



BERTCORONA

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

To: Yvette King Berg
Re: November Monthly Report
Date: November 30, 2015

Enrollment

Our enrollment is now at 67 students. We have received both 9th and 10th graders as new students. New banners were made to articulate that our school is a 9 - 12 school to influence recruiting for second semester and next year.

Academics

We spent significant instructional time and professional development time calibrating student performance to rubric indicators of proficiency. Our model is producing more authentic conversations about student learning. One of the challenges that arises out of an aligned academic program anchored in authentic assessment is successfully coaching students through academic adversity. Typical assessment practices allow students to cover up academic deficiencies with extra credit or last minute assignments that are treated as buffers against low grades. In an authentic assessment learning environment that is aligned and calibrated using standards-based rubrics, both educator and student must face together the moments when it becomes unavoidably apparent that skills and/or knowledge are missing, and intervention is necessary. As we are coming to the end of the first semester of operation of our high school, and the first official transcript grades will be published soon, we are trying to encourage our students that although they may find the acquisition of certain skills difficult, they can rest assured that the skills they are being graded on are truly theirs, and that their grades are indicative of specific levels of proficiency as described in the indicators of every rubric we write for them. In turn, those rubrics are anchored to the Common Core, NGSS, and CST descriptions of proficient student performance. Our teachers are using the time on Mondays for both November 30 and December 7 to conference with students in an effort to give them every opportunity to earn grades that best reflect their level of mastery in all learning outcomes.

Mr. Meyers shared with me that more than half of our students experienced a dip in either math or reading test scores on the second NWEA Maps periodic assessment. In speaking with the teachers, they suggested that the lack of incentives and push for performance (as was the custom at the middle school) was largely responsible for this dip. They noted specific examples of students whose performance in class on similar tasks is very high, and were perplexed by the outcomes. I am meeting with Mr. Meyers to discuss multiple measures and determine an explanation for the drop in scores.

Facilities

The following improvements were made to our facilities this month:

- Access to Special Ed RSP Pull-Out Classroom on the Maclay Campus
- Full network installation and cut-over to YPICS Network (go Harvey and Ayala!)
- Access to the small kitchen attached to the covered eating area, so that our food (by 12/4).
- distribution programs will have hot-water access and food storage (by 12/4).
- A detailed plan and timeline for installation of security camera and phone at the main gate (to be completed over winter break).

We continue to wait on the following repairs and upgrades:

- Blinds for every room for lock-down safety and P.E. changing privacy.

Staffing

Mr. Meyers and I have conducted 2 interviews for the Visual and Media Arts position that is being vacated by Ms. Redstone at the end of first semester.

We continue to search for the ideal candidate and have a third interview this week.

Mrs. Funk has introduced us to a new intern who will be working with us at the high school one full day per week for the second semester.

Logistics

With the much anticipated access to the adjacent kitchen being finalized by the end of this week, the challenges to our food program regarding compliance to minimum facilities requirements should be resolved. These include appropriate tables and table height for storing and serving food, refrigeration for leftover food, and access to hot water.

Also, now that access to the RSP Pull Out space is being provided, Mr. Nutt and Mr. Rosas can begin to create a regular schedule of special ed services provision that is appropriate to the least restrictive environment needs of our most sheltered i.e.p plans. The only concern going forward with this development will be the consistent security of both campuses as we coexist in a manner that requires daily travel to and from the Maclay campus for a number of our students and staff.

College and Career

Ms. Gonzales held a unit on dressing professionally and participating successfully in interviews. She went above and beyond the call of even the best teachers by recruiting other teachers, law enforcement officials, business leaders, and just about every adult she could convince to come to our campus and interview our students for jobs that are representative of those available in today's market. The students were highly motivated and wonderfully engaged in this process, and we all got a glimpse of what it will look and feel like to send our young people off to college when the time comes. It was an inspiring experience for everyone.

Technology

Mr. Harvey and Mr. Ayala installed our YPICS Network this month. The online technology tools we now need to run a 21st century progressive high school are now more accessible to our team. The enrollment of our students' machines into a safer and more reliable network means they will no longer have to fight the indiscriminate LAUSD firewall that blocks all websites in its filter categories without rhyme or reason. Now both students and staff can do a more careful and intentional job of determining which resources are useful to them in the pursuit of new understanding and skill.

Mr. Dueñas and Ms. King Berg both interviewed me for the CTE grant that we are applying for starting in the 2016-2017 school year. We mapped out the resources needed to build our CTE Pathway, Media Art, through the 2018-19 school year, and fleshed out the actual course design and continuum.

Climate and Culture

Mr. Rothenay and Mrs. Gonzalez continue to bring tons of life and school spirit to our little campus. The seemingly endless stream of spirit activities and themes in which we all participate is really keeping everyone's spirits boosted and encouraged as we do the hard work of getting ready for college.

Just in this one month, we participated in a Fear Factor assembly (yes, I sucked up real earthworms and beat Rothenay by 1 worm), held a food drive to assist needy families during the holidays, carved out time to watch the film "Bully" and discuss how to keep our campus free of harassment and intimidation, and ordered our first real SWAG (thanks, Rommel!!). As the first Fall of our school has been so strong in this area, it bodes well for the incoming 9th graders and for maintaining the sense of identity as a compassionate place where teens can keep it real.

Mr. Simonsen