

High School Language Arts Curriculum Committee

January 19, 2010 West High School Library 3:30-5:00 PM

Beginnings

- Welcome!
- Call to Order: Attending: Leslie Fleming, Chris Rumps, Kathie Steele, Gayle Boyer, Marcus Reese, Hannah Odyniec, Janice Strickland, Francine Jackson, Devon Roberts, Glenn Wright, Beth Ann Brogan, Marina Gantz, Amy Larsen, Ann Morgester, Judy Olive, Mary Richards, Jennifer Stone, Mike Graham, Mike Henry, Martina Henke, Karin Parker.

Introductions: Guests: Mike Henry, Executive Director High Schools, Karin Parker, principal of My High.

Continuing Business

- **My High Update:** We began with a presentation on **My High** given by Karin Parker. The following points were made about **My High at this time:**
 - Student centered philosophy
 - APEX platform
 - Moodle portal
 - Live orientation - face to face
 - Revision tool in Word - to provide feedback
 - Communication is Key
 - Deliberate in speech and writing
 - Adult and student communication not always the same. Learning opportunity for us to teach students how to communicate professionally.
 - Email - teachers to use welcome email, general correspondence, student help and discussion beyond email.
 - Benefits of Phone Calls (welcome call, monthly call, discussion based assessment)
 - Student Feedback; Being student centered; Sandwich approach (something positive, suggestions for improvement, close with something positive);
 - Be specific with responses and respond promptly; Why resubmissions? Mastery learning. Love of learning. Time management.
 - Academic Integrity (how do you address it online). Use of phone call connections to ensure student honesty.
 - Questions followed:
 - Martina asked what Language Arts courses were being offered this semester.
 - Response: Government, Economics, 2nd semester American Literature, 2nd semester World Literature; 1st and 2nd semester Reading and Comprehension, Alaska

Studies (open enrollment). Really popular from counselor point of view. APEX classes for credit recovery still in place as before. In the Language Arts classes, Beth Ann has 10 enrolled and Amy Larsen has 4 enrolled; Reading Comprehension has 6 and World Literature has 8. About 30 students district-wide. They are looking at courses and comparing them to our curriculum. Mike Henry said he gets a lot of questions concerning the Florida Virtual classes because "they are cheaper"; are we going to that? Mr. Henry said that we are interested in quality, not what is the cheapest or easiest. Right now for FL Virtual we only have a Marine Science class (14 enrolled) and an Algebra II class. Project Smart - Alaska Native program (purchased Florida Virtual); can adapt for cultural relevance.

- Martina asked if they were planning to stick with the APEX courses after this semester.
 - Mr. Henry stated that we are most interested in quality. With the APEX experiment (especially with AP classes), the rigor has been there and student performance is very comparable to taking the class live, based on tests. With Florida Virtual they are able to align and change it, and the company revamps every 3 years. We are interested in hiring teachers to make sure these courses are aligned; best way to tweak a class is to teach it, then make recommendations. When we purchase a Florida Virtual Class, any teacher can use any element from that class in their face to face class.
- Marcus Reese asked whether classes would be advertised, say in Program of Studies, or whether it would be more counselor driven, say a student comes in to fill a hole in the schedule or wants to check out online classes.
 - Mr. Henry said we always talk about flexibility for our kids. Summer school offerings provide a lot of flexibility for kids. To give a kid the opportunity to plan ahead (a year or 2 or 3 or 4) is really good. We don't want this just for credit recovery. Online courses can help with kids coming in 4 weeks late (travel, military, etc.) Goal is to increase number of courses offered with flexible enrollment. Helpful to counselors. We are experimenting with a Lifetime Personal Fitness course that is online and is open enrollment.
- Mary Richards asked if there was going to be any consideration that would allow students to entertain a 3 to 5 year high school plan rather than the traditional 4 year plan?

- Mr. Henry said absolutely. We are not against that at all. Looking at offering an opportunity for 6th graders to take a pre-algebra class online rather than going to a zero hour. Online courses continue to show their utility.
- Marcus asked another question concerning APEX remediation at Dimond and whether MY High displaces that.
 - Karin Parker said credit recovery is not being displaced.
- Mr. Henry talked about Project Smart. The most common problem with native kids is not intelligence or desire...it is mobility and transiency. They are using netbooks with Internet access.
- Devon Roberts asked a question about the curriculum review process. He is curious how we are going to ensure continuity of the content.
 - Mr. Henry said it is their goal for the match to be as close as possible (not easier and not more difficult) to what is being taken in the classroom. Stated that the people in this room are key; and wants the input and feedback of this group and teachers. We learned a lot from Alaska Studies Online...what to do and what not to do.
- Mary Richards recommends that whoever is doing the My High curriculum review should be applying Webb's Degrees of Knowledge and Bloom's high order skills as well as the Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions that drive our curriculum guides. Mr. Henry said any course has to be more than a series of handouts including online courses.
- Mary asked about the possibility of having use of turnitin.com in regular classrooms. This would be a school based decision.
- Martina asked if Beth Ann or Amy wanted to share about how things are going with their online classes.
 - Beth Ann said all students seemed really motivated. She hasn't had to prod any of them to do anything. Amy's students are motivated as well and she is doing British World Literature. Student seem pleased with the course; they are not taking it for credit recovery. She mentioned that she is working on trying to build a teachers' lounge for the teachers of **My High**, so they can build community (virtual teacher's lounge in Moodle).
- Mr. Henry pointed out that it is our 7th year with online courses. We are going into it carefully, knowing it is not a solution to everything.
- Marcus asked what the process was for dropping a class.
 - Karen stated that students have 4 weeks (20 school days) from the time they start the class to drop it without penalty. After that, it is like any other class that they

drop. Mr. Henry said they didn't want to document failures.

- Janice Strickland asked how did they see growth and do they have an expectation for growth?
 - Mr. Henry - students don't have to have a reason to take the course. Enrollment this past year was about 700 students, but that will increase now that it is being opened up and word is getting out. What if a student is in a comprehensive high school? Mike said that currently kids can take one course online. Once they have successfully done that, they can take two. Marcus asked if there is any kind of suggestive chart growth; are we pushing online so much that we are going to have less need for seats in the classroom and need for teachers in the classroom? Mike said the conversion is simple and we are faced with it each year. For every 150 kids that is one FTE that would be directed to online. Ann said that the goal is for Anchorage teachers be teaching these courses so the conversion would be same. Mr. Henry said that people are afraid that online teaching is going to replace teachers - it is not.
 - All are welcome to ask questions as they arise to keep information accurate and up to date.
- **MY Access Update:** Mary spoke about two courses coming up (there was a flyer in everyone's folder). She encouraged teachers to take the Round 2 training. She said that she is discovering that we haven't done enough talk about the writing process and teachers (especially at the secondary level) are sometimes murky about the process. It is becoming clear that we need to be talking more about writing in the district. She is excited about trying to bring on-board 9th grade and 7th grade Social Studies teachers, so there is more cross-content writing. She has had positive response from Social Studies teachers. We are hoping to begin creating more prompts specific to our curriculum. There are some dynamic prompts out there. She is encouraging more conversation between Language Arts and Social Studies teachers. *My Access* is a beautiful model, but it is just a model. .
 - Judy Olive commented that *My Access* was not for "beginners"; meaning that it is important that they know the writing process first.
 - Martina - Happy to report that netbooks are on the January Board agenda, which means we will be ordering soon!
 - Mike Henry - is going to talk to principals about distribution. He wants to be sure that the carts are going to be used and moved around. If we run out, he will get more *if they are being used*.
 - Martina - looking for info about who is really "chomping at the bits" to get the netbooks. Watch for an email inquiring.

- Mary - let us know if teachers get stuck, we can help them. We find they get stuck and don't ask for help.
- Devon Roberts said that he had teacher who was really excited about My Access after taking the Round 2 training. Martina said that we really want to encourage teachers to take the Round 2 training; it's where they dig into the writing process and making MY Access work.
- Francine Jackson - 2 questions to ask. Is the manufacturer of the netbooks also making the cart? Martina said that she will find out. Question #2 - Are we continuing the TESST project? Martina said, "yes". If any teachers wish to have sub time to collaborate, plan, etc. to support SS/LA integration and use of the technology tools, please let her know!
- Devon Roberts asked if anyone is looking at My Access DBQs; has anyone investigated that? Mary Richards said that you would have to have the text separate; if you can keep talking to Social Studies, we have asked them to identify some common documents. It is possible to create prompts.
- Francine Jackson wanted to know how we are going to get our new students at the alternative schools enrolled in My Access. Martina said it should be automatic; it talks to our student information system. You still have to add them to the class in MY Access. Judy Olive said it wasn't happening for her; Martina said they would talk about it and get it figured out.

Agenda Approval:

Minutes Approval: A motion was made by Glenn Wright to approve the minutes from the November 17th meeting; seconded by Kathie Stelle; motion passed.

Reports (SS/LA Support, ELL, SPED, Library, EdTech, HS Administration, UAA, Schools)

- **Schools:**

- Francine Jackson (SAVE) reported that Nikki Giovanni was going to be at UAA on January 21, at 7:30.
- Ann Morgester commented that Sherman Alexie will be in Anchorage on March 4th and also Chris Crutcher coinciding with the 2010 AKLA Conference March 4 - 7th.
- Marcus Reese (Dimond) had comments concerning our need for a concerted effort at defining NCAA courses (right now they are defined by individual schools). Rick Volkis in charge of this project.

- **Library** - Ann will have something to report next month.

- **EdTech** - Covered earlier.

- **HS Administration:** No report

- **UAA:** Jennifer had to leave early and will cover at the next meeting.

Continuing Business

- **MY High Update:** Above

- **My Access Update:** Above

- **9th Grade Materials Purchase:** Still in a holding pattern as we await release of ARRA funds, Phase 2.
- **Composition Credit/English 11:**
 - Martina stated that Marcus had previously brought it to her attention that Strategic Reading and Writing was not listed as receiving composition credit. She spoke with the Zangle people and it has now been changed. Program of studies - Martina stated that we need to figure out which courses are not getting composition credit that need to - Technical Writing and Digital Composition. There was discussion and different views of what courses should and should not count as composition credit. Martina said that she will be working on getting the wording the way it should be in the Program of Studies for next year. There are instances where the wording is unclear and it is making it difficult for the folks at Zangle.
 - Marcus asked if it would be as simple as adding a line that said that Technical Writing counts as composition credit. Martina said it probably would be. It could be part of our minutes and she could present it to the folks at Zangle to have it changed in there. Marcus asked if she needed a motion on that. Martina said she would like a motion and then they could have discussion on it. Marcus moved that we add wording in the Program of Studies that Technical Writing and Digital Composition will satisfy the required one semester of composition credit. There was discussion as to how the motion should be worded. Martina asked if someone would second the motion so we could have discussion. She said that we were really over time and we did not have time to have the discussion right now....but we needed to have discussion on this and we need input. She said that she could do it electronically or they could do it next time. She said that she would probably be sending them something to ask for their input. There was further discussion.
 - Ann said that they are currently doing an audit of the course catalog so the faster the discussion can move forward the better it will be because they are beginning to schedule courses for next year.
 - It was decided that a vote could be taken and if it was unanimous, it would pass, if not there would be further discussion.
 - Martina said that the motion on the floor was that Technical Writing and Digital Composition be worded so that they would earn a semester of composition credit (it would satisfy the composition credit).
 - Mary Richards wanted clarification as to how they were defining "composition" (what are we saying it means). Devon Roberts explained that in the past there was English 9, English 10 and the electives. One of the semesters of electives had to satisfy a composition course, which meant it was a writing intensive course. Intermediate Comp was the number one most popular course students would take to satisfy that; but sometimes it was Poetry, Advanced Comp, and journalism courses were also accepted as meeting the comp requirement. The intent was that

students not take Eng. 9 & 10 and then dodge a writing intensive course for the next 2 years. Largely, it is a moot point, since most comprehensive high schools have Eng. 9 , 10 & 11.

- Martina asked if we could vote with a show of hands. Someone asked if the vote could be separate for Digital Composition and Technical Writing. A vote was taken for Technical Writing and all were in favor, with the exception of Janice Strickland, Mary Richards, and Mike Graham who were opposed. A vote was taken for Digital Composition - those opposed were Francine Jackson, Mike Graham, Hannah Odyniec, Janice Strickland, Amy Larsen and Mary Richards. Martina said it sounded like we needed to have more discussion on this issue.
- **In the interest of time, Martina stated that she would complete the other items on the Agenda via email. Meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.**

- **UAA Survey:**
- **Read 180 Course in Program of Studies:**
- **Strategic Reading & Writing Course**

New Business

•

In the Folder

1. Agenda
2. Minutes (Nov. 17)
3. Core Standards article
4. Supplementary Title Recommendation
5. Current LA Program of Studies
6. MY Access: End of Prompt Reflection/Using Reports to Make Instructional Decisions/Training Schedule
7. Info: Twenty-First National African American Read-In Chain

Next Meeting:

Need to reschedule. Possible dates: March 2, 16, 23

*Providing leadership and support in our schools to
increase student achievement & support effective learning environments...*