



**Huntington Union Free School District
District-Wide Shared Decision Making Regular Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the District Shared Decision Committee of the Huntington Union Free School District was held on March 25, 2021 virtually via Zoom conference.

ATTENDEES:

Nancy Allard, Navila Armon, Suzette Biagi, Valerie Capitulo-Saide, Jeanine Caras, Carol Coffey, Carmen DiBartolomeo, Gabriella Escorbane, Sheena Fallon, Kim Gilroy, Lara Gonzalez, Jamie Jerome, Lucia Laguarda, Liz Matthews, Brenda McManus, Emily Meyers, Beth McCoy, Donna Moro, Valerie Murray, Scott Oshrin, Edie Pulizzotto, Diana Rich, Michelle Richards, and Leah Van Horn.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion made by Carol Coffey and seconded by Carmen DiBartolomeo to approve the minutes of the District Shared Decision Making Committee meeting of 1/12/2021.

REPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS:

Huntington High School (Suzette Biagi)

- Working on the Parent Workshop Series. Erica Murphy and Suzi Biagi did a parenting workshop called “Adulting”. Over 40 attendees. Some parents had their child with them.
- Reviewed survey responses for ideas of future workshops. Some of the requests made were:
 - The most interest right now is improving student’s physical activity. Parents are concerned about getting their children from off of the couch or bed.
 - Another workshop topic requested was tech online platforms and gradebook. Parents are still struggling with understanding.
 - Emotional support and self help for the children and adults.
- We will possibly host the physical activity and tech online platform topics this spring. Possible additional workshops would incorporate physical activity and emotional health and continuing outreach for all students who are all remote.
- Enlisting groups like the Natural Helpers to work one on one with students.
- Promoting extracurricular activities attendance has improved in the clubs. Now that athletics has started, it is affecting our clubs so a lot of clubs have changed meeting times to 7:00 p.m.
- Next meeting is in April after the break.

Finley Middle School (Carmen DiBartolomeo)

- Continuing with Parent Workshops. In April, Carmen DiBartolomeo and Ileana Perez-Castillo are doing a workshop to highlight the importance of digital portfolio. Trying to get parents to help support kids with understanding the importance of completing their digital portfolio and why they need to continue with personalization.
- PTA Meeting. Attendance was low for our February meeting so the Virtual Book Fair didn’t get off of the ground. The March meeting was postponed until April. Still working with the PTA to support summer reading. We are meeting with Huntington Public Library in April to support

summer reading and try to work on a collaborative project to get as many students at FMS library cards to encourage summer reading.

- Tonight, the FMS Drama Club present “Bad Auditions on Camera” at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.
- National Honor Society sponsored a fundraiser “Hero Squad” for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in March.

Woodhull Intermediate School (Lara Gonzalez/Leah Van Horn)

- Next Parent Engagement Night is Thursday, April 8th at 7:00 p.m. Topic is “Helping Students Manage Their Feelings and Friendships” and will be presented in English and Spanish. Discussion about children to start to engage again with friends.
- Spring Book Battle aka Battle of the Books. Small group of core teachers are developing book trailers to be able to share with homeroom classes. Students will be given a choice, they will discuss and then vote. A read aloud that will culminate in some related activities literacy based for the months of May and June.
- Inspirational Mask Project with the support of Mrs. Van Horn. We are still seeking volunteers in the community who will help us with a template, sew the mask and working with our art teacher, Mr. Todd Hiscox. We will be encouraging our 6th graders to get creative and to inspire others for a mask that could be worn at the year end celebration.
- We currently have enough for our graduating class. We will need volunteers if we are going to make it for the entire school. Kelly Donovan is going to be able to bang out the 130 units. Also, Mr. Hiscox said he could make it a project with his 6th grade class to work on the masks.

Jack Abrams STEM Magnet School (Navila Armon/Liz Matthews)

- Mental Health team has been going into each of the classrooms for all grade levels and doing social emotional lessons which take about 20-30 minutes. We rotate so the children get to meet all of us. We don't usually get to work with all of the students one on one, so it's been a great way for the children to know who we are, the ‘helping people’ in the building, and it opens up conversations to things that aren't normally talked about in a regular classroom setting. At the end of each lesson, we give each of them a little laminated card which they can put on their desk. It just highlights the strategies that were learned. We've done a lessons on:
 - ANT therapy in which we teach kids a very simple strategy on challenging negative thoughts.
 - Resilience, what it is, and how to build it.
 - Anxiety where we taught simple techniques on how to cope with anxiety.
 - Our next lesson after the spring break will be on self-esteem, defining it, and teaching students strategies on how to build self-esteem.
- Family Paint Night will be May 6. About 100 families have responded. Mr. Hiscox will be running a Zoom event where they'll be putting together a Monet type expressionist painting.
- Parents Social Campaign in April that Mrs. Gunderson and Mrs. Crow will be putting on. It will be a yoga event. They have secured a professional yoga instructor to present a 45 minute yoga program via Zoom with families. They will have a 15 minute cool down conversation time to connect and chat with everyone.
- Mrs. Tafflock is working on another family event in the math Rtl services doing a Family Game Night.

Flower Hill Primary School (Lucia Laguarda)

- Cultural Nights. Opened it up to staff and families to sign up and they get to share a bit about their culture (i.e. cooking, story, etc.) It's a nice opportunity for everyone to see what it's like from a family that might not have the same culture as you. The first night we had the Prada family from Columbia. They had their friend in Columbia actually Zoom into the meeting saying he made the recipe. The father and child did the songs and we had the lyrics beforehand. The second one was El Salvador.
- Our follow up to that is what we want to create passports for students to motivate them to join in.

- Kindness Squad. Gabriela Escorbores and Allison Conlon are training 3rd graders to be Kindness Ambassadors at our school. We thought about the new students that enter during the school year as opposed to the beginning of the school year. The Kindness Squad have created these big welcome signs that they hold outside when new families arrive to welcome the new kids. The signs are in English and Spanish.

Jefferson Primary School (Valerie Capitulo-Saide)

- We kicked off strong in February with Dr. Oz leading our 3rd grade leadership team. It's a non-traditional year so she's actually going in all of the classrooms this year and working on projects with students.
- College Awareness Day on February 5th.
- We wanted to really engage our virtual students throughout the month of February. We came up with a way to celebrate a famous black person in history and announced it every day along with a special visual for each day.
- Math STEM Night on February 24th. Lucy Marotta ran it with several other teachers and they worked on a science experiment. We sent home all of the materials in advance that our PTA helped fund. They worked on a chromatography experiment. We also did some math activities and sent out a survey. 87 participants.
- March is Women's History Month. Similar to Black History Month, we've been focusing on a famous woman in history and engaging our virtual students with a picture announcement every morning.
- Picker Reading Partner Month currently underway. We have our Ninja Warrior challenge happening. We have optional activities, an interactive calendar and virtual guest readers.
- Tonight is our Reading Night run by four teachers and a translator. We have 52 students pre-registered.
- Our Equity Team created Around the World Wednesdays. Similar to Flower Hill except we're doing it virtually through sending videos. Our idea is to highlight one culture every Wednesday. We haven't started, but we're collecting the videos. We have Germany, Italy and Mexico.

Southdown Primary School (Valerie Murray)

- Continuing our Parent Workshops and our Southdown Stories. We're going to begin to open that up to parents because the kids really seem to enjoy those videos.
- We also have our social emotional website highlighting our focus each month that links to our SEL curriculum.
- Hosted various Virtual Nights. We just had Family Fitness that Ms. Romano and Ms. Bergman put together. We had many participants come on. Students did physical activities with their families at home. The PTA sponsored BINGO Night. We're doing Cultural Cooking Night which is paired as a cooking demonstration and a read aloud (replicated from Washington). So far, we have had Colombian empanadas that was done by one of our staff members. We had Korean cuisine and Irish soda bread which was so much fun.
- Equity Team is working on bringing culture into our building. We are working on having flags that represent each of the different cultures of our students where the kids are making flags that will be placed in the front of our building. When you enter the building, you will see all the different cultures represented at Southdown.
- Planning End of Year celebrations. Trying to make them fun both virtually and in person. Field Day activities and end of year Beach Day activities with support from PTA.
- PTA has many fundraisers. Coins Class. Students are obsessed with bringing all of their coins. So far, we have raised \$1,500 dollars and probably more. They keep bringing in so many coins to the front office. Thanks to Shanna Fallon for setting up the little clear container that the students see when they walk past it. It's really motivating to see how much the groups collected. The money will be used to purchase t-shirts for field day.

- Cereal Dominoes – Cereal boxes are lined up in the hallway like dominoes and knocked down. PTA is asking for boxes of cereal donations to be donated to the Helping Hands Rescue mission.
- Virtual Game Day to try to engage the virtual students and also involve parents.

Washington Primary School (Emily Meyers)

- Computer Science Spirit week with The Hour of Code. Lessons took place during library, media science, and social studies periods.
- Agricultural Education Project. Took place in February where we had a partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Seed sowing planting demonstration via Zoom with Ms. Hope. She demonstrated how to plant different seeds in different containers, the process of planting seeds, and growing different plants. We plan on having the students plant a garden in April.
- Cultural Kitchen Night held one Friday night each month. We began in January and have everything planned through June. This was actually highlighted in Newsday as well.
- We have virtual announcements by Dr. Richards every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and we have different themes.
- February - Celebrated Black History Month. Ms Kraus has made a Black History presentation. and had a BINGO Night. March we had Contributions Made from Women from the World.
- March – Contributions Made from Women from the World and Game Trivia Night. For March Madness, we collected 134 cereal boxes for Helping Hands.
- We Are One Bulletin Board – Flags that are representing the native country of our students and faculty and staff and the families in our community.
- Washington Reads Reading Rainbow – We're recording different videos of read alouds and we have different themes. February/Black History, March/Women's History, April/Autism Awareness.
- Had Parent Workshop yesterday, March 24 by Chrissy Martino and Linda Kohan to discuss different activities parents can do at home to foster resilience with their child.
- Kicked off PARP. Kickoff was presented by Lauren Soskil and the virtual assembly was done by Jeff Dicker, Lauren Soskil and Vanessa Ulloa. Theme is Kingdom of Books. Kindergarten/Nottingham, 1st Grade/Far Far Away, 2nd Grade/Neverland, 3rd Grade/Camelot.
- Spirit Week is this week. Trying to implement different activities that students can get involved with.

PTA (No Report)

SEPTA (Diana Rich)

- Continues to work on their fundraisers. Started the three week cooking class series. You can sign up for all three or sign up for them individually. Ms. Kustera is hosting them as our expert chef. Made a delicious vegetable tart. It was something fun for the family to do. There's a main dish course and desert course coming up. Check the SEPTA Member Hub to view and sign up.
- Trying to do another presentation before the end of the school year for picky eaters and kids who have specific eating or feeding needs. We will have willing staff members to do them, but given the time of year with annual reviews, we weren't able to get it in time for the next meeting so we will move that to September.
- Our big fundraiser, Sunset on the Sounds, is canceled again this year. SEPTA is working on other ways that they can fundraise to continue to support grants and scholarships.

Title Funds (Nancy Allard)

- Title I Grant supports some of the things being reported from the buildings. Title I and School Improvement Grant just finished up the ELA After School Extended Learning Program and the math ASLEP will begin. About nine classes in ELA, six were funded by Title I and SIG. We have thirteen math classes and ten are being funded by Title I and SIC.
- This is the time we begin planning for the grant for next school year so if there's any need that you feel can be supported by Title I, please provide a wish list. Typically, we fund our reading and math teachers, parental engagement and professional development so if there's anything either your building or you would like to address, now is the time to inform me so we can look and see if we can work that into our grants for next year.
- I will be reaching out to building level SDM teams to go over our Title I policies and our Parental Involvement plans for each Title I building.
- UPK applications are out for next year. A lottery is on April 14th. April 9th is the last day to submit applications for the lottery so please pass the word. Applications are available on the website, in person or we can email them.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction (Beth McCoy)

- Computer Science Standards were released by the NYS Education Department. We need to have full implementation by 2023 which only gives us two years to do the groundwork with regard to course planning, curriculum writing and staffing. We are working on a plan to share by spring.
- We just found out that we are the recipients of a Smart Start grant that we wrote in 2019. We get a significant amount of training that we're allowed to do for the next five years. Because of this grant, we're able to train 12 staff members and a new 12 each year for the next five years.
- We are also the recipients of the ACA grant that we also wrote in 2019. This grant is able to provide advanced placement courses and college credit courses to students from underserved populations that may not necessarily take AP or college courses. This grant actually pays the tuition for those students as well as provides some support to ensure their success. We're able to pay the tuition for AP course and support for that coursework for 30 students per year.
- We are in the midst of writing the Learning Technology grant with the assistance of Marybeth Robinette which is due in April to fund some additional technology supports, software and devices. If awarded, that grant will be a three year grant.
- Each of our buildings now will have an action plan for next year. We are looking to train another group on the topic of inclusivity for next year and keep the original group here to ensure that the action plan is being implemented as we move into next year.
- After School Extended Learning Program – We weren't sure how running it virtually after school when kids got home. We had great attendance considering the circumstances. It was very successful.

NEW BUSINESS

- N/A

Future Meetings: May 18, 2021

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Michelle Richards and seconded by Edie Pulizzotto to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kisha Fowlkes