

Interview with Site council member David Morgan

Date: May 22nd, 2002

Time: 2:10 pm

At Century high School

Interviewee is Dung Nguyen

What is the Site council and what are your responsibilities?

David: Pretty much Site council is what you call the governing body of curriculum decisions, scheduling decisions of the school. We are a group of staff and parents and students, who make decisions on what curriculum will be introduced in the following years and also how our schedule is going to work.

When, where, and how often do you meet?

David: We meet in the library once, the first Wednesday of every month at 6:45 in the morning.

Who are the Administrators that participate?

David: Kathy Robinson and Mary Peterson are the two vice principles who are in there, as well as the principle, Dawn Montgomery is there every meeting we have. We have committee chair and other people on board.

What does a typical agenda look like?

David: It starts with usually handing out the schedule of what we're going to do at the meeting and then we'll talk about curriculum proposals, like we had teachers come in and propose the classes they wanted to teach next year. And then see what they have to say and decide on that. We had a lot of stuff on academic seminar this year that was one of our big things when they introduced that. We started doing a lot of planning for that.

How did you get on to the Site Council?

David: During the summer our leadership retreat they were looking for two students to do Site Council. There was about eight or ten of us who wanted to do it and we talked about our reasons why we wanted to do it and I was voted to be a member by my peers.

Do you feel that the students or parents have an equal voice and can you give examples?

David: I would definitely say so because there was a lot of times this year where I spoke out about things to try to give a student perspective and a lot of consideration was given at some of the staff meetings that I went to. For trimester I put my input in a lot and I think the teachers respected it and kind of understood and saw not just from their point of view but from how it's going to effect the students.

As a group have you made a difference in the school?

David: This year I think we definitely did. We had a pretty big impact because of the way that the trimester stuff planned out and we ended up having academic seminar and the agenda for that time is directly done by site council and planned out by us. So I think there was some very large impact because of that fact and of the fact us as well as the entire staff worked to keep trimester out of Century for next year. At least until Liberty opens, if not in a definite way.

When did site Council Start up?

David: First meeting I think was the first Wednesday morning after school started. And that was kind of our introduction meeting. They explained what our goals were for the year, who the committee chair was, what people were going to be involved. From there it was every Wednesday morning until finals week we had a couple meetings during then because the trimester agenda was right there and academic seminar so we had some extended meetings to help those out.

How long has Site Council been around?

David: Each school is supposed to have a Site Council. Whether it's elementary school, middle school, or high school they're all required to have this body to keep the connection between the staff and students and the community.

What have been the most important decisions you've participated in?

David: Personally, probably the trimester and deciding to stay on block schedule. I had a lot to direct contact with that. I personally decided to go to staff meetings. I decided to go to a trimester panel on an in service day when everybody had the day off. I had to go in and listen to the teachers and listen to what they had to say just so that I knew it could make a good decision on it. Even though I was just one student on Site Council because it was my responsibility to at least know what I was going to be talking about and that really had a big effect that personally felt on it.

How do you see the school now compared to when it first opened?

David: I think that the staff at this school is very committed at keeping things the way that they want to get then. Like our scheduling took a lot, they fought for that. They

decided to wave a part of their contract to be able to teach the way that they teach and having a Site council that is backing them is I think a pretty big thing. We're able to make ourselves not exactly the enemy because sometimes decisions can look like Site Council did this and that. A lot of it is just keeping Century how they wanted it to be and not letting things change it so that it's not as good for students because our goal is to make things as good for the student body as they could.

Are you benefiting from this job?

David: I kind of get the satisfaction. Not every student has the opportunity to sit in and listen to the perspective of an administrator and the perspective of a teacher or counselor on certain issues, such as curriculums and especially on the trimester. One it gave me that experience and two it gave the chance to kind of be involved in school and a little bit see things in the way that I wouldn't regularly and it was a unique experience. The benefits for me were pretty great.

What kind of tasks do you do on a regular basis?

David: There really aren't any. Regular as in once a month we meet and that as a student I don't really get that many things delegated out to do. Staff members will have certain committees that they head up when they are looking to bring new educational things to the school, but as a student, my main thing is to listen and be the voice of the students. Other than that as a student I just get a good perspective and listen, I don't have to worry about much.

Have you had any frustrations with the role of Council?

David: Kind of in the fact that we don't always see eye to eye. It's hard, when you're that diverse of a group of people with different jobs and different roles. Where I may see it one way from the student perspective, what would make it better for the students and what not, the teachers might see in a different way and the administrator in a different way. We don't always see eye to eye on it but I guess as things finally went to a close, they end up winding up the best for everybody. It kind of ended up being a complement; so that can be kind of edgy sometimes.

Are there any obstacles that kept the council from achieving its goals?

David: There are a lot of things that we can't just do. We're the first step in a lot of things. In say getting the new curriculum in place, they come to us first and then we approve it and that goes to the citizens review board. They have to make their decisions on it, which it goes in and becomes a new curriculum. With the trimester stuff the teachers had to wave their contract. Then they have to go through a vote that we set up to the union representatives then they go to another board so we get the ball rolling on a lot of stuff but after that it's