
From: "Kevin Skelly" <kskelly@pausd.org>
Date: Thursday, April 26, 2012 12:11 AM
To: "board" <board@pausd.org>
Subject: Confidential - A Challenge

Hi Folks:

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

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.

Gunn had a staff meeting Tuesday and this topic was the source of much discussion. I don't think there is much, if any support for being a TA or adopting the TA model at Gunn. That said, there is a professional, healthy discussion taking place about how to improve counseling services at Gunn and a committee has been formed that includes Todd Summers and Kristy Blackburn..

Today I attended the Gunn Instructional Council meeting, which is made up of their instructional supervisors and other site leaders. This issue has clearly upset many people on the campus, particularly because there is a sense that they are being bullied to adopt a particular model. Staff are considering petitions and the like on this topic, but they are unsure what the best path forward is. They are afraid to come to a board meeting and voice their opinions. There is real pain among the staff, a hit to morale, and a sense of defeat. It is not good.

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.

I continue to believe that, while there is a sense among many in the Gunn community that counseling could be better, there will not be support for wholesale changes if staff are not brought into the conversation in healthy ways and they support the changes. I still like many elements of the changes I shared in last Friday's weekly.

I have been asked to make various statements of support for Gunn, etc. Below is a very rough draft of an email I am planning to send to the Gunn staff and community. I am unsure whether

or not Katya should co-sign or not..

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.

KS

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.

Dear Gunn Community:

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 _____.

The board has asked the leadership of Gunn to return to a June board meeting with thoughts on ways to improve the guidance services at the schools. Over the past few weeks the Gunn administration, counselors, and teachers have been meeting and discussing this topic. In the upcoming weeks students and parents will be invited to respond to preliminary thoughts in this area.

A particular focus of attention will be to continue to provide students with strong support in the college application process, course selection, and social-emotional support. Some people have expressed concerns that specific methods of service will be forced upon the Gunn community to the detriment of course offerings, class sizes, and expertise around college advising. Please be assured that this is not the case and any changes will carefully consider how proposed improvements fit into the larger school environment.

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

Thanks.

KS

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

Kevin, Charles, and Michael,

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.

Sent from my iPad
Katya Villalobos
Principal
Gunn High School