



## Hawthorne High School Workshops

DATE: Monday, November 16, 2009

PROJECT: Centinela Valley UHSD  
Master Planning and Measure CV Bond Implementation Program  
Hawthorne High School Workshops  
HMC # 3199004

PRESENT: See notes from each workshop for a list of the participants

**The Purpose of These Workshops:** To review implementation strategies for the Guiding Principles and collaborate with school site staff as well as students, parents, and community members.

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

### **3.1 Parent Workshop – 8:30 to 10:30 am**

Participants: Benita Reynoso, Shirley Adams, Mariel Rubio, Magdalena Perez, Rosa Jimenez, Carmen Proa, Maria G. Martinez, Ray Rodriguez

Ellis Kaufman (HMC), Victoria Bergsagel (Architects of Achievement), Glenn Ueda and Konni Wong (WLC Architects)

At this workshop, Victoria Bergsagel presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the importance of establishing District-wide Guiding Principles, how students best learn, District options for instructional reform, and how smaller environments address the needs of urban students.

Information was shared regarding the neurological and cognitive research underpinnings of optimal learning environments. A highly interactive (and translated) discussion ensued regarding how to best engage students in the digital age. The group addressed with enthusiasm the prediction of Harvard researchers that half of all learning in high schools in America will include online learning within the decade. Graduation rates, college-ready statistics, and parent experience within the Centinela Valley Union School District were explored and commented upon by parents from a variety of backgrounds. Cogent examples of other similar urban school districts were highlighted to explain what works and what is possible when school transformation efforts are undertaken with courage, stamina and intentionality.

Some of the comments and statements that parents made during the workshop include the following:

- We need stability of leadership. It's discouraging to have changing leadership. Ideas and reforms are constantly being replaced. Kids and parents don't know if they're coming or going.
- Can foreign language classes be made available to all students and parents?
- The buildings are too large and impersonal.
- Gang issues harm educational outcomes and the social environment of the school.
- Classes need to be fun.

- How are students assigned to Hawthorne HS?
- Parent involvement really needs to be increased. Some workshops are currently offered. Parents need to conduct, produce, and design programs for other parents. Parents representing all cultures should participate and feel welcome.
- Parents are in favor of smaller environments such as small learning communities. Small schools may be a preferred way to re-organize Hawthorne HS.
- What is the best type of reform or transformation for a school with the demographics of Hawthorne HS? What works best? What can we learn from other schools and other districts?
- How does the CVUHSD work with its bargaining units to ensure what is best for students?
- We need to see more display of student work on campus. What about murals?
- Student work needs to be more rigorous; this will show that teachers have high expectations for all students.
- Personalizing the instructional program and educational experience sounds a lot like the AVID program culture where there are adult advocates for every student.
- All of our small learning communities should look like AVID.
- Idea – students remain in place and teachers travel to classrooms. Create smaller environments (contiguous space / contiguous classrooms) where traveling does not waste time and cause tardiness.
- More students and possibly all students should be surveyed and involved in a deeper way in order to provide feedback and ideas regarding school reform. How will more students be involved in the visioning process? We need to involve the “at-risk” students as well as those who are no longer enrolled at the school.
- Visual and performing arts are important for the school.
- The “kids make the school. If they are happy, then the parents and other adults will be happy too.”

### **3.2 Administrator Workshop – 10:30 am to 12:00 pm**

Participants: Mark Newell, Mike Martinez, Elizabeth Hirata

Sandy Kate and Ellis Kaufman (HMC), Victoria Bergsagel (Architects of Achievement), Glenn Ueda and Konni Wong (WLC)

At this session, the Principal and two Associate Principals had the opportunity to discuss how the Guiding Principles might be applied to Hawthorne High School. Topics, statements, and concepts discussed included:

- School is in Program Improvement status; District enrollment is declining
- What we form at this school must be relevant for students
- We are progressing with school-to-career programs; the AVID program is a good sign
- We have had excellent feedback from teachers, but we need to hear from the students
- We have visited and studied reform at Lakewood High School where changes were phased in year-by-year

- We must focus on what students want; review the marketplace and provide small communities that students want
- How do we meet the needs of over one hundred teachers on this campus?
- The school needs gyms dedicated for boys and girls; needs storage facilities with a place for everything; large outdoor congregation areas are needed; outdoor science classes can be effective
- Need more landscaping – green spaces – on campus
- Need facilities for collaborative work
- Students “get-it” with the Engineering Academy
- What funds are available for facilities work at Hawthorne HS? What is the dollar amount and the extent of renovation projects?
- The overall goal – keep the school whole – keep the Cougars; expose students to their interests in various small learning communities

### **3.3 Faculty Workshop – 12:00 to 1:30 pm**

Participants: Andrew McGregor, Jeff Hines, Raphael Farkouh, Kathy Givens, Santamaria Miller, Le Barron Smith, Cynthia Randolph, Galda Ortiz, Alisha Park, Natalia Semko, Susan Poland, Jilleen Sargent, Pedro Martinez, Richard Allen, Todd Barker, Victor Frayre, Daniel L. Barnes, Cordell Haynes, Ahkim Augbala, Erin Estrada, James Swain. Others were present who did not sign the roster.

Ellis Kaufman (HMC), Victoria Bergsagel (Architects of Achievement), Glenn Ueda and Konni Wong (WLC)

At this session, Victoria Bergsagel presented a PowerPoint presentation similar to the one discussed with parents (see 3.1) regarding school reform options and how other urban districts are personalizing their high school programs and creating smaller learning environments. Teachers had an opportunity to ask questions and make comments during the presentation.

To ensure that all staff had the opportunity to better understand the process of planned high school renovations, this lunchtime presentation included a survey of planning activities to date. A recap was given of the District Transformational Design Summit on October 9, 2009, where educators, parents, students, community members and architects gathered to develop CVUHSD guiding principles. Teachers present at the Summit were also on-hand to lend their insights of the process and possibilities to their colleagues.

Some of the questions and comments that were made during this session included the following:

- What changes will be done to the facilities? Are you asking for input from teachers for what changes might occur at the school?
- Specialized counseling services are needed to support the needs of students. Counseling services are limited. Where is the support for students?
- “I support the career focus and the 21<sup>st</sup> century focus that we’ve been researching. We don’t have the financial support necessary.”
- We LOVE our students.

- Where is technology headed within the CVUHSD?
- Unless we do professional development regarding using classroom technology well, the technology means little. Our students carry high-end technology with them every day.
- We are supporting national and international competition in the world of business and e-commerce.

### **3.4 Student Workshop – 1:30 to 3:30 pm**

Participants: Diego Mendoza, Eric Molina, Chris Soria, Kiara Palma, Giselle Salcedo, Augustin Ambriz, Raydel Marquez, Jasmine Fernandez, Alex Ogueke, Katey Patterson

Ellis Kaufman (HMC), Victoria Bergsagel (Architects of Achievement), Glenn Ueda and Konni Wong (WLC)

At this workshop, students from Hawthorne High School met with HMC, WLC, and Architects of Achievement and offered their insight regarding the Guiding Principles and other issues of importance for their school and their futures.

Victoria Bergsagel wrote the following summary of the student workshop at Hawthorne High School:

## **We Can Change Our World**

By Victoria Bergsagel

There can be no doubt that students have something meaningful to say about their education.

An attentive group of young leaders at Hawthorne High recently met with the HMC architectural team to offer insight into how to transform their campus. Located just a few miles from LAX, their school consistently registers some of the lowest test scores in Los Angeles County.

Students knew there was room for improvement in their school and had lots to say about the Centinela Valley Union High School District Guiding Principles of Design. They posed thoughtful questions. They offered respectful answers. Yet most importantly, they tendered sage advice as they considered what the guiding principles would mean for both the culture of their school, and the trajectory of their lives.

The students gathered in the library that day were told about the intention to use bond funding to modernize their campus. They heard, in fact, their input would be critical if the guiding principles were going to be used as the basis of making decisions to transform their school. After introductions, a free flow of commentary followed.

- *Parents need to feel welcome. They need to be more involved in our school. It will only help me if my mom knows what is going on.*
- *We need technology, so give us access. It will mean great things for our futures if you do.*
- *There is too much judgment in our school. Too many race issues. Too many fights. We need a friendlier environment where everyone gets along.*

- *I think small schools will help us break down barriers. There has to be a better way to 'do school.'*

At a critical point in the discussion a gentle young man made a captivating observation. Wondering out loud if the guiding principle suggesting the implementation of a "career-focused, small schools" made sense to him, he speculated. "If I knew more, I think it just might hold an answer to our school's problems."

A fellow student asked, "Is it like giving the AVID program to all kids in the school? If so, I like the idea. Every kid deserves that kind of personalized care."

Another student offered, "Yeah, I like that concept ... but only if it applies to *every* kid."

"If small schools, what will happen to sports?" another asked.

"What about electives?"

"What about choice?"

And then, a perky young woman who breezed into the meeting late offered penetrating commentary. "How teachers get divided will make a big difference," she offered. "If all the best teachers go into a certain academy, it will be unfair."

A bright-eyed lad concurred that small schools would break down social barriers and make their school safe.

An attentive girl said she realized that most students were not even aware of their options.

A soft-spoken young man said that he thought it was time to change. "Lots of kids don't care if they get interested in school. We can change that. I think everything we have talked about today will work. Just let the kids know about it and work on it with you."

As the meeting drew to a close, the facilitator asked students to thoughtfully consider whether the guiding principles were on target. *Did they make sense? Were they worthy of student support? Was the transformation planning on track?*

As a measure of their feedback, they were asked to hold up a hand. Five fingers extended meant they agreed completely with the guiding principles. A fist meant they were adamantly against them.

One by one, hands went up. When each hand was extended the students all looked around the room. All but one boy held out five fingers. He held out four.

When asked by his teacher, "Why four?" his answer was simple. "I just don't have enough information yet."

Since small schools were a large part of the discussion that day, students were again asked how robust they thought that concept was. The hands went up. The results were the same. Mostly fives, and one four - the same kid.

Perhaps it goes without saying these students care deeply about their futures. Threaded throughout the conversation were the thoughts of a particularly respectful and courageous young

man. At the close of the meeting he said, "If this program comes off – these guiding principles you are talking about – then you will really serve students well. If you focus on us, you will help us carve out our path. If you help us, you will benefit everyone and everything around us."

Another boy agreed. "You will change our entire community if you focus on the students. Make us the important ones. We can change our world."

*The above notes document our understanding of items discussed in the above-referenced meeting. Unless notice to the contrary is received, the notations will be considered acceptable and HMC will proceed with work based on these understandings. Any discrepancies should be brought to our attention within seven (7) working days of receipt.*

Submitted by,

**HMC Architects**

Ellis Kaufman

cc: [Ariane Lehew](#), [Tom Cavanaugh](#), [John Nichols](#), [Kyle Peterson \(HMC\)](#)  
[Those Present](#)  
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