

Here's a report on the **March 8 East High United (EHU)** meeting by Ed Hughes.

The meeting started with a few updates:

Class Meetings. The administration has recently held meeting with each of the four classes. The gravity of the potential consequences for students who make bomb threats was a topic of discussion. Students were informed that that the school has identified three students who were responsible for past bomb threats. Each of the three has been recommended for expulsion and is facing possible felony charges and potential liability for up to \$150,000 in damages. The message: bomb threats are a really, really bad idea. Hall sweeps were also discussed at the meetings, as well as the importance of not using cell phones or iPods while at school. (Many are stolen and few are recovered.)

Scheduling classes. Students are currently in the process of registering for next year's classes. The registration process began the week of March 5 with this year's juniors, with sophomores and freshmen next in line. This is the first year students have been able to register on-line using the school district's infinite campus program. So far the process seems to be going well, with a higher percentage of students successfully scheduling their classes in a timely manner than has been true in the past.

TAG classes: Eighth grade students have submitted applications for TAG classes. A difference in the process this year is that the students had to complete a writing assignment during school, without outside help. There was a dramatic increase in the number of applications this year – about 105 to 115 for each class, which is about double the number of applications that were received in the past. Each TAG teacher is now in the process of reviewing the applications for his or her subject area.

Construction on East Washington begins on Monday, March 12. This will cause some disruption for the rest of the school year. The plan is for the construction to be completed just before school resumes next year. The city has made considerable efforts to communicate plans for the project to the school, and the school will let students and parents know of developments.

As the principal topic of the meeting, Kim Gary, the head of the guidance department, talked about a plan the staff has put together to better coordinate the efforts of the school's counselors, psychologists, social workers, the minority services coordinator, and nurses. The plan calls for the staff in these areas to work together in one of two teams (not surprisingly to be known as the purple team and the gold team). Both teams would report to the same assistant principal. The purple team would consist of 3.5 counselors, 1 psychologist, .5 nurse, and 1.5 social workers; the gold team would consist of 3 counselors, 1 psychologist, 1 nurse, and 1 social worker. The ESL Counselor and Minority Services Coordinator would be available for both

teams. Counselors would have the same students throughout their four years of high school, and so as a practical matter students would be permanently assigned to one or the other teams as well.

The goal of the plan is to facilitate communications and coordination in providing services to students. A key component of the plan is to relocate the offices of all the effected staff to the same part of the second floor, to the extent possible, so that the staff members can interact more easily and efficiently (it may be the case that the school nurses will not be able to leave their current location on the first floor.) If this plan is to be implemented, this year's structure that features one counselor focusing exclusively on freshmen would be discontinued.

The reorganization would also be designed to provide weekly time for planning among those on the different teams. The teams would meet as groups to discuss the needs of particular students, providing an opportunity for insights grounded in the particular disciplines of the team members as well as collaborative strategizing, and leading to an action plan and recommended follow-up for the team members to address students' needs.

The reorganized teams would have their eyes on the time during the school day that is now dedicated to silent reading. Currently, all students have 15 minutes of silent reading time on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, as well as 15 minutes for homeroom on Fridays. There seems to be a rough consensus that this time might be utilized more effectively. The reorganized purple and gold teams might want to propose moving the time to just before or after lunch and taking advantage of it to provide an opportunity for groups of students grappling with the same sorts of personal issues to meet together, or as a chance to make presentations to broader groups of students. This might prove problematical, as using the time to, in effect, extend lunch periods might disqualify the time in question from counting as instruction time and leave the school short of DPI standards. It was also pointed out that the group at the school working on literacy issues has its own ideas about how this time might be used to better effect. Feel free to communicate your thoughts on the proposed re-organization to Ms. Gary or Mr. Harris or both.

The next EHU meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, April 12**, in the LMC (Library), starting at 7:00 PM. The principal topic will be a presentation by our special guest, Pam Nash, the school district's assistant superintendent for secondary schools. Ms. Nash will talk about the **school district's high school redesign project**. There is perhaps no current undertaking that will have as significant an effect on the education provided in the city's high schools over the years to come. Please come and hear what Ms. Nash has to say. This project will likely have a bigger effect on students who are currently in elementary and middle schools than current high school students, so please pass along an invitation to the meeting to parents you know who have younger children. It

would be good to have more parents at this meeting than have been at our most recent gatherings, where the attendance figures have generally ranged in the very low two figures.