

Thursday, October 23rd, was our first Curriculum Forum meeting. We had 25 people attend; half were parents and the other half were administrators, teachers and school board members. Many of the parents have been actively involved with Curriculum Council for the last two years and this year have experienced the site council meetings that have taken place throughout October. It is clear we have a core group of parents that are willing to give of their time, and support our efforts to provide venues for public engagement. It will be important as we move forward to find ways to expand the information to all parents and hopefully build on this group to a larger pool of parents.

Below is the agenda with a recap of each step of the meeting.

I. Introduction - Opening Statement

We began the meeting with introductions, and then I proceeded with a historical perspective leading to this year's shift in process. My main point focused on the District's desire to bring the conversations back to the sites and reestablish our relationships. We are a District that values relationships and partnerships with the parent community. The Curriculum Council seemed to move people away from the connections parents had with their sites and we want to build our new process beginning at the site level and then move to the K-12 conversations at the Forums.

It was also confirmed this is a transition year and we all need to be patient as we walk through these changes. We are open to reevaluate and discuss the things that worked well and the areas that need further attention. The District is committed to finding a process that supports all of us learning from each other and working in partnership.

II. Expectations and Goals

Talking about the norms for the meeting was well received. Everyone agreed that we all wanted to be respectful and follow the bulleted list below. When asked specifically what a respectful community of learners would look, sound and feel like, one participant talked about how difficult it is to have conversations when people do not agree. People do not know how to say the important things they want to say without feeling frustrated and possibly threatened. When that happens, the tone can reflect the frustration that comes from disagreement, which then leads to the misconception that one is not being heard. I reinforced that tone was a big problem last year and that all of us were responsible for our behavior and the behavior of the group. Our charge at each meeting is to reinforce the agreements as a group. Before we begin each meeting, we will restate our commitment to each other to work together and uphold the norms. I acknowledged the areas where my leadership failed last year and then invited everyone to work together to make this process successful.

- Respectful Learning Community
- Learn the K-12 Perspective
- Focus on Issues not Individuals
- Start with Questions, not Conclusions or Solutions
- Speak Thoughtfully and Listen Carefully
- We are all Responsible for the Process

III. Break into Groups for Discussion

A. Clarify Expectations and Goals

For the next half hour, the groups talked about last year's process, the site councils, and any other issues/concerns that came up for each group. It was a good debriefing session where each group, consisting of parents, administrators, teachers and board members, could have a more intimate conversation clarifying the norms and revisiting some of the concerns of last year.

For the next 40 minutes, the groups concentrated on the next prompt:

B. What would you like to learn at these meetings this year as we continue our discussions of the math curriculum? (Please prioritize & remember K-12 perspective).

III. Report Back to Group

The three groups came to consensus on three agenda items:

1. How are the new programs going that have been implemented recently: Science, Everyday Math, 8th grade Geometry?
2. Clarify the role of Curriculum Forum and public engagement for the adoption cycle (define the adoption process and the role of public input)
3. Reporting out what is happening at site councils

From the longer lists came:

- Dialogue versus presentations
- District philosophy
- Questions driving research
- Timely parental input before things goes to the Board for adoption
- Algebra I, eighth grade mandate
- Update - Geometry at middle school/ Cal BC
- Looking forward instead of backwards
- Alignment of elementary curriculum - tri-school implementation
- Balancing discussions among the three levels: elementary, middle and high school
- Role of public input
- Teacher process for implementation
- Outside speakers
- Invite community
- Look at student population as a whole (low, middle, high with equal considerations)
- Social emotional impact of math acceleration on our student population
- How is differentiation happening K-12

Next Meeting: January 29, 2009, 3:30-5:00 PHS Library