

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 4:57 PM
To: board
Subject: FW: board member request
Attachments: Palyparentfocusgroupletter.doc; Gunnparentfocusgroupletter.doc; Paly11th grade parent focus group.docx; Gunn 9th grade parent focus group.docx; Gunn 10th Grade Parent Focus Group.docx; Gunn 12th grade parent focus group.docx

FYI. We will continue to collect documents for your information and for our public records request.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737



From: Amy Drolette
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 3:42 PM
To: Kevin Skelly
Cc: Charles Young
Subject: board member request

Dear Kevin:

A board member requested if we had any additional information regarding the guidance counseling program evaluation. I've included a few documentations that I'd like to share with members of the board.

Two documents are the actual letters sent home to parents from both Paly and Gunn High School inviting current parents to participation in the parent focus groups.

The second set of documents are MY personal notes from the parent focus groups. I was the district representative at the following parent focus groups: 2/8 Paly 11th grade, 2/13 Gunn 9th, 2/21 Gunn 10th, and 2/23 Gunn 12th grade parent night. Following the event, Kelun requested via email that I send her my notes. For clarification purpose, upon the conclusion of the project, Kelun did not turn over any of her notes from the parent or student focus groups to the district office.

Regards,
Amy

From: Michele Dauber <mldauber@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 3:34 PM
To: Kevin Skelly; Melissa Caswell; Camille Townsend; barbara klausner; Dana Tom; Barb Mitchell
Subject: Re: public comment and board responses

Whoops, this cut cut off.

Yes, there are a number of concerns about the district I would like to meet with you about. Please supply me with some dates and times that you are available to meet.

Best,
Michele

On Tue, May 8, 2012 at 3:32 PM, Michele Dauber <mldauber@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear Kevin,

Thank you for your informative notes today. I will respond to both notes together. On the subject of the anonymity of the survey responses, I appreciate your giving me this information. This is surprising news to us. Over the past week we heard from Charles Young that the information had been sent to the schools for "follow up," which obviously meant that such follow-up was possible. We have talked also with Board members and have not heard, until your email (and the similar note sent by Charles to Ken) that you did not collect identifying information. This also renders somewhat mysterious the students who wrote things like "help me" as if they at least thought that such help would be possible to obtain by sending such a message.

In terms of the Board Bylaws, while I appreciate the views of counsel and would never want to see a Brown Act violation occur, it is important to recognize the difference between taking action (and certain kinds of action) and the permissible actions under the bylaws and the government code: briefly respond, or, in response to questions posed by the public, a Board or staff member may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on his/her own activities. (Government Code 54954.2). Furthermore, the Board or a Board member may provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information, ask staff to report back to the Board at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter, or take action directing staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda.

Board members may, without any risk of violating the Brown Act do the following things:

1. ask a question for clarification;
2. report on his or her own activities on the relevant subject;
3. ask staff to report back to the Board at a subsequent meeting;
4. take action (that is, vote and agree) to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda.

The Board of Education does none of these things. Instead, they have consistently misstated their own Bylaws, and misinformed the public that they are not permitted by law to make any response at all. They stare straight ahead and do not react in any way. This is not required of them. Rather they can "briefly respond" and can do one of the several things listed above.

The very idea that this particular collection of individuals comprising this board is going to somehow accidentally reach a consensus is pretty unlikely, since it is hard to tell what they mean by what they are saying even when they intend to be reaching a consensus. If out of that confused welter of bureaucratic gibberish a consensus was to emerge on any subject at any time I believe you should assume that it is End Times. Thus, I think that the risk of violating the Brown Act is slight, if any.

Now, there are other issues that do concern the Brown Act that I feel concerned about, such as your confidential memorandum to the Board informing the Board dated April 20 in which you informed the Board that you had decided not to recommend advisory counseling of some sort at Gunn at this time but rather plan to hire an additional counselor. This seems to be to be business of the board being conducted outside public view, since the public was informed that the Board wanted to hear a report in June about this matter and that no additional counselor should be hired until that report was received and discussed and a decision made by the Board. If the Board received and assented to your recommendation with no public discussion or debate but merely decided to take action and go another direction that, I think, does threaten the spirit, if not the letter, of the Brown Act.

Perhaps the district's legal counsel would like to weigh in on the advisability of governing by secret confidential memorandum.

Michele Dauber
Professor of Law
Stanford University

Yes, there are a number of concerns

On Tue, May 8, 2012 at 1:42 PM, Kevin Skelly <kskelly@pausd.org> wrote:

Dear Michele,

I have consulted with our District's legal counsel regarding the email below sent to our Board send on May 7, 2012 regarding the ability of Board members to comment at a Board meeting on items presented by the public that are not on the Board's agenda. While you are correct in stating that the "Board members or district staff members may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by the public about items not appearing on the agenda" under Government Code section 54954.2 and Board Policy 9323, if no action is taken on matters that are not on the Board's agenda. It is important to note that our Board Policy 9323.2 defines "action" to include "a collective decision by a majority of the Board members" as well as "a collective commitment or promise by a majority of the members of make a positive or negative decision." Our legal counsel has advised us that any communication between a majority of the Board members for the purpose of reaching a consensus on a matter within the Board's jurisdiction outside of a duly called and agendized Board meeting would constitute a violation of the Brown Act even if the discussions are held at Board meeting but on a item not on the agenda. (Government Code sections 54950 et seq.) If the Board members expressed their opinion on an item not on the agenda and a consensus was apparent, the Board could be in violation of the Brown Act. Therefore, we are advised to be cautious and not come close to a Brown Act violation.

I would be happy to meet with you at a mutually convenient time to discuss any concerns you have about the District.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.

Superintendent

Palo Alto Unified School District

[\(650\) 329-3737](tel:6503293737)



From: Michele Dauber [mailto:mldauber@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 10:36 PM

To: Camille Townsend; Barbara Klausner; Melissa Caswell; Dana Tom; Barb Mitchell

Cc: Kevin Skelly

Subject: public comment and board responses

Dear Board Members:

I have frequently heard you say that the board may not respond to an item raised in open forum that is not agendaized. However, in looking over your Board By-laws (in preparation for opposing your amendment to delete the proscription on late meetings because this limits public access) I have discovered that this is inaccurate. Actually, board members are allowed by law (and in your bylaws at 9323) to briefly respond, and to offer your own brief announcements and reports of your own activities in relation to those comments: "Without taking action, Board members or district staff members may **briefly respond** to statements made or questions posed by the public about items not appearing on the agenda. Additionally, on their own initiative or **in response to questions posed by the public, a Board or staff member may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on his/her own activities.** (Government Code 54954.2). Furthermore, the Board or a Board member may provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information, **ask staff to report back to the Board at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter, or take action directing staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda.** (Government Code 54954.2) Please see: <http://pausd.org/community/board/downloads/PoliciesStandard.pdf>

This means that you may indeed "briefly respond," or make an announcement regarding your own activities, or may ask Staff to report back, or may direct staff to place the item on the agenda in the future. You are not required by law to merely stare at us without speaking on matters of great public importance. I am sending you this message along with the quoted text today because at tomorrow's board meeting you will be hearing a lot of tough public questions and comments on the failure of the district to properly read, analyze, and follow up on the open-ended survey responses from Gunn High School. In particular, as you well know, we have identified more than 2 dozen students who needed some follow up at Gunn who were literally crying out for help in the survey comment box (and no similar students at Paly, a point I will also make tomorrow). The fact that district staff failed to read and follow up on these potentially at-risk students (including one who stated that he was considering running away from home) is a breach of trust between the district and the Gunn parent community. We feel that this failure deserves an investigation into precisely what happened, why, and what protocols or personnel actions are needed so that it cannot happen again.

You will also hear tough comments and questions on the Superintendent's 4/20 memorandum to you stating that he would not be recommending advisory for Gunn but would instead recommend hiring another counselor, and one college advisor, a decision that has not yet been announced to the public.

You will be called upon to comment on these matters. We will at that time recite the above quoted passage from your own by-laws that make it clear that you are not, as you have stated so many times, forbidden by law from commenting, and I and other members of the public will ask you to comment on our request for an investigation.

I am sending you the bylaw ahead of time as I suspect you are unfamiliar with this rule since some of you have misstated it on many prior occasions.

Regards,

Michele Dauber

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 1:48 PM
To: Michele Dauber
Subject: RE: public comment and board responses

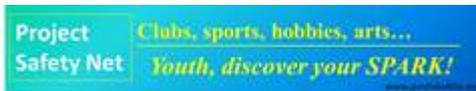
Hi Michele:

I want to make sure you are aware that we do not have the ability to tie specific student responses to the survey results. In the survey spreadsheet you received, there are blank columns for first name, last name, and email address. However, we did NOT ask these questions on the survey. There is no identifying data to particular students.

I hope this is helpful.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737



From: Michele Dauber [<mailto:mldauber@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 10:36 PM
To: Camille Townsend; Barbara Klausner; Melissa Caswell; Dana Tom; Barb Mitchell
Cc: Kevin Skelly
Subject: public comment and board responses

Dear Board Members:

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You will also hear tough comments and questions on the Superintendent's 4/20 memorandum to you stating that he would not be recommending advisory for Gunn but would instead recommend hiring another counselor, and one college advisor, a decision that has not yet been announced to the public.

You will be called upon to comment on these matters. We will at that time recite the above quoted passage from your own by-laws that make it clear that you are not, as you have stated so many times, forbidden by law from commenting, and I and other members of the public will ask you to comment on our request for an investigation.

I am sending you the bylaw ahead of time as I suspect you are unfamiliar with this rule since some of you have misstated it on many prior occasions.

Regards,
Michele Dauber

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 1:43 PM
To: Michele Dauber
Subject: RE: public comment and board responses

Dear Michele,

I have consulted with our District's legal counsel regarding the email below sent to our Board send on May 7, 2012 regarding the ability of Board members to comment at a Board meeting on items presented by the public that are not on the Board's agenda. While you are correct in stating that the "Board members or district staff members may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by the public about items not appearing on the agenda" under Government Code section 54954.2 and Board Policy 9323, if no action is taken on matters that are not on the Board's agenda. It is important to note that our Board Policy 9323.2 defines "action" to include "a collective decision by a majority of the Board members" as well as "a collective commitment or promise by a majority of the members of make a positive or negative decision." Our legal counsel has advised us that any communication between a majority of the Board members for the purpose of reaching a consensus on a matter within the Board's jurisdiction outside of a duly called and agendized Board meeting would constitute a violation of the Brown Act even if the discussions are held at Board meeting but on a item not on the agenda. (Government Code sections 54950 et seq.) If the Board members expressed their opinion on an item not on the agenda and a consensus was apparent, the Board could be in violation of the Brown Act. Therefore, we are advised to be cautious and not come close to a Brown Act violation.

I would be happy to meet with you at a mutually convenient time to discuss any concerns you have about the District.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737



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You will also hear tough comments and questions on the Superintendent's 4/20 memorandum to you stating that he would not be recommending advisory for Gunn but would instead recommend hiring another counselor, and one college advisor, a decision that has not yet been announced to the public.

You will be called upon to comment on these matters. We will at that time recite the above quoted passage from your own by-laws that make it clear that you are not, as you have stated so many times, forbidden by law from commenting, and I and other members of the public will ask you to comment on our request for an investigation.

I am sending you the bylaw ahead of time as I suspect you are unfamiliar with this rule since some of you have misstated it on many prior occasions.

Regards,
Michele Dauber

From: Ken Dauber <kenneth.dauber@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 1:32 PM
To: Melissa Caswell; Barbara Klausner; Camille Townsend; Dana Tom; Barb Mitchell
Cc: Kevin Skelly; Charles Young
Subject: Talking about equity this evening
Attachments: skelly_boe_counseling_memo.pdf

Dear Board members,

You have two major issues in front of you over the next month -- A-G high school graduation alignment, and guidance at Gunn. Both of these topics raise fundamental issues of equity among students in our district. We hope that you will stay focused on that core value on both of these issues. We're strongly supporting the Superintendent's proposal for A-G high school graduation alignment, and urge you to continue to insist that the inequity in guidance services between Paly and Gunn be eliminated. Our members will have more to say on both topics tonight.

My purpose in sending you this email is to respond to a suggestion from district staff that while Paly is providing better guidance services than Gunn overall, the reverse may be true for minority students. This seemed an unlikely prospect to me, but I took the time to look at the data from the PAUSD student survey to find out.

I found that minority students are similar to the student populations as a whole, in that minority students at Paly are far more satisfied with guidance than are minority students at Gunn. You can see the table here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0AkTe89oAASzOdHdtRE9ubmxnWXBZNZloybkc0YjFJWUE#gid=0>

The percentages in the table are of students who reported being able to get help on these issues from at least one adult on campus (guidance counselors for Gunn; guidance counselors, TAs, and career/college advisors at Paly). Since the availability of multiple overlapping adults in guidance roles on campus increases the likelihood that a student will have at least one adult who can help them, this increases the overall gap between Paly and Gunn. I'll share with you in the next few days the full analysis on this point.

You'll note that I've changed the shading of cells to indicate a gap of at least 10 percentage points, rather than 5 as in the previous table, because otherwise nearly every cell is colored green. It's still quite overwhelming.

While I haven't done a full comparison, I'd say that the gap between the schools for minority students is even greater than for white and Asian students. These results increase the urgency of moving to an advisory system at Gunn, particularly given the extra demands for academic advising that an A-G requirement will bring.

I'm also attaching a memo from you to the Superintendent, dated April 20, 2012, that I received via a public records request. I'm providing it to you because several of you told me that you hadn't previously read it. We'll also be commenting this evening on this memo and what it indicates about the "process" that is going on at Gunn.

Best regards,
Ken Dauber

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 8:56 PM
To: board
Subject: Fw: Gunn pulling out of Challenge Success

Fyi

Connected by DROID on Verizon Wireless

-----Original message-----

From: Katya Villalobos <kvillalobos@pausd.org>
To: Ken Dauber <kenneth.dauber@gmail.com>
Cc: Kevin Skelly <kskelly@pausd.org>, Charles Young <cyoung@pausd.org>
Sent: Tue, May 8, 2012 03:32:49 GMT+00:00
Subject: RE: Gunn pulling out of Challenge Success

Dear Ken,

Thank you for the email and inquiry. Gunn has been a part of Challenge Success since it first began, every year the Challenge Success committee does meet to discuss the areas of strength and growth we will bring to the conference. With the work ahead of us next year, our participation in CS is dependent on making sure our resources are targeted for the maximum benefit of our current students, parents, and staff, not Dr. Pope Clark's participation in the meeting sponsored by We Can Do Better. Thank you

Sincerely,
Katya Villalobos
Principal

*Henry M. Gunn High School
780 Arastradero Road
Palo Alto, CA 94306
650-354-8200
650-493-7801 (FAX)*

*"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."
"Inspire the love of learning"--life long asset.*

From: Ken Dauber [kenneth.dauber@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 04, 2012 2:30 PM
To: Katya Villalobos
Cc: Kevin Skelly
Subject: Gunn pulling out of Challenge Success

Hi Katya,

I heard that Gunn is pulling out of Challenge Success because Denise is participating in our parent education event about advisory. Can you confirm? That seems like an extreme reaction. Denise's role in the event is to inform parents about the academic research about advisory.

Best,
Ken Dauber

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 8:55 PM
To: board
Subject: Fw: Additional Gunn students in need of urgent follow up from the student survey

Fyi

Connected by DROID on Verizon Wireless

-----Original message-----

From: Amy Drolette <adrolette@pausd.org>
To: Kevin Skelly <kskelly@pausd.org>, Charles Young <cyoung@pausd.org>
Sent: Tue, May 8, 2012 03:38:36 GMT+00:00
Subject: Re: Additional Gunn students in need of urgent follow up from the student survey

Hello Kevin:

Per our conversation, Charles will be communicating with the Daubers.

I'd like to take this opportunity to respond to a question from a board member regarding the student guidance survey.

The student survey was administered at both high schools via survey monkey. The survey was anonymous/confidential. The Student ID# in the raw data are artificial numbers given to each student that participated in the survey. We do not have the ability to ID the students. The raw data was not made available to the district until after the March 27 board meeting. That said, our Research and Evaluation Coordinator is currently working on a quantitative analysis of the the student's open comments for both schools. This approach provides both school sites productive and constructive feedback from students on how to better serve them. It's compelling information/student voice and the reports have been shared with schools. Myself, Charles and Michael met with both high school Principals to discuss next steps and prep for the June board meeting.

We want to reassure board members and community members that we are reflecting on student responses. We are committed to supporting the social emotional wellness of all students.

Regards,
Amy

On 5/7/12 1:07 PM, "Kevin Skelly" <kskelly@pausd.org> wrote:

Hi Amy:

When you respond to the Daubers about this, please copy me so that I can share your information with the board and principals.

Thanks.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.

Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737



From: Melissa Caswell
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 10:47 AM
To: Kevin Skelly
Subject: Re: Additional Gunn students in need of urgent follow up from the student survey

Do we have the ability to identify these students?

Sent from my iPhone

On May 7, 2012, at 8:39 AM, "Kevin Skelly" <kskelly@pausd.org> wrote:

Hi Folks:

I am going to try to keep you all informed about emails like this we receive since you are not all copied with this.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737

<image001.jpg>

From: Ken Dauber [<mailto:kenneth.dauber@gmail.com>]
Sent: Sunday, May 06, 2012 9:25 AM
To: Katya Villalobos; Charles Young; barbara klausner; Melissa Caswell; Camille Townsend; Bill Johnson; Linda Lenoir; Mary Ojakian; Kevin Skelly
Subject: Additional Gunn students in need of urgent follow up from the student survey

Dear Katya, Tom, and Board Members:

Following please find a list of an additional 36 students who are in need of follow up based on the district guidance survey "open ended" question data. I have separated them into "urgent" and "non-urgent" for triage purposes. There are 20 students I have demarcated as "urgent" including one considering running away from home, several complaining of stress, and several indicating that they need help with a secret or confidential

problem.

As we work through the analysis of these data, the content is overwhelming. But from our perspective as sociologists, just as striking is the fact that so many students at Gunn chose the comment field of a survey as their instrument for seeking help. To them, this seems as likely to obtain help as anything else they can conceive of doing. Why are these students reduced to the equivalent of placing a message in a bottle and tossing it into the open ocean? These students are asking the adults at their school, "Is there anybody out there listening to me?" And unfortunately in this case, for the past 5 months, the answer was "no."

We have yet to receive any response to my request to ensure that the students I have identified -- now 40 in all - are receiving follow up. Charles informed me that the excel spreadsheets (which were very unwieldy and hard to use and you all doubtless have discovered by now) were "forwarded to the schools." Does that mean that anyone has contacted the students who need help? We would appreciate hearing from Katya and Tom that they have located and assisted these students as I am genuinely worried.

<font face="Times New Ro

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 5:58 PM
To: board
Subject: FW: public records act request

FYI. This request was cancelled later in the day and a different version was given. I do want to make you aware of this email.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737



From: Michele Dauber [mailto:mldauber@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 06, 2012 11:13 AM
To: Kevin Skelly; Charles Young
Subject: Re: public records act request

Sorry -- the third topic is:

The memorandum from Kevin Skelly and Katya Villalobos to the Gunn H.S. Community dated May 6, 2012.

Please tell me when and where I can view or obtain copies of the demanded information.

On Sun, May 6, 2012 at 11:11 AM, Michele Dauber <mldauber@gmail.com> wrote:
This is a request under the California Public Records Act for all communication, written or electronic, and any notes or records of in-person or oral communications **between and among any, some, or all of the following individuals and any member of the Board of Education** during the period beginning August 1, 2011 and ending at the time the request is fulfilled, inclusive of today, May 6, 2012:

Persons:

Kevin Skelly
Charles Young
Amy Drolette
Mike Millkin
Katya Villalobos
Tom Jacobowsky
Trinity Klein
Phil Winston
Kelun Zhang

Heidi Emberling
Micaela Presti
Any of the PTAC leadership
Barbara Klausner
Barbara Mitchell
Camille Townsend
Dana Tom
Melissa Caswell

This is a demand for all communication (written, electronic, or otherwise, including calendar entries or other records) on the following subjects, and all subjects reasonably appearing to be related thereto:

Topics:

Guidance Counseling at Secondary Schools
Advisory
The memorandum from Kevin Skelly and Katya Villalobos to the Gunn H.S. Community dated May 6, 2012.
Teacher-Advisor
Gunn High School guidance services
Gunn High School academic support programming
Gunn High School staff concerns
Gunn High School social-emotional support programs
Gunn High School Committee to analyze guidance services
Trish Hatch
Kenneth Dauber
Bill Johnson
Michele Dauber
Amy Balsam
Wynn Hausser
Kathy Sharp
We Can Do Better Palo Alto
Palo Alto Weekly
PTAC
St. Mark's Episcopal Church May 16 event
All copies of the Superintendent's Weekly Confidential Memo to the Board issued during this period (properly redacted for information not covered by the Public Records Act)

This is furthermore a demand for all drafts, emails whether sent or not, notes, memoranda, tables, charts, graphs, comments, and other records, whether written or electronic and in whatever form in which they exist, authored or possessed by any, some or all of the above listed persons, and on any of the above listed topics.

Michele Dauber

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 8:40 AM
To: board
Subject: FW: Additional Gunn students in need of urgent follow up from the student survey

Hi Folks:

I am going to try to keep you all informed about emails like this we receive since you are not all copied with this.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737



From: Ken Dauber [mailto:kenneth.dauber@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 06, 2012 9:25 AM
To: Katya Villalobos; Charles Young; barbara klausner; Melissa Caswell; Camille Townsend; Bill Johnson; Linda Lenoir; Mary Ojakian; Kevin Skelly
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Following please find a list of an additional 36 students who are in need of follow up based on the district guidance survey "open ended" question data. I have separated them into "urgent" and "non-urgent" for triage purposes. There are 20 students I have demarcated as "urgent" including one considering running away from home, several complaining of stress, and several indicating that they need help with a secret or confidential problem.

As we work through the analysis of these data, the content is overwhelming. But from our perspective as sociologists, just as striking is the fact that so many students at Gunn chose the comment field of a survey as their instrument for seeking help. To them, this seems as likely to obtain help as anything else they can conceive of doing. Why are these students reduced to the equivalent of placing a message in a bottle and tossing it into the open ocean? These students are asking the adults at their school, "Is there anybody out there listening to me?" And unfortunately in this case, for the past 5 months, the answer was "no."

We have yet to receive any response to my request to ensure that the students I have identified -- now 40 in all -- are receiving follow up. Charles informed me that the excel spreadsheets (which were very unwieldy and hard to use and you all doubtless have discovered by now) were "forwarded to the schools." Does that mean that anyone has contacted the students who need help? We would appreciate hearing from Katya and Tom that they have located and assisted these students as I am genuinely worried.

We urge you to locate these 40 students and contact them and their parents in order to ensure that they are being provided sufficient assistance immediately if you have not already done so. The parents of some of these students should be notified ASAP so that they can obtain needed assistance for their children.

I have copied Bill Johnson in the hopes that some media attention on this matter may help to spur some more attention to the evident systemic issues behind this failure. I have copied my original message with the IDs of the first four students at the bottom of this message in case you need them.

Regards,
Ken Dauber

Urgent Follow Up

ID:1704944704 (soph male)

in my opinion none of the guidance counsler care what so ever about the students, they care about getting theyre job done and crossing names off a list, i can recall over 15 times where waited for over an hour to meet with my guidance counsler and ended up not even getting a meeting, at gunn i take over 4 courses that i could not care about but forced to take them so i can "meet the requirements", i think gunn is nothing more than a prison to beat kids minds senselessly into a mold that every person in sociaty according to gunn needs to be like, i dont feel like i can shine at anything i do at gunn, **in the past 3 monthes i thought of running away over 20 times** just because of school related pressure only, i think most kids that go to gunn are oblivious of the fact that all theyre freedom is taken away every day and are oblivious of the fact that in most places you have a choice. i can honetly say that gunn is by far the worst and most closed minded school i ever went to, i think if you ever want gunn to be a average school you need to replace every single staff member (exculding a few teachers) delete "the system" and start again, i am ashamed that gunn is on my school record. and im definitely NOT going to gunn next year, i think if who has a choice between other school and gunn he would be a fool to go to gunn.

ID: 1710461457 (senior, female)

"Make Gunn less stressful. It is a terrible place to be."

ID: 1701562749 (soph female)

The guidance department should spend more time trying to get to personally know their students. I feel as if my counselor does not truly know me that well and thus is persuading me to do things that I many not feel very comfortable doing. Also, I think that the guidance department needs to be a little more approachable. Some of my friends have counselors that seem very open and easy to talk to about personal issues, but mine does not. I feel like if I tell her something she will judge me or the person I am talking about, or will not keep it a secret.

ID: 1708221503 (freshman, female)

i want to have longer deeper appointments with my counselor and to talk about deeper things. also although i am a freshman i want to make sure that my credits and things are all set for graduation and talk about my future

ID: 1707762363 (freshman male)

Talk to me.

ID: 1705481447 (soph female)

To have completely confidential conversations with students.

ID: 1705364375 (soph female)

We need more support, and we need you to actually DO something when we come to you for help. When we're stressed out from workload or social issues, sometimes we need more than just

someone to talk to. We need help to find out what's wrong and then fix it. It would also be nice to have some way of communicating with our parents through you... There are a lot of things I'd like to talk to them about that I simply can't. For example, I want a way to tell my parents that I'm considering not going to college until 4-5 years after graduating from high school, and have them not question me. I KNOW it could be a foolish decision, but if I end up making this decision, it will be mine. I'm just too afraid to talk to my parents about it.

ID: 1705093654 (soph male)
actually talking to me might help. hahahaha

ID: 1705057886 (soph female)
I would like my counselor to try to get to know me more. She has not scheduled an appointment for me yet. I am willing to talk to her about what I need, as long as she is willing to help! :)

ID: 1704831780 (freshman, female)
I don't know. I've never had to go to my guidance counselor but if I did, I'd want it to be really private, like keep it hidden so no one else knows.

ID: 1703650744 (soph female)
I feel as if i cannot talk to my counselor freely about anything except classes at Gunn. I wish i could relate or be able to talk to them more easily. My counselor is harder to talk to than the counselor i had last year so i hope i can improve on this.

ID: 1703426555 (freshman male)
She can help.

ID:1703424243 (senior female)
I am unsure how one would go about reducing the stress and overall pressure that students at Gunn have, but that is the most important issue to solve.

ID: 1703181055 (senior male)
I have suggested friends talk with my guidance counselor because they feel that theirs will not be responsive to their problems and I believe they need help from an adult.

ID: 1703179136 (soph female)
i dont feel like i can talk to my counselor about personal issues at all. also soemtimes they dont hear me out fully before giving me advice.

ID: 1702073788 (soph female)
I would like to have a meeting with my guidance counselor, i have no idea about the college applications process or what I need to be doing in school to get to my dreams. Nobody can guide me in this area and I think it's the guidance counselor's job....

ID: 1701972934 (soph male)
when people stand outside there office and even tho there helping someone else, they should take a minute to ask whats wrong or tell the student if its important or a serious issue instead of writing whats wrong in a peice of paper and wait for them to read it and sometimes they dont even call you right away

ID: 1701702201 (soph female)

I have no idea how this would be possible, but do SOMETHING to reduce the stress level-- like having "stress release activities" or having more pajama days or workshops where everyone tells stories about tests they have flunked so that we don't all get the impression that everyone around is perfect, we all struggle.

ID: 1701695779 (soph female)

if you go for help to them and you tell them you need a smaller class were you know the teacher will be able to help you when you need it. then your counselor should let you!!!!!!

ID: 1701460193 (freshman female)

Sometimes it can be hard for a student to bring themselves into the office to talk to their councilor because the reason they would talk to them usually isn't good. I think in order to introduce councilors to their students there should be a one on one meeting at the beginning of the year where students can meet their councilors. It doesn't have to be long, it could only 2 minutes, but no one really wants to go get help and/or pour out their feelings to someone they've never even met.

Non Urgent follow up:

ID: 1701821258 (soph female)

I have never met my counselor

ID: 1703730687 (9th grade, female)

I have no idea who my counselor is. They should tell us more about the course options.

ID: 1705086694 (soph male)

I actually don't know who my guidance counselor is, because i have never met with him/her. It would be nice to actually get to meet/see my guidance counselor, even in a group setting.

ID: 1705457553 (soph male)

I don't even know who my guidance counselor is. I would appreciate some sort of introduction meeting with the counselors where they explain what they do and what they can help with.

ID: 1705057252 (soph female)

I haven't actually ever met my guidance counselor, so it might be nice to actually have a meeting and talk about my plans.

ID: 1706395140 (freshman female)

Get rid of Titan 101. It wastes peoples time and explains things that aren't relevant to learning. Be more welcoming.... The councilors to me seem like they are only there to do schedule stuff. I mean we never see them unless its planning for high school or college. Which doesn't make me feel comfortable to go talk to them. I know on the announcements they say its ok. But still it doesn't seem comfortable.

ID: 1710462314 (junior, male)

"Help me know who my counselor is."

ID:1708076842 (junior, male)

I never had that sophomore counselor meeting that most people had. I tried to organize a meeting myself, but that didn't work out... I've talked to my counselor once or twice, but not about anything college or school related. I've heard that she is a good counselor, but she has never done anything for or with me. I don't think I need any help from the counselors academically, but I'm sure that they have good advice on college search and application, and I would really appreciate some help!

ID: 1708076438 (junior, male)

It would be useful to have more visits with our counselors about college. I have only seen my counselor 4 times, but I would love to have a more personal relationship with the counselor and to meet on a monthly basis (maybe every two months)

ID: 1707979761 (fresh female)

What the guidance counselor has to do is to meet the students, every one of us, and memorize our names. Also, do not lie or blab or make a whole spiel on something you do not even know! JUST DO THE RESEARCH and work hard, and don't just leave and lie that you are sick when I e-mail you that we have a meeting planned a week ago and you confirmed. You should try to be a good counselor that even students from a poor family can go to, not one of those paid-for counselors!!!!!!

ID: 1705481346 (soph male)

The guidance department could show/tell me how to apply to colleges and how to start my life after college because i have no clue where or how to start.

ID 1704940309 (soph male)

I wish that my counselor would actually meet with me to discuss about my college because I havent talked with her yet

ID: 1704844198 (soph female)

I'm not really sure who my guidance counselor is because apparently it switched and is different than the one I had last year and that is a confusing system.

ID: 1703424964 (freshman female)

They should at least try to set up appointments to see us. I know that they are busy, but they need to make time to help people out. I had to change my schedule because I was missing a G period class and I left 2 pink slips to see my counselor and she never followed up. I left a email and everything.

ID: 1701975349 (senior female)

Be less awkward when talking. Make fewer assumptions about what we personally seek in a college. My counselor kept telling me to apply to small colleges because he thought that I'd like a small class size, even though I never said anything about preferring that, and many people consider UCs to be great schools. They could also stop implying that I don't have any social life and and somehow deficient as a student because I usually don't hang out with my friends after school and on the weekends. People are busy. It's that simple. He has also suggested that my friends are stupid.

ID: 1701561944 (soph male)

I have never met my counselor and earlier this year when I had an issue with my schedule I had to look in the yearbook so I could figure out whether they were a man or a woman so that I could properly address an email. I feel like that might point to a small issue in the way the department does things.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ken Dauber** <kenneth.dauber@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, May 2, 2012 at 8:44 AM

Subject: urgent need to follow up on certain student open-ended responses

To: Katya Villalobos <kvillalobos@pausd.org>, lnoir@pausd.org, Mary Ojakian <ojakian@comcast.net>, Charles Young <cyoung@pausd.org>, tjacoubowsky@pausd.org>

Dear Katya, Tom, and members of the PAUSD Health Council:

The recent district survey of students regarding counseling contained an open-ended response field. The district never disclosed the existence of these comments in its report to the board or community. We Can Do Better obtained them in a recent public records request and has coded them and created an online resource for viewing them (devoid of any individually identifying information). In the course of that coding, we came across 4 responses that are alarming and that we feel justify follow up from the school. Based on our conversations with staff we believe that it is possible that the school has not seen this data and has had no opportunity for follow up.

We believe that there may be more such responses in the data but these 4 leapt out at us for additional follow up by the school and we did not want to wait to review all the data prior to contacting you. We are now transmitting to you the comments of these students, along with their unique identifier from the data. We believe that you should, from that identifier, be able to locate this student's identity in your records, because the original spreadsheet that we received from Amy Drollette contained a deleted field for the student's name. We have not published this unique ID on the web because we are concerned that it may be individually identifiable (even though the district should not have disclosed it to us if it is). Therefore we have created unique WCDB identifiers instead.

We urge you to locate these four students and contact them and their parents in order to ensure that they are being provided sufficient assistance immediately if you have not already done so. The parents of these students should be notified ASAP so that they can obtain needed assistance for their children and if the district has been sitting on that information rather than sharing it with parents then it would constitute a serious failure.

Best regards,
Ken Dauber
We Can Do Better Palo Alto

Gunn: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AkTe89oAASzOdDNPVHNmeEYxcm1QQWxkMGo1M1J4NHc#gid=0>

Paly: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AkTe89oAASzOdF9TclZuR1FySkZhZnZTa0t4a2RLenc#gid=0>

Student: 1705472651

The Guidance Counseling has helped me tremendously, along with ACS. The only thing is that I wish I was able to meet with my counselor more often and talk about my worries concerning colleges, and just overall my future. I constantly feel overwhelmed and exhausted from school worries and workload. The atmosphere in Gunn creates almost too much pressure. Everyone seems to strive for "the perfect Gunn student" which means you have top grades, excel in athletics/music/or something other than academics, look good, and do crazy amount of community service and such get into top notch college. Everything at Gunn is centered around academics, which makes it such a great school, but at the same time, its the thing that stresses everyone out. I personally had a huge breakdown from all the pressure (plus some added things going on at home) last semester that caused my grades to slip, I missed a lot of school, and I felt helpless and that I had failed. I'm doing better now thanks to ACS and some understanding teachers, but that pressure and overwhelming feelings have not gone away. Just overall the pressure to succeed in Gunn is too much. The mentality is set as, "failing is not an

option", and that scares me. I'm so scared of messing up. I'm so afraid of having a GPA lower than 3.7. I'm afraid I haven't done enough to have an interesting story to tell colleges. I'm worried I won't get into a good college. I'm just really nervous about my future. Gunn makes me feel that my grades here can make or break it. I need more help with the college process, and though I have mentioned this to my counselor, I feel like I'm still lost. I'm not sure where to find financial aid or who helps with that. I know Mr. Lang, but do I make an appointment? Where is his office? Also I have no idea what I want to do in life, and I feel like I haven't been given the opportunities or even the time to look for those opportunities in order to try other things and experience more out of school. And this is my main concern: THERE IS TOO MUCH WORKLOAD. I am not able to hold a job, while pursuing my art interests, finding time for community service, and then study, finish homework to get good grades. I also need time to rest between all these activities, and with the amount of work I get each night; it's absolutely impossible. There have been so many projects, interesting programs, art opportunities, etc that I've been wanting to pursue, but I can't with all my homework. I would just like an open weekend where the amount of hw is reasonable so I can take Saturday to go to a museum in San Francisco, the other day to do art, the next to study for SATs. Instead I have on average 2 hours of hw per class out of 6 of my 7 classes. I stay up until 2 am daily. I get VERY little sleep. I am constantly tired, worried, overwhelmed, and sometimes this bubbles down to feelings of depression. I just can't take all the work. And it's not that I feel lazy or I don't want to learn--I actually love learning! I love sitting in class and learning new things. I love to read and find out more. I like to go to museums, read interesting articles, watch cool documentaries, make art, take pictures, travel--just overall find out and explore new things...and I want to be able to learn more and more things, not be confined to just those 6 classes that drench me with homework. Last semester I would just freeze up sometimes from all the pressure and I ended up getting really depressed and would sleep all day and do nothing--which then made me feel even worse. Things are better though thanks to the amazing teachers here at Gunn that are so supportive and are available to answer any questions. So overall, this long rant is just basically that I love Gunn because it has a great staff and has great challenging classes, but I feel like the workload should be less if possible or deadlines extended.

Student: 1706498117

Ask me more about my class because I'm stuck in my "ALL SUBJECT" right now !!!!! I fell helpless and disappointed right now . I feel very upset and I'm a transfer student from china so i need more help. I really need your helping hand and I'm a ELL2 student . I need help.

Student: 1710340940

be in the office more. I had a panic attack, and there was some sort of counselor meeting. Everyone was gone, and I had no one to talk to. It was horrible. I had no where to go, and i needed to talk to someone. I can never find my counselor when i need it.

Student: 1710461563

I would like to feel like my counselor truly knows who I am. I know that a lot of colleges ask for letters from counselors and I don't think my counselor knows very much about me at all. We hardly ever interact - it seems like counselors are holed up in their offices all day. I honestly don't even know what they do except when they manage class changes at the beginnings of semesters behind the locked doors of the guidance office. Overall, it seems like a very unapproachable resource for me. I have been having family problems and been breaking under a heavy academic and extracurricular load this year, but I don't feel like I can go to my counselor. I only see her in the context of class changes and I see that aspect of her job in a negative light because of the obvious distaste everyone seems to have for doing this one task which can have a huge impact on our lives as students. I don't know how this situation could be fixed, but perhaps if counselors met with students more or if their environment was more welcoming to students (open office hours?) it would help, but at this point I feel as though my counselor has hardly done anything for me.

From: Kevin Skelly
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 8:18 AM
To: board
Subject: FW: public records act request

FYI.

Kevin

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Palo Alto Unified School District
(650) 329-3737



From: Michele Dauber [mailto:mldauber@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 06, 2012 10:39 PM
To: Kevin Skelly; Charles Young
Subject: Re: public records act request

Please cancel the request that I sent to you earlier today, and substitute for it the following:

This is a request under the California Public Records Act for all communication, written or electronic, and any notes or records of in-person or oral communications on any of the following topics involving any of the people listed below, during the period beginning August 1, 2011 and ending at the time the request is fulfilled, inclusive of today, May 6, 2012.

This is furthermore a demand for all drafts, emails whether sent or not, notes, memoranda, tables, charts, graphs, comments, and other records, whether written or electronic and in whatever form in which they exist, authored or possessed by any, some or all of the below listed persons on any of the below listed topics.

Topics:

Guidance Counseling at Secondary Schools

Advisory

The memorandum from Kevin Skelly and Katya Villalobos to the Gunn H.S. Community dated May 6, 2012

Teacher-Advisor

Gunn High School guidance services

Gunn High School academic support programming

Gunn High School social-emotional support programs

Gunn High School Committee to analyze guidance services

Gunn High School college counseling

Kenneth Dauber

Michele Dauber

We Can Do Better Palo Alto

St. Mark's Episcopal Church May 16, 2012 event

All copies of the Superintendent's Weekly Confidential Memo to the Board issued during this period

Persons:

Kevin Skelly

Charles Young

Amy Drolette

Mike Milliken

Katya Villalobos

Tom Jacobowsky

Trinity Klein

Trish Hatch

Barbara Mitchell