

Goleta Union School District  
**District Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 9, 2014**  
**Ellwood School**

**1. Call to order:** Tammy Johnsen called the meeting to order at 9:20.

**Introductions:** Stephanie Denier was welcomed as the new representative from Brandon School.

**Attendees:** Superintendent William Banning, Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth DeVita, Abby Vasquez (Principal at Ellwood), Nancy Yokubaitis (Teacher Representative-Hollister), Michele Hay (Foothill), Sue Bruns (Community Rep. of Goleta Women's Service Club), Chris Messner (Kellogg), Melissa Fitch (El Camino), Tammy Johnsen (Foothill), Tammy Merritt (La Patera), Yvonne DeGraw (GUSD School Board member), Sandra Edgar (Hollister), Jil Ronkainen (Ellwood), Stephanie Denier (Brandon), Yael Brennan (Mt. View), Heather Shea (Isla Vista).

**2. Approval of Minutes:** December meeting minutes were distributed and scanned for corrections. Some corrections: Melissa Fitch not present, Nancy Yokubaitis and Michele Hay were present. Yael Brennan moved to approve the minutes, as amended. Chris Messner seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended.

**3. School Report: Abby Vasquez, Principal at Ellwood School**

Ellwood School is the home of the Eagles. Monarch Miracle is the name of the school's major annual fundraiser. Ellwood School at present has 476 students, 3 classes at every grade level, with 2 combo classes and 24 Pre-K students. Demographics: percentages are an exact representation of Goleta's population. California Standards Test scores grew by 1 point (876) but did not meet all targets. We are moving toward Common Core and getting ready for Smarter Balance Assessments.

The Ellwood School Garden is still growing strong. The district and Ellwood PTA helps with funding, although garden grants are fewer, less money is available.

We now have Apple TV in all classrooms grades 3-6: Teachers are able to instruct with iPads using Smart Technology. Students' work on iPads and can also be mirrored on the screen while working from their desks. We are in year two of PC computer lab, which is working out well.

Parent Square at Ellwood is now 385 strong. While we are not quite reaching all families yet, Parent Square is working well. Teachers, parents and students have reported that they find it very useful for distributing and receiving immediate information and for such uses as requesting volunteers.

Recently a local business donated 10 iPads to the school. In addition, one teacher, Mr. Hanna, received a grant for one-on-one iPads for the students in his class. He has been able to develop creative lesson plans using the iPads. For example: students are sent outside to look for a representation of math concepts they are working on in class. For one lesson they found and took photos of items in the shape of a grid, such as the top of a metal picnic table, then were able to describe the item as a multiplication equation and present the results using PowerPoint. After school: This year Ellwood is offering a Computer Coding class for a small charge. The PTA is helping with the funding of this class, which is being piloted by 4<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Ellwood overnight camps coming up in the Spring: Rancho El Chorro Science Camp for 5<sup>th</sup> graders, Astro Camp in Idylwild for 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

William Banning comments: There can be a problem with accepting money donated by nonprofit organizations. For example, in the past the district received a Garden Grant from the Orfalea Foundation. The individual schools in the district could choose how to spend the funds and many schools hired GEMs (Garden Education Manager). Now the Orfalea Foundation has withdrawn much of the funding as it has gone more national. The problem occurs when nonprofits want to donate money for a specific program of their choosing. When the money stops, the program is embedded, put in place not by District demand, but by external donations.

Regarding assessments on iPads: Since this year's assessments are more of a trial run, we can use this as an opportunity to see what does or doesn't work in the testing environment. For example, iPads lack a keyboard so a Bluetooth style keyboard is necessary which may be difficult to arrange in testing situation.

**4. Local Control and Accountability Plan/District Vision:** William Banning, Superintendent. One of the LCAP requirements is for the district to seek council from various groups, one of which is parents. It may be possible for a modification of this DAC group to fulfill this requirement.

Looking ahead at upcoming DAC Agenda topics: Superintendent Banning suggested that the upcoming February 13 meeting could focus just on LCAP Outreach with the Math and TOSA topics moved to the March 13 meeting. (See Handout: DAC Agenda Topics 3013-2014)

**Local Control and Accountability Plan:**

The Local Control plan calls for an unduplicated count of students. This means that a student with 2 designations doesn't count twice-- so an English learner who is also low income, for example, will result in just one count for supplemental funding. Regarding accountability, we must show what we are doing with the supplemental funds to better serve these subgroups.

Requirements: What we want is for the State requirements to fit into our Strategic Plan, to be compliant minimum. There are 8 areas of state priority: (see handout: Local Control Accountability Plan *Educ. Code Section 52060 (d)*). 2016 will be the first year we'll have comparison numbers, before that all will be baseline numbers. The API will continue to exist, but it will be based on different things, such as attendance, school climate, student engagement, parental involvement, etc. ("Other student outcomes" = what we choose that matters to us.) Focus on at-risk and low achieving students.

A three-year plan is required. The district can't pass a budget until this is complete, with annual goals for each subgroup. The template has come out as a draft and must be approved by March 31, 2014. We can't afford to wait until the final plan is approved. Since we have an idea of the general requirements, we can move forward ahead of time, perhaps at the next DAC meeting in February. At the very least, we must have one parent representative from each subgroup, plus DELAC. Can we find more people for that day from other groups? Talk with principals: our homework for this month is to find parent representatives from low-income, Hispanic, special education, Asian groups.

What should the content of those meetings be? The first step is input only. It is proposed that LCAP Outreach be the only agenda item for the February DAC meeting. Other agenda topics

could be moved to later months. Elizabeth DeVita commented that the Differentiation time line might work better if we moved the Math to a later date. William Banning feels that discussion of the Math Program needs a stand-alone meeting time.

##### **5. District Update/Topics:**

Some themes came up from our answers to the SWOT worksheet (although it may be that our voices as DAC members may not be representative of the general population in the district):

Strengths: Esteem for quality of staff, teachers; parent participation; Special Education (mentioned both as a strength and as a weakness); safe campuses; highly educated staff; healthy breakfast and lunch programs; parent volunteers, smaller class sizes, specialists funded, proximity to UCSB, Science camps, Parent Square, TOSAs, highly educated parents.

Weakness: Not all schools have same allocations of fundraising, not enough money, some facilities are not in good repair, district not willing to listen to parent input, playground issues, inequity of resources among schools, tech limitations, no intro program for new hires, one size fits all for high achievers, GATE program lacks, academic levels vary widely, communication with parents, Common Core changes difficult, lack of funding, hands tied by politics, expectations may be too high and unrealistic on teachers, lack of performing and visual arts.

Opportunities: After-school programs, differentiation, empower teachers, UCSB as resource, more parental involvement, grant possibilities, more emphasis on science than in past, rebuild trust between staff and district, Common Core communication-- make sure teachers are heard and supported, restructure GATE program, redefine GATE qualified student, think outside standard models.

Threats: Fear of losing specialists, fear of losing funding, safety, changes in administration, greater demands on teachers, lack of time for teachers to implement Common Core, increasing class sizes, facilities built in 60's, flexibility widens choice but may leave some out.

##### **Themes/topics from “Letters from the Future, 2020”:**

Unlimited funds, teachers, services, inclusion, special education instructors, tech, art, music, science, community interaction and service, science lab, Spanish, all students all schools, no hunger-meals for all, safely walk to school with signs, focus on creative learning, no homework - apply new ideas from school at home, more equitable between schools, funding distributed equally among schools, nutrition, local gardens, physical education incorporated into classroom education, take advantage of UCSB and SBCC, English learners are paired with adult language and cultural learners, no more “No child left behind”, all classes have additional instructor, normalization of incoming funds, all schools considered good and thus desirable, gardens in all schools, peer mediation counselors in all schools, teachers are all paid what they're worth, poor teachers are eliminated.

There is a wide variety but some themes stand out: Level of equity and special needs and differentiation. Shows that still more work to be done in these areas.

Yael Brennan asks: How are funds allocated for special programs like the arts?

William Banning: Part of strategic plan assures a balanced distribution of funds but some schools have the ability to solicit funds from their community and some schools qualify for extra funds based on demographics. Equity doesn't mean equality; there may be greater needs or greater talents at different schools. For example, there may be a super GEM at one school, while another may have a super science or computer instructor.

Tammy Merritt asks: What is the basic allocation for each school for the arts? Is it entirely dependent on the PTA for funding? Would it disappear without?

William Banning replies that he will look into this question and send out information about funding for the arts. He thanks all representatives for their responses on this, saying that it helps to open our vision to the possible.

Our overall class size in the district is under 23 for K-6, which is lower than state requirements and lower than most schools in the state. Teachers feel more effective with smaller class size. Much of our focus and funding goes to hiring people: staff, specialists, certificated tutors.

Stephanie Denier asks: Why not have more certificated tutors if they cost less?

William Banning replies: That's an interesting question, we hope to be able to expand that in future and continue to ask, are we doing the right things with our resources?

#### **6. School Council and PTA Reports:**

- Chris Messner: (Kellogg) Just had Winter Sing for grades 3-5, Author-Go-Round coming up for 5<sup>th</sup> graders during the last week of January, Talent Show coming up Jan. 29.
- Melissa Fitch: (El Camino) Jog-a-thon coming up, continued emphasis on the “No Excuses” theme to promote college readiness, yearbook will be in-house this year with 6<sup>th</sup> graders doing much of the work.
- Tammy Johnsen: (Foothill) Winter Sing at Foothill was held one week earlier this year, worked better for teachers/parents; preparations started for the Gala in March; After-school Enrichment program has started.
- Tammy Merritt: (La Patera) Zumba classes are starting up for after-school, working on more after-school activities, hopefully Lego from outside vendor for younger grades.
- Sandra Edgar: (Hollister) Reading Under the Stars and Jog-a-thon events.
- Jil Ronkainen: (Ellwood) Holiday Boutique was a success, Coding class has begun for 4<sup>th</sup> graders, starting Lego robotics, after-school needs are ongoing.
- Stephanie Denier: (Brandon) Jog-a-thon was held last month, raised more than goal, Winter Sing, preparing for Auction in March. This year there will only be the Silent Auction, which leaves more time for the Casino to stay open later.
- Yael Brennan: (Mt. View) Rather than a jog-a-thon, they hold a Move-a-thon at Mountain View which includes various stations, only one of which is running.

#### **7. Meeting adjourned at 11:10**

Minutes submitted by Jil Ronkainen, Ellwood School DAC Representative