

Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

- Paulo Freire



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The Still Focused on Learning Issue

April 21, 2007

March is the Biggest Attendance Month in WAAE History!!

With over 150 units of ADA in one month, our program surpassed the previous "highest attendance month" of March, 2006. It was pretty unexpected given that last year's March was thought to be a statistical anomaly. Much of the credit goes to teachers who have worked so hard to attract and keep students, and the collaborations that we have built with parent outreach initiatives in PVUSD. Special thanks go to Teresa Rodriguez of Extended Learning, and Ruby Vasquez of Federal and State Programs, who have done the difficult logistical work of including parenting workshops into the adult education system. As of the end of March, we are running almost 40 units of ADA above last year (which was 50 units above out CAP). With recent legislation we will get money for this attendance over CAP, only we are not sure how much. We will be looking to close classes on June 15, or perhaps earlier if teachers are willing, attendance and the site meri it. Congrats to us all.

Focus on Learning Update from AV Coyle

We're continuing the reflection stage of our Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education **Focus on Learning (FOL)** journey with the second series of Home Group meetings taking place just before spring break and the second Focus Group meetings scheduled for the week of April 23-28. Several Home Groups have reported that they spent valuable time talking about student learning, including the need to define concrete and measurable goals and objectives in course outlines. Some teachers spoke of students who have asked for their CASAS, EL Civics and other assessment results so that they can follow their progress. And the need for a much greater percentage of paired CASAS scores is recognized across the board. This discussion reveals our awareness that it is crucial that we document student progress, assessing student learning in a variety of ways.

The next task before us is to turn our attention to the 4 focus areas: **Organization for Student Learning, Curriculum and Instruction, Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Resource Management and Development.** While our (cont. p. 5)

Quacking of a Lamé Duck: Reflections from Student Council

Even after many years of collaborative work on improving communication in our program, there are still issues of perception and reality about how we communicate. Some teachers still feel they are unheard and that communication is all top-down, even with the establishment and full functioning of an elected School Council. Some classified staff still feel that they don't receive the same attention from the administration that teachers do. All these are real issues to those that perceive this. In a real sense, sometimes perception is reality. But I'd like to talk a little about an issue that has come up frequently over the last few years at Student Council. Students in many classes have reported that they do not feel that they have a sense of the direction of a course. I've heard this reported as not knowing how any given activity fits into an agenda for the whole class, and how a whole class session's activities fit into weekly and monthly plans. They have reported that, given that working adults may need to come and go to classes, they'd like a roadmap or list of course objectives. Perhaps this is what we sometimes call a syllabus or course of study. It's an interesting question; how, in an environment of open enrollment do we give a students of where they've been and where they going. We have, as a school, looked at this when we've studied what affects student persistence. Knowing course goals, and clear feedback on those goals, has a (cont. p. 2)

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Quacking of a Lamé Duck: Reflections from Student Council

has a positive impact on student persistence. Especially seeing how an individual activity is part of a bigger plan. Of course, as is our theory of adult learning and our institutional values, adult learners need to be part of the planning of both those immediate instructional goals, and those long term syllabi or courses of study. That students continue to observe that this is what they want is a confirmation of the research, and an indication that thinking and responding to this is an institutional need. Perhaps the most important place where clear and two-way communication needs to happen is in the classroom with the students and the teacher. Remember a few years ago we repeatedly asked ourselves, "how do we know that our students are getting what they need and want?" Perhaps another prompt for reflection might be "do our students know what the goals of the class are? Are they a part of setting those goals?"

BIG CHANGES IN COMMUNITY BASED ENGLISH TUTORING (CBET) PROGRAM.

by Cynthia Stark, Assistant Director

There were some questions whether Community Based English Tutoring would be reauthorized. Even now there is a senator who would like to take it away from Adult Schools even though Adult Education provided ESL and Parent Ed classes long before K-12 schools did. WAAE receives one of the largest CBET grants in California based on the number of English Language Learners we have in our school district. Without it, WAAE could not offer babysitting, support services, special materials, and professional development or offer many of the CBET classes we have been able to. It has been reauthorized for the fiscal year 2007-08 with the additional provisions of Senate Bill 368 that CBET programs include local school board approval of its implementation plans and assessment process. The intent of CBET is to provide English Language instruction to parents or members of the community who in turn pledge to tutor a limited English speaking K-12 child. We have served over 4000 parents in this district. Under SB 368, documentation of adult progress must be analyzed by CBET staff members, the district superintendent and the governing board. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Adult schools with federal funding use for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking skills within a functional context has been approved and validated by the US Department of Education and the US Department of Labor. It assesses both native and non-native speakers of English in adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English as a second language. CASAS can report and track the enrollment of CBET students and measure student outcomes. Now more than ever before, we will have to show student outcomes through CASAS scores and other measures, we define and are approved by the school board, documentation of tutoring that has been provided to the K-12 students. Of course, the material assessed by CASAS has to be taught and learned in the classroom first. However, one of the most difficult tasks for showing these student outcomes has been paired pre and post tests. This year we have implemented CASAS testing most students when they enter at main sites. Green Valley is the biggest CBET site. However, most of the CBET classes are in K-12 sites. SB 368 states the importance of CBET classes on K-12 sites. It is more difficult to get the pre and post tests in these sites. We will need the CBET teachers help and ideas on how to do this better.

There was some speculation that we would lose this funding. [Senate Bill 368](#) was passed in the fall authorizing Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) to continue and directing certain accountability measures to be added, including tracking attendance and test results of K12 students tutored by CBET participants as well as tracking how parents are taught to tutor their children and the reading scores of the adult students.

The tracking of the K12 students will be no easy feat. We have been working for some time to create a process that our software will import K12 CBET students software to match children's test scores with CBET parents.

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Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education School Council

April 18, 2007

Present: Cynthia Stark, Bob Harper, Lynn Simons, Natalie Castillo, Jack Carroll, Teresita Marchisello, Amy Jewell, Eloisa Sanchez, Cary Keisler, Charmaine Ryan, Pam Sexton, Marta Bechhoefer, José Humberto Camacho, Marina Candor, Ann Veronica Coyle

Director's and Assistant Director's reports:

ILC – everything is moving along on (new) schedule with the exception of the chairs order, which will be delayed by about 4 weeks. The chairs will be in place for summer school, and if they have not arrived in time for the Community Advisory Council meeting we'll bring chairs over from Porter. There are 4 or 5 small items remaining on the punch-out list (certification that the work is finished and the building accessible), and when they are completed we will receive the keys to the building. The grand opening is scheduled for June 29.

CBET plan – will be submitted to the Board of Trustees and approved by the superintendent. Data required is Pre- and Post CASAS testing for parents and STAR test results for the children from both sites, Starlight and Freedom.

March attendance – is one unit of ADA more than that of March 2006, our then-highest attendance month in history, and overall ADA is higher than that of 2005-06 ADA to this point. It will be hard for us not to exceed last year's ADA. Persistence is improved, demonstrated by increased ADA and decreased enrollments. We can attribute this improvement, at least in part, to our enhanced orientation process and effective ESL advising. This is an amazing accomplishment and everyone should be congratulated. We will receive a lesser apportionment for all over-ADA units. This raises the question of whether we should stop classes after June 7 in order not to increase expenses at a time when our ADA revenue will be reduced significantly. All those programs which are able will close classes after June 8 and resume on July 5. Programs and classes for which students have paid (e.g., CTE) beyond June 8; for which we have collaborations with other agencies (e.g., Even Start); which are funded separately from ADA (SOS); or which take a lengthened break in winter (Together in the Park) will continue beyond June 8.

Congratulations! The Federal Office of Management and Budget has listed WAAE as one of the top 4 providers among 997 training programs, giving the highest ranking of "effective" to these 4 programs. The ranking is based on participants' rates of earning the GED or high school diploma or getting jobs; and on retention and recruitment practices that are the most cost effective.

Bob's departure – Bob spoke of his decision to accept the position of principal of Pacific Grove Adult School. He expressed his complete confidence that the School Council specifically, with the support of the rest of the WAAE community, has the capacity to continue to lead the school in the very positive direction it is taking. While accepting the confidence that Bob expressed, members stated their sadness that Bob is leaving and their gratitude for his leadership and particularly his ability to inspire leadership, confidence, enthusiasm and commitment in staff members.

Department chair elections:

Natalie distributed copies of the Department Chair job descriptions, and we recognized the need for their revisions. Natalie asked that revisions be sent to her by email. Revised hours were noted. Every out-of-class assignment will be discussed as we near the end of the school year. The need for a more thorough orientation for new department chairs was acknowledged.

April 29 – ballots will be distributed
May 4 – ballots will be due

Full time employees (18 or more hours) have 2 votes, and part time 1 vote.

Focus on Learning:

Marta opened this portion of the meeting with a fun cup-stacking event that demanded creativity, collaboration, surprises and thinking outside the box!

AV led a “backward overview” of the process, noting that we are doing VERY WELL in our preparation:

- a. Spring 2008 – The product – our written report!
- b. June 8 – Focus Groups present charts that show areas of strength and areas for growth for each criterion. All-staff meets in groups and reviews these: Agree? Disagree? Missing anything? Comments? This is one important opportunity for all WAAE members to have A VOICE!!!!
- c. April 23-26 – Focus Groups meet: Make the charts, three for each criterion.

The group then did a mini-practice in brainstorming for Focus category A.1, School purpose: (See 3 charts on next page)

The activity prompted several observations:

- The emphasis in the Home Groups has been on areas for growth. It is equally important that we recognize our strengths along with the growth areas.
- Sometimes brainstorming activities give way to negative or constructive criticism, complaints, long discussion of issues or philosophical comments. In order to acknowledge people’s concerns and channel the brainstorming back on track, each Focus Group should have a “parking lot” sheet to record issues that distract from the task at hand and that will be addressed in the future.
- It may be a good idea to ask for suggestions 1st and affirmation next (or the reverse?).
- Each group will find that it will identify homework: what more do we need to know? What evidence do we need to find or research? etc.....

Focus Group chairs will

- remind all members of the dates and times of the meetings next week
- update membership lists, especially members’ preferred phone numbers.
- let AV know if s/he needs a copy of his/her WAAE 2002 Focus Group chapter
- send charts to AV not later than 1 week after the Focus Group meeting (& AV will return them well in time for use at the June 8 all-school meeting)

Student survey sample:

Natalie presented a draft of questions for the student survey and asked for our comments within 2 weeks. Members of the Student Council have received this same sample survey and will add their comments, also.

Summer and fall assignments:

Teachers will receive a letter today asking for an indication of their desire to work the July 5 – August 4 summer session.

Next meeting:

Wednesday, May 13, 4:00-6:00, Porter

**Major agenda topic: Preparation for June 8 All-school meeting
(TO ALL TEACHERS: IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE END-OF-SCHOOL
MEETING ON JUNE 8, TELL BOB, CYNTHIA, NAT, OR YOUR DEPARTMENT
CHAIR)**

Focus on Learning (cont. from page 1)

discussions most certainly have addressed very significant components of these areas, there is even more to consider! As part of our self study we will write a comprehensive report that will outline the needs of our community and how we are meeting these needs, including our strengths and areas for growth. Each Focus Group will contribute essential components of the report, and Focus Group members will continue to seek our input so that the final product will reflect the contributions of as many of us as possible. A more detailed description of the content of the 4 focus areas is given in the glossary below.

And be sure to mark your calendars for Friday afternoon, June 8, 3:30 – 5:30, when we'll culminate this semester's **Focus on Learning** process with a summary that should give us a snapshot of Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education!

FOL Glossary of terms #2:

Organization for Student Learning: The focus group that addresses our school's program and purpose, leadership, relationship to the district as a whole, staffing, environment, reporting student progress and program improvement process.

Curriculum and Instruction: The focus group that addresses what and how students learn, and how assessment is used.

Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth: The focus group that addresses student connectedness to a system of support services and the extent to which the community is involved in the school.

Resource Management and Development: The focus group that addresses financial and material resources and how these resources are managed.

FOL Glossary of terms #1:

FOL: Focus on Learning, an ongoing process of school self study, formulation of action plans, implementation and evaluation.

WASC: Western Association of Schools and Colleges, one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities in the United States.

Home Groups – Department or program groups which meet together to consider our instructional program and give input to the Focus Groups (see next definition). Home groups (all WAAE departments, Student Councils and Community Advisory Council) will meet for the 1st time in this process during the week of February 13 - 16, 2007, and every Home Group will appoint one member to each Focus Group.

Focus Groups – Groups devoted to 4 areas of study, as identified by the FOL process: Organization for Student Learning, Curriculum and Instruction, Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Resource Management and Development. Each Focus group is composed of representatives of all Home Groups. Focus Groups will meet during the week of February 26 - March 2, 2007.

Focus on Learning Leadership Group – The School Council, comprised of elected department chairs, appointed CSEA and PVFT representatives, office managers, program representatives, student advisors, a school safety representative and school administrators. This group is charged with the ongoing school improvement process throughout the entire year, every year.



WAAE Calendar

Spring Semester Dates:

Jan. 8 - June 15, 2007

Focus Groups Meet

April 23-26

ESL PDRT's

Tuesday, April 24 -Morning Porter

Thursday, April 26 - Evening Porter

Department Chair Elections

April 29 – ballots will be distributed

May 4 – ballots will be due

Student Exhibit: Ceramics and Bake Sale

May 9, 2007, 9:00am-1:00pm, Green Valley

Student Councils

May 22 (Porter), May 23 (GV)

Agenda: Representation in Focus Groups and All School meeting

Community Advisory Council Meeting

In the Institute of Language and Culture!

May 16, 10:00-noon

Adult Education Graduation!!

Friday. June 1, 7-00 p.m.

ALL SCHOOL MEETING - PAID!!

Please save the date and make every effort to attend.

Friday, June 8, 3:30pm - 5:30pm.

Save the Date!

GRAND OPENING - COMMUNITY CELEBRATION!!

The Institute of Language and Culture

Friday, June 29

Summer School (Tentative)

Thursday, July 5 - Saturday, August 4.

As the WAAE World Turns:

Kim Iwasko has taken an opportunity leave beginning this week... Kim has accepted a management position with Goodwill Industries... it is an excellent opportunity for her, and while we'll find another teacher, no one will replace Kim whose success with students has been remarkable... congratulations Kim!!... as rumors of ICE raids and actual raids both create a climate of fear for many of our students, let's think how we can provide them with important information about rights.. your department chairs can help you.