

**Dunwoody High School Council Minutes**  
**Thursday, October 25, 2007**

Members present:

Claire Botsch, Bo Cooper, Marge Duvall, Page Olson, Stacy Stepney

Guests present:

Johnathan Clark, Linda Cooper, Karen Dwyer, Kathy Robinson, Pam Tallmadge

1. Opening: Johnathan Clark called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.
2. Minutes: The minutes from the September meeting were read and approved, pending two additions.
3. Scheduling A: Kathy Robinson related that the freshman conferences have been overwhelming for parents and students. As a result, she has prepared the students for the first conference by getting them to consider career paths for which they might prepare. They chose freshman English and freshman social studies for each semester. Next, they went to the computer lab and opened their accounts in Georgia College 411. They completed a questionnaire to map their interests and strengths and were given possible career matches. They also looked at careers in demand and found that 2/3 of them will be in the health-care field. The parent meeting, then, was the last step in the process.

Linda Cooper suggested mass meetings for parents at each level--or maybe a single meeting for all parents--with knowledgeable speakers. Dunwoody used to hold such meetings, but they were discontinued some years ago because of low attendance. Meetings about college planning also have been held prior to the junior conferences.

Someone suggested that parents be invited to a meeting during the school day. Also, a publication called Making Your College Search Count comes highly recommended.

4. Scheduling B: Pam Tallmadge presented some useful details about the scheduling system at Arapahoe High School, which has been implementing the A/B variable-block system successfully for over 40 years. She pointed out that, while the 4 X 4 block system offers some advantages, its disadvantages are considerable and need to be taken into account (for example, Advanced Placement classes lasting only a semester, as well as problems with articulation and continuity in World Languages, math, and the arts). By contrast, the Arapahoe system, which matches our school in terms of socioeconomic strata, benefits all students rather than only the college bound. The school has a nine-period day, with A, B, and C blocks. Upon enrolling at the school, each student receives a book of course options. Each student has a mapped path through high school, and electives are chosen within that framework. The system is also easier for a transfer student to adjust to than our current system.

Dr. Lewis is willing to learn more about this system and might use DHS as an experiment; we would have six classes, plus a "zero" period for activities, tutoring, and study halls, and we would rotate classes from one day to the next. The length of the school day would not change.

The proposal will be presented formally in December.

Bo Cooper suggested that we get input from schools already implementing some form of the A/B model to find out if it truly expands students' options and offers greater flexibility.

Johnathan Clark interjected that 4 X 4 would simply become 8 X 8 and might be simpler to implement.

Page Olson raised the possibility of asking the county to send Stacy Stepney on a field trip to Arapahoe so that she later can report her findings to the school council; Bo Cooper moved that we do so, and the motion was approved unanimously. Page will draft a request letter to Dr. Lewis, which we all will sign.

5. Changes to School Council: Officially, school councils no longer are to be chaired by the principal. We will discuss who will chair our council at a later date.

6. Meeting Dates: Johnathan Clark related that Ms. Stepney suggests we coordinate our meetings with those of the School Design team. Of course, we enjoy the flexibility to change some of the dates, as needed.

7. Media and Public Relations: Bo Cooper mentioned that we could use the print media in our favor by sending more of our positive news to the local papers. Ms. Stepney will meet with Cathy Cobbs in order to foster positive relations with The Dunwoody Crier, and liaisons in the school will channel information to the Crier. Karen Dwyer said that the PTSO had had a publicity chairperson last year for a similar purpose and that that same committee could work with these liaisons. Linda Cooper also pointed out that our school needs to offer more community service, or at least to publicize the community work our students have done. She suggests that we put the school logo on a T-shirt. Ms. Stepney explained that Steve Fortenberry has purchased the web site "dunwoodyspiritwear.com" and has a virtual store there for spirit items.

We approved Bo Cooper as our council liaison for public relations. Gerri Jackson and the PTSO will also play appreciable roles.

8. Design Team: The team will meet in the DHS media center at 3:30 p.m. on November 5. Amy Sue Mann will be here from Pat Pope's office, and the architect will run the meeting.

9. Principal's Coffee: On November 6, Stacy will hold a Principal's Coffee, with refreshments, for all interested parents and citizens.

10. School Crest: We looked at the choices for our school logo. Most of us liked some features of #1 and other features of #2. We wonder if we could combine the two.

11. School-Calendar Options: We discussed the three choices.

12. Enrollment Data: We looked at the percentages of special-permission students; the freshman class has the lowest, at 7.6 %, and the junior class has the highest, at 16%.

13. Staff Update: Ms. Stepney relayed information on staff members who are on leave and who have additional personal concerns.

14. Attendance Update: The student attendance rate is 96%. Teacher posting is 99.83%. Thirty-one students have been absent for 15 or more days, including both excused and unexcused absences. A total of 299 students have missed five or more days. Ten per cent of the seniors were failing two classes or more at the nine-week mark. On the other hand, the number of students taking three or more Advanced Placement classes has grown considerably.

15. Design Team: The next meeting is at Shallowford Elementary School on November 7.

16. New Item: Claire Botsch asked about the status of staph-infections in our school. We have had none reported, but Stacy is being proactive in using school funds to pay for new soap dispensers, strong antibacterial soap, and foggers for weekly use in the vents. The locker rooms will be pressure washed, and we will be provided antibacterial wipes for our classrooms.

Claire and Page said we should let the PTSO know if we need more resources.

17. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 15, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie L. Duvall