



Huntington Union Free School District
District-Wide Shared Decision Making Regular Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the District Shared Decision Committee of the Huntington Union Free School District was held on October 27, 2020 virtually via Zoom conference.

ATTENDEES:

Donna Alberico, Suzette Biagi, Andrea Boccard, Kathleen Camarata, Valerie Capitulo-Saide, Jennifer Carrillo, Carol Coffey, Alison Conlon, Nancy Conlon, Carmen DiBartolomeo, Nina Digioia, Christina Droskoski, Sheen Fallon, Kim Gilroy, Lucia Laguarda, Nicole Lennon, Beth McCoy, Donna Moro, Valerie Murray, Kim Piccora-Einemann, Edie Pulizzotto, Diana Rich, Michelle Richards, Brian Stellato, and Leah Van Horn.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion made by Valerie Saide-Capitulo and seconded by Kim Gilroy to approve the minutes of the District Shared Decision Making Committee meeting of 12/3/2019.

REPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS:

Huntington High School (Brian Stellato)

- Identified three goals the committee will focus on at their first SDM building meeting.
- Goal: Putting together a series of virtual parent workshops for the school year. Will send survey to parents to gauge some topics they are interested in. Will review the survey results in November and then reach out to staff members in November/December to see who is interested in putting together some of these workshops. Then will develop a timeline to implement the parent workshops sometime around January, February and/or March.
- Goal: Trying to reach out to the group of students who are fully virtual. Attempting to support that group of students as much as we can since they're not stepping foot into the building at all. An outreach program targeted towards full remote students. Will survey those students and then sessions will be scheduled particularly targeted to that group of students. Sessions considered are mindfulness, fun virtual social activities, trivia nights, etc. These students may feel isolated and separated with what's going on.
- Goal: Promotion of extracurricular activities. Many of the activities are on hold, but some clubs and extracurricular groups are starting up now in a virtual setting. We are looking to promote those activities. Creating some type of virtual club activity board where kids can scan a QR code with their phone and instantly get more information. We are reaching out to clubs and honor societies to have the members create some informative videos for students to watch and learn about the extracurricular opportunities.

Finley Middle School (Jennifer Carrillo)

- Goal: Finley faculty and staff will seek to engage all families, specifically the economically disadvantaged and ENL parents/guardians to be actively involved within the Finley Community to increase achievement on the Common Core state assessments, quarterly exams, and AIMSweb benchmarks.

- Trying to engage the community as much as possible, especially in regards to the “haves” and “have nots”. Attempting to get them on the same page as much as we can. Want to offer some virtual workshops and maybe do some breakout rooms.
- Translating the agenda book into Spanish.

Woodhull Intermediate School (Christina Droskoski)

- Goal: Implementing three team building community building opportunities for students to help connect in-person and virtual cohort one and cohort two students. Methods in which to do this is to foster healthy competition between grades and cohorts in a variety of different ways. Spoke about the idea of doing some school wide reading initiatives and math challenges, virtual athletic contest with a focus on mind body connection as well as some virtual art or music showcases. Will attempt to have one event in each quarter (quarters 2, 3 and 4). Student participation would be a big part of data collection and feedback.
- Goal: Focuses around family engagement. Devoted to strategies to help keep children connected on virtual days. We had our first family engagement night. It was very successful. Had two events, one for English speaking parents and one for Spanish speaking parents. We gathered feedback from the parents which will help us to set up subsequent meetings moving forward. The discussion that came out of that particular meeting was some strategies devoted to helping children stay connected.
- PTA provided full digital access Big Life Journal last year for SEL. Discusses people and how they’ve gone through adversities, power of our minds, persevering, etc. Acquired it right before the pandemic.

Jack Abrams STEM Magnet School (Nina Digioia)

- Goal: Parent Engagement. Want to give parents tools to try to minimize screen time because obviously it’s become more of a problem. Just trying to engage students in low tech activities. Will be doing a parent survey, then a needs assessment based on those results, and then virtual parent engagement sessions to meet these needs.
- Goal: Increase opportunities for students within a class cohort and grade level to interact with peers. Kids love coming to school with their cohort, but are missing the connection with the rest of the building. They’re not interacting anymore. Possibilities are having a pen pal between classes and cohorts, monthly house meeting where they get points, working with the PTA to schedule virtual grade level events to encourage more socialization among the classes.
- Goal: Helping the students and teachers navigate these uncertain waters and help deal with feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Possible strategies are a daily check in, check out for the teachers to do with the students just a few minutes in the morning and a few minutes in the afternoon, just a time for the students to express themselves and allow for the students to get whatever is on their mind out so they could be more available for learning. The other part is for the mental health people to push into all of the classes on a schedule and doing short social emotional lessons. Allows us to have direct contact with the students pushing into the classes helping them express themselves about this time and give them strategies to problem solve.

Flower Hill Primary School (Allison & Nancy Conlon)

- Goal: Continue to maximize home school communication. We think that it’s more important than ever with the way that we’re teaching right now to really be in constant communication with our families and to implement new culturally responsive strategies that encourage involvement from all of our neighborhoods. Virtually Family Nights like Pajama Night with breakout rooms through Google Meet so they can jump into different rooms with different teachers and we’ll be reading different books. Around the World Cultural Night, Family Science and Technology Night to show off a science experiment that they’ve been working on at home, Karaoke Night. Feels like they may get more participation virtually because transportation won’t be an issue as it has in the past. Equity team align with SDM to implement the new culturally responsive techniques and try to get more involvement from all of our families. Provide virtual parent workshops. Work with

staff and parents to provide virtual workshops. Will send out surveys. We had an idea of supporting parents for virtual learning like Google Classroom, how to turn in academic things, social emotional learning, what can we do to give parents some coping strategies at home, to keep your child motivated, mindfulness and meditation. Have exit tickets from these workshops so when they leave, we can know what they thought and what they would like more information or help with.

- Goal: Create new engagement opportunities for all students. To increase social and emotional learning experiences. We want to work on connecting the students at home and in school and the cohorts. We use breakout rooms through Google Slides and the kids love it. They love getting to talk to the students who are at home. They can even talk to students who are across the room that maybe they don't have that much interaction with because of the social distancing. Looking to incorporate the Sanford Harmony kits with giving them activities and assignments they can do in small groups via the breakout rooms. Last year, we started a student council with the third graders and we're looking to do more of that, but instead of it being student council, make it more of a Kindness Squad rotating the students throughout the year. Have them focus on an act of kindness each month and do a mini project and then rotate through the next group of students that way we can get more of our students involved. In class pen pals with remote learners so that they can make connections with the different cohorts that they might not see or are all virtual learners. That can also extend to different classrooms and maybe pairing an older student with a younger student to foster mentorship in the school to connect them as much as possible. Ensuring that Star Student Celebrations continue even though they're virtual to keep up with motivation. We had a virtual Star Student assembly and we recorded why each of our students was a star student. It was sent out to families and the classes for us all to watch together. Including theme days that are done virtually that can be alternating. Something to keep the kids and ourselves motivated because we notice we have the Harvest Festival coming up and everyone's excited. The teachers and students are excited just to have a little sense of normalcy with some fun activities.
- The Harris family created a fantastic picture book about the back story of our Flower Hill Fox and how it became our mascot. There was a video of them reading it and the kids knew the voices. Everyone loved it.

Jefferson Primary School (Valerie Capitulo-Saide)

- Has met three times, twice in September and one last week. We met early in the year because we had a virtual parent workshop early October so that we could target the specific needs that our parents have. We were able to provide three English and three Spanish workshops led by faculty and staff. Two on anxiety, two on virtual learning and two on Google Classroom.
- Goal: Focus on the social emotional needs of our students. Foster an environment where students feel safe and that their social emotional need are supported. Each classroom teacher will conduct a class meeting daily, and this time will create an environment and opportunity where the students will feel warm and accepted and really open to express their thoughts and feelings. We also wanted to provide an opportunity for the teachers and students to collaborate with one another and problem solving efforts, teambuilding, developing positive peer to peer relationships and to talk about and develop empathy. Our goal is that Jefferson students will be able to identify at least one method available to them for expressing their feelings. We talked about this "Ear Poster" Carol Coffey shared this "ear". Maybe the quiet students would feel a little bit more open to sharing something with the teacher. They put a post it on the ear to just signal the teacher to let them know that I'd like to say something to you privately. We want to measure the student's ability to communicate their feelings by providing an opportunity where students would fill out a survey twice this year. By the end of the year, we are going to create two additional parent workshop opportunities. A STEM Math Night coming up hopefully soon and a Reading Night sometime in the winter.

Southdown Primary School (Valerie Murray)

- Goal: Engaging parents to support remote learning. This Thursday will be our first parent workshop on Navigating the Google Classroom and Supporting Students in the Clever App. The trainings are being done in English and Spanish. We will have a question forum so any parent that have questions can ask at that time. There will be one training each month. Next month will be for mental health focusing on the social emotional piece. Then we're doing a how to support your child at home in math and reading. We do Southdown Stories which started during the pandemic where each week we had a guest reader. It could be someone from district office, first responders, nurse, police officer or teacher in the building that would read aloud to the students. Mr. Polansky is on for this week. We have a YouTube channel called "Southdown Stories" to promote literacy at home. We would upload the video and shoot it out to the students each night during the pandemic when we were learning from home. But since we're back in the school, the students loved it so much that we're continuing it just not every night because that's a lot to keep up with. So now, we're doing one time a week. Mr. Asher sends it out in our Sunday emails and the kids get to watch it throughout the week. It's great for parents to play right before the kids go to bed. We're also doing virtual family nights. We have our math Night that we're kicking off in December. We're doing a Fitness Night that our PE teachers are doing virtually using breakout rooms in January.
- Goal: To engage social emotional learning at home. We are creating a social emotional learning site like a Google site for parents. On that site, we're going to share it out in our Sunday emails. On that site is going to be a Student Center and the Family Center. The Student Center is going to have activities that are linked directly to our Sanford Harmony activities we do in the classroom. We have that block at the end of our day where we go through the Sanford Harmony curriculum. At that time, we're going to post similar fun activities in the Student Center for the families to do at home to be engaged in the school environment. For the Family Center, we will have a family flip grid where the parents can all be involved in the footprint that we share out in the classrooms with the students, which would revolve around our Sanford Harmony topic of the month. We're kicking it off in November with diversity and inclusion, which is the first one for Sanford Harmony. We're talking about getting to know your family members and having that all provided in one Google site so that the parents can access it and they don't have to go through their child's google classroom. Our third graders are going to do virtual announcements. We're going to send out virtual announcements that are going to talk about our topic of the month to all students as well as be posted in the Google Classroom. This will allow students to engage with students from other cohorts.

Washington Primary School (Nicole Lennon)

- Goal: A parent engagement goal where we're hoping to get our parent population involved through virtual participation. To partner with our PTA in order to connect parents into utilizing the technology resources and building those home school connections. The parent workshop committee has already held one workshop that had over 40 participants on Navigating Google, Clever and the Online Platforms. They lead an English and Spanish workshop at the same time using teachers in two different Zoom meetings. We plan on doing more parent workshops. There's a workshop proposed for helping parents manage our current home learning. Additionally, we plan to use the neighborhood aid Minerva and any other resources to provide translation because we do have a large Spanish speaking population and we want to make sure they feel included and are able to access the information we're sharing.
- Goal: Social emotional learning. We want to increase students' self-awareness and self-management skills in order to achieve school and life success. We're currently doing SEL at the 3:06 to 3:26 period using the Sanford Harmony curriculum as well as using picture books. Our school psychologist came up with resources for that. We've shared Washington Chill Out

classroom so that the kids had some resources in order to give them that soothing calming feeling we need. Many of the teachers in our building do the daily check in. That is something that we use in order to gauge our day.

- Goal: Cultural proficiency. Establishing a culturally competent learning environment for our students. This is something we started last year. The buildings partnered with the PTA and with our school librarian in order to increase our library book selection at Washington. We want to make sure our bulletin boards and student work and basically anything around our building represents our students and other people in the world. We want them to see themselves and feel included. Through the principal Book of the Month, we have a lot of different nationalities represented. Will continue to partner with the PTA to purchase additional books.

PTA (Kim Piccora-Einemann)

- We did the plant sale fundraiser which went well. STEM is doing a pure vita sale which worked well last year so we're hoping that it will be successful this year. Mr. Polansky spoke mostly at the last council meeting regarding FMS closing and leading up to the next phase regarding opening up grades 1 and 4.

SEPTA (Diana Rich)

- Held two SEPTA meetings so far. SEPTA continues to try to increase their membership through a variety of ways. We are working on an informational flyer that we can provide to donators or vendors.
- There's a Johnny D's fundraiser coming up on possibly Monday, November 9th. Flyer should be going out soon, but Johnny D's is basically donating 20% of the proceeds for the day to SEPTA. We are excited about it as that is very generous.
- Working on sending out the grant applications. Due to the pandemic, last year we had just finalized the faculty grants and we had to hold off ordering because we weren't here from March through June. All of the teachers that were awarded faculty grants in September did get their memos from the Business office as to whether or not we can order certain things. Certain things we had to wait to order until they could be used because of the pandemic, but that money is still there for the teachers when they can use it. Some of the things that were awarded, we just can't do right now.

Title Funds (Beth McCoy)

- Title I Grant is spent on the Title I buildings so this is a way we support our students in the area of reading and math. A lot of salaries for our reading and math specialist at the elementary level come from the title grants.
- We are required to set aside funds for parental involvement, but it can only be used in a Title I school.
- There is also money in the grant for translation services so if anyone is in need of translation for parent involvement, Ms. Allard has sent out information about that to the building principals and they will communicate that back to us if there are needs. They must be board approved in advance so keep that in mind. Must be planned well in advance.
- We have some rollover funds that will likely come in the next month or two from money that was not spent last year. We will likely be using that to support students in some sort of after school capacity.
- Usually in the fall, we do support our grade one and two students for some extra reading support with our Title I funds, but we just really couldn't justify asking them to be online any longer than they already are at such a young age so we put that off for the fall. However, we usually do run an after school program in the spring and we will do a modified schedule of some sort just to provide students that need some additional support with the opportunity to receive it.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

- Providing 24 hours worth of teacher support for Parent Engagement Nights between our Title I funds and our SIG funds. Each building is able to ask their teacher who would like to provide professional development in English and hopefully in Spanish also, so that we can help parents support their kids in the best ways possible at home. It's been a real struggle for parents, whether your child is hybrid or full remote learning or even in person. Everyone has different needs at this point. Being able to provide some additional parent workshops this year, virtually in both languages will hopefully provide some much needed support for our families.
- I work on many surveys (parent surveys, teacher surveys, etc.) and look at data to see what we need to do next and how we could do it best. We're really trying to provide the best program for all students whether they're virtual or hybrid. Now that we have this plan to hopefully bring back our elementary students full time, we will have another set of data to look at to see how many virtual learners we have and what can we do with those virtual learners to hopefully provide them with an optimal environment. In addition, provide our teachers with a shift so that they can focus on the kids that are in person in a different manner because we know how difficult it is to do livestreaming. Although livestreaming looks seamless in many classrooms, it is extremely difficult to do and the planning is tremendous. We know our staff is doing a phenomenal job, but if there is a way to make it better for all, we're going to figure that out. That's something that I'm working on diligently. I have mock schedules in place.
- One of the things I'm most excited about this year is our equity teams. We've done some preliminary work over the last couple of years in the areas of cultural proficiency. We're part of the Long Island Consortium for Excellence and Equity called LICEE with other districts on the island that are addressing the changing needs of the changing demographics and all of our districts and how we're responding to them in a productive manner that's really providing equity for all students. This year we will be supporting equity teams. Each building has a team in place and they will attend PD after school between 12 to 14 hours of PD. They will have some learning at the beginning where they will form a basis and understanding of the cultural proficiency continuum. They will self-reflect on where they are in that continuum and where they want to be and how they want to take those steps to get there. They will be doing equity walks in their buildings which two buildings did last year just before we closed. STEM and Jefferson did equity walks last year and those were very powerful experiences. They were a half day in length where you walked with your team with a specific protocol to see what is reflected on the walls and in the halls of our buildings, and the literature in the classrooms and libraries. One of the things we want to do to make it better for everybody so that if I'm a second grade child in this class, do I see myself reflected in this class? Am I part of this community? Do I feel like I'm a part of this community? How do we start to bridge those gaps? We will be replicating that at all of the buildings. The next step that we didn't get to do at Jefferson or STEM, is really creating an action plan for the building to determine what the next steps are to get us where we want to be with regard to cultural proficiency. We'll also be creating a district wide plan. We know that if we achieve these goals it will increase student achievement for our students as well because they'll feel more connected to our school setting.
- Reviewing our 5-year curriculum plan. Each year I meet with the directors for each department and we review the textbooks and workbooks and online learning resources for each department districtwide. We determine our resources and our budget for those departments and what we need to do to keep our programs moving. Do we need to offer new courses or are there courses that aren't being taken very frequently anymore and why. Is there a better course out there? Those meetings are starting within the next month.
- We have lots of professional development happening in the areas of technology, mindfulness, SEL, supporting English language learners, and supporting special education students. We do have a lot of things offered but everyone's biggest commodity is time. We will keep offering, but we understand that everybody might not have as much time as they usually do to take advantage of those offerings.

NEW BUSINESS

- **(Suzi Biagi)** The Virtual Enterprise program is having a fundraiser on Monday, November 2nd and November 9th Johnny D's is donating 20% of the proceeds. We will split the money and utilize that money in the program. The money we had leftover from last year, we bought a Mac for the classroom so that we can do better graphic and do some really awesome Photoshop and stuff like that. You can eat twice on the 2nd and again on the 9th.
- **(Kim Gilroy)** Huntington Village Lacrosse We are not allowed to promote our not-for-profit sports. We have scholarships to give and equipment. It's one of those activities that unifies our community. We're looking for ways to build the bridge. Was thinking if we can get each coach to do a flip grid or video or tutorial and introduce themselves and the sport so that all of the kids have access and understanding of all the sports that are available to them once they reach FMS. Promoting all sports on the video.

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Future Meetings: January 12, 2021, March 25, 2021, and May 18, 2021

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Christina Droskoski and seconded by Diana Rich to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kisha Fowlkes