hi Kevin,

Just a quick note, because I just read your email for the first time earlier tonight. I watched the board discussion again and I think it would be accurate and very useful if you clarified that the board did not direct Gunn to adopt the Paly TA system. The strongest directive we issued was that the two schools talk with each other and that the Paly TA system be included (among many other topics) in the sharing between the two schools. If you have received feedback that the staff is feeling bullied into adopting the Paly system, then you should make it clear that that is not the case. I don't know how many times I, the most outspoken of the advocates, said that the Gunn staff should ultimately be responsible for deciding what works best as an effective guidance system. If staff is feeling bullied, they should not be pointing to the board as the source. Do you disagree? Let me know so I can learn from the experience.

I haven't had a chance to consider specific wording revisions to your draft letter to the Gunn community, but I wonder how it will be received because I think there are two distinct groups in your defined audience -- staff and parents -- whose needs you are trying to meet. It will make sense to staff, although they may find it not strong enough to reassure them. For parents, it may not make enough sense because I don't know how many have actually followed the board discussion closely enough to know that you are referring to the idea of considering aspects of the Paly model (TA in particular).

By the way, of course we do not want to adopt a system that is not embraced by staff. I have absolutely no desire to see us foist a TA system on an unwilling staff. I would, however, like to continue to impress upon staff some sense of urgency about the inadequacies of the current system and to leverage this rare possible window of opportunity to shake things up a little more dramatically than we normally do. Counseling has been an annual district goal for the last three years. This should not be drawn out.

On the other hand, I've had some interesting discussions and I think that it may be true that so many Gunn families have such low expectations of the guidance support offered at Gunn that they may actually place low stakes on improving a system that they have come to essentially ignore. Please, of course, do not under any circumstances share this portion of my email with Gunn staff. I'm not interested in offending anybody, especially hardworking, well-meaning staff. I do think this is a big blind spot for some of the staff at Gunn.

I'll take a closer look at your letter, but consider whether it needs to be one letter for both staff and parents.

Ah, a break from board meetings. Enjoy the respite, at least on that front.

Barbara

On 4/26/12 12:11 AM, "Kevin Skelly" <[kskelly@pausd.org](mailto:kskelly@pausd.org)> wrote:

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> Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2012 11:29 PM  
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> To: Kevin Skelly; Michael Milliken; Charles Young  
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**From:** [Barb Mitchell](#)  
**To:** [Kevin Skelly](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Confidential - A Challenge  
**Date:** Thursday, April 26, 2012 12:37:16 AM

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Thank you, Kevin.

Barb

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**From:** [barbara.klausner](#)  
**To:** [Kevin Skelly](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Gunn Guidance Services  
**Date:** Sunday, May 06, 2012 1:15:22 PM

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Kevin,

Have you forwarded a copy of this communication to the entire board? If not, you should. Also, could you let the board know who the members are of the workgroup that has been formed?

I'm curious to know the basis for your statement that there is "concern among some community members that a specific guidance model will be forced upon the Gunn community." This certainly was not represented at the last board meeting, so it would be helpful to know who has been speaking out and what they have been saying.

I would have strongly preferred that this message only go out to staff, because it sounds like they need to hear that their perspective is being considered and that they will play a role in the decision. You and Katya must be hearing a dominant voice in the parent/student community that I am not.

Barbara

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** "Palo\_Alto\_Schools@pausd.org" <Palo\_Alto\_Schools@pausd.org>  
**To:** barbsih@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 5, 2012 11:31 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Gunn Guidance Services

Dear Gunn Community,

As part of this year's implementation of PAUSD's strategic plan, the district hired consultant Kelun Zhang to assess the guidance counseling models at both Palo Alto and Gunn High Schools and recommend potential enhancements to both programs. On March 27, the Board received the summary report from Ms. Zhang and discussed her findings at length.

A copy of the report can be found at:

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As a follow-up to the March presentation, the Board has asked Gunn's leadership group to attend a June board meeting with recommendations for further assessment and potential enhancements to Gunn's guidance services. In preparation, Gunn administrators, counselors and teachers have formed a workgroup and are meeting and discussing this topic. The group is developing a process for the next school year to review and enhance guidance services, which will include participation and input from our students, staff, and parents.

We will continue to provide students with strong support as they transition to high school, encounter social-emotional issues, navigate graduation requirements and tackle the college

application process. While local media coverage has led to a concern among some community members that a specific guidance model will be forced upon the Gunn community to the detriment of the level of expertise around college advising, as well as the funding available for course offerings and class size, please be assured that this is not the case. All future changes will be carefully considered, taking into account best practices in guidance curriculum and delivery that aligns with our students' needs and our school, culture and community.

Thank you for your support in this matter; more information will follow.

Katya Villalobos, Gunn Principal  
Kevin Skelly, PAUSD Superintendent

**From:** [Camille Townsend](#)  
**To:** [Kevin Skelly](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Gunn Guidance Services  
**Date:** Monday, May 07, 2012 2:34:08 PM

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Kevin,

They are being asked to look at the TA system. As far as I know, none of the PALY TA's have been asked to come to a Gunn meeting to discuss how it operates and what they think of it. Don't you think that this conversation is overdue?

Camille

On May 7, 2012, at 2:05 PM, Kevin Skelly wrote:

Hi Folks:

I wanted to make sure you saw this letter that Katya and I wrote, with input from staff members at Gunn, regarding the counseling conversation.

This letter is the final version of an email I sent you a week or two ago. There is a strong sense from Gunn staff that a particular model of guidance organization is being forced upon them and they asked Katya and I to send a message on this topic.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Palo Alto Unified School District  
(650) 329-3737

<image001.jpg>

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** "[Palo Alto Schools@pausd.org](mailto:Palo_Alto_Schools@pausd.org)" <[Palo\\_Alto\\_Schools@pausd.org](mailto:Palo_Alto_Schools@pausd.org)>  
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Kevin Skelly, PAUSD Superintendent

**From:** [Kevin Skelly](#)  
**To:** [board](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Gunn Guidance Services  
**Date:** Monday, May 07, 2012 2:05:18 PM

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