



Huntington Union Free School District
District-Wide Shared Decision Making Regular Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2021

OPENING MEETING:

The Regular Meeting of the District Shared Decision Committee of the Huntington Union Free School District was called to order at 4:00 p.m. on October 27, 2021 virtually via Zoom conference. A motion made by Edie Pulizzotto and seconded by Carmen DiBartolomeo to begin the meeting.

ATTENDEES:

Nancy Allard, Jill Amott-Erwig, Melissa Anderson, Suzette Biagi, Valerie Capitulo-Saide, Jeanine Caras, Carmen DiBartolomeo, Jennifer Gregory, Sarrit Haik, Jaime Jerome, Catherine Juliano, Lucia Laguarda, Melissa Lapp, Toniann Mangan, Liz Matthews, Beth McCoy, Keith Meyers, Priya Mondkar, Valerie Murray, Denise Murtagh, Scott Oshrin, Jenna Prada, Edie Pulizzotto, Debra Ravo, Eric Reynolds, Diana Rich, Michelle Richards, Catherine Schaeffer, Meredith Shanley, Melissa Stark and Desirae Stropoli.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion made by Valerie Capitulo-Saide and seconded by Denise Murtagh to approve the minutes of the District Shared Decision Making Committee meeting of 5/18/2021.

REPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS:

Huntington High School (Edie Pulizzotto/Suzi Biagi)

- Recruiting students to the building Shared Decision Making team. Possibly inviting Honor Society, Student Government and Pride Award groups to join SDM. Great experience for students to see how the administration works.
- Goal was to have the Parent Wellness Fair outdoors instead of indoors so that people would be able to walk around and meet some of the clubs.
- No Homework Family Engagement Night. Will work with the PTA to assist with getting special deals from local businesses so that families could go out and be engaged with one another. They are discussing about going into the village with possibly a sticker that recognizes them as a partner in our "No Homework Night". Google form survey to measure the success of the program.
- There's a shoe collection in progress for people in need of footwear in the main lobby. If anyone is cleaning out their closet, please consider donating.

Finley Middle School (Carmen DiBartolomeo)

- Met and reviewed goals from last year and what we worked on last year consisting of the parent workshops and the assembly for SEL on bullying. We were also working on the welcome packet that we reviewed with the guidance department that is given to new students and the welcome video created by current students to welcome new students which didn't get completed last

year. We had several students complete the BINGO Reading Challenge and they were excited to receive gift cards donated by the PTA.

- Our new goals for this year are:
 - To further explore and establish culturally responsive and transformative K-12 learning environments designed to meet the needs of individual learners with a diverse school community.
 - Build upon existing means of home school communication and collaboration in an effort to address family needs under the current pandemic conditions and beyond.
- The first PTA meeting was held virtually. Looking to hold an in person meeting and possibly include a speaker and/or a book fair so that there will be student and parent involvement in an activity during the PTA meeting to further that established connection with home and school.
- Principal Roethel plans to send out a parent survey to see what parent workshop topics parents would be interested in attending. Perhaps on topics such as time management, homework help or an upcoming app called Parents Square. Survey is also looking for suggestions for assemblies to present to students such as anti-bullying, cyber safety or digital citizenship.
- Looking to build more school/team spirit by doing teen themes with activities on a monthly basis to try and build camaraderie in school.

Woodhull Intermediate School (Keith Meyers/Priya Mondkar)

- One of our goals is to beautify our school. The PTA has helped us with some plantings in front of the building. They will also donate stencils that will be used to paint the hallways. The hallways are being painted the school colors of blue and white. We are getting new bulletin boards to display the students' work in the hallways. We have two beautiful courtyards that we will maintain. Years ago, Todd Hiscox built a pond in one of the courtyards and it is one of the most beautiful spaces we have at Woodhull.
- Another goal is to create enrichment opportunities for students. Trying to give third graders that are choosing a school for next year a good reason to come to Woodhull showing them what makes Woodhull unique. Working with the librarians to create makerspace opportunities during lunch recess. Mr. Oshrin has created a 3-on-3 basketball tournament for 6th graders during recess. This will help give some structure at recess and give the kids something to do and make school more fun as COVID took away a lot of fun so this going to bring fun things back.
- Woodhull is the world/foreign language school. Our students start their process of learning a foreign language in grade 6. When they are in 5th grade, students are exposed to the various world languages by studying different units of languages with the end goal being them selecting a language for 6th grade. Students at Jack Abrams STEM begin foreign language when they get to 7th grade.
- Held a parent workshop last night led by our school counselors on "Ways to Reduce Stress" presented bilingually. They focused on helping identify what stress looks like, how to reduce stress and techniques to manage stress.
- Intramurals, Newspaper Club and Student Council all recently started.
- We will be meeting with the 6th graders in the near future to discuss Frost Valley which replaces the Greenkill trip. The trip is not guaranteed as it is dependent on COVID numbers.
- Mr. Oshrin has secured the motivational speaker and author Adam Welcome. Mr. Oshrin gave each of the staff his book, [Kids Deserve It](#). We will be seeing Adam Welcome virtually at three of our faculty meetings and we're looking forward to it.

Jack Abrams STEM Magnet School (Desirae Stropoli)

- Goal: To increase parent engagement opportunities and offer a way for students and families to share cultural backgrounds through a variety of events. The parent survey in our action plan was recently completed. Will provide targeted parent engagement sessions virtually to meet identified needs and provide parents with tools to support and supplement activities missing in today's virtual world such as outdoor activities or other non-screen time related events.
- Goal: Increase opportunities for students to feel connected to teachers and the school community to minimize feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. This would include an expansion of

our house system. We use the Ron Clark Academy version of the house system, in which all of our students are separated into four difference houses and earn house points to unify the school and the students. Implementation of a daily check in and check out system and how to cope with COVID lesson provided on a rotating basis by school mental health staff.

- Goal: To expand on student access to support which is serviced via social and emotional programs conducted by the mental health team. Student Support Services will identify needs based on observations and student input and develop 20 minute intervention programs that can be delivered to students in all grade levels.
- Revamping the library and updating the collection of books. Donna Moro obtained a wish list from teachers and Angela Berner to deliver boxes of books for each class.

Flower Hill Primary School (Jeanine Caras/Debra Ravo)

- We met and discussed what worked last year for us. We held three cultural nights where we had a lot of parent and student involvement.
- Goal: Continue to maximize the home school communication. Welcoming Committee will greet new students with a welcome sign in their native language as they get off the bus. When the new student gets to his/her classroom, there's a welcoming committee there as well to welcome them to the classroom. Working on a PTA buddy system where a PTA parent would reach out and connect with one of our new families to provide information and guidance about the school. The PTA is in the process of finding 28 volunteer families to pair up with the new families. They want to make sure they have matches for Spanish speaking families. We make sure that each new student gets a welcome kit that includes supplies, the Flower Hill Fox stuffed animal and all sorts of fun stuff. Working on Meet the Teacher Night surveys to assess things they would like to discuss prior to the conference and concerns they have.
- Goal: Create new engagement opportunities for students to help with the social emotional learning experiences. We will utilize the tents. Many of us are signing up for outdoor time so we can intermingle without being separate in our classroom at our desks. We have Pen Pal system in place. We are doing reading buddies across the grade levels and increasing our SEL books in all the classroom libraries. The PTA is providing poetry and creative writing, writing journals. We have subcommittees planned for Family Cultural Night.
- One activity that we're going to start towards the end of the week is having the kids think about what brings them joy. The teachers are to have stickers for them and the students are going to think about something that makes them happy. Their responses will be displayed on the JOY Bulletin Board in the hallway.
- The PTA over the summer had parents read a bunch of books. Shared books that touches on social emotional learning but were also diverse in their representation to represent the school community more. The students weighed in on the books and then Mrs. Laguarda purchased copies of the favorites for each of the classrooms.
- The PTA has created a subcommittee to take over planning the Cultural Nights.

Jefferson Primary School (Valerie Capitulo-Saide/Jennifer Gregory)

- Goal: We are working on actively nurturing the most positive relationship between our school staff and families, increasing the level of trust, support and positive interactions in an effort to create the best possible learning environment for all of our Jefferson students.
- We are aware of all of the challenges that we've had during COVID and with that information, we are looking to further support children's learning needs during this unprecedented time. We're looking for a minimum of 75% of our families reporting that there is a positive relationship between our school staff and families, measured by a school created survey when we have our Parent Workshops.
- We sent out a survey in September requesting parent buddies to buddy up and connect with our new families. We have parent buddies that speak English and we have some that are bilingual that speak Spanish. Our Welcoming Committee consist of our principal, the attendance secretary, social worker, building aides, and parent and student volunteers. We have a new sign

that we put outside for our new students in their native language to make them feel welcomed. We have welcome bags that include school materials such as workbooks, textbooks, notebooks, pencils, folders and highlighters. We're working with our PTA to have some spirit wear in there as well. There's also a parent folder as part of the welcome bag, which includes all of their forms that are pertinent to the class and school.

- In collaboration with our PTA, we're inviting our families to participate in parent engagement events such as Kindergarten Orientation and Visitation. We had a Family Engagement Night on 10/14/21 where we offered four virtual opportunities to attend different workshops (Encouraging Independence and Supporting Your Child at Home, Discovering Math Around Us, Promoting Bilingualism at Home, and Using Clever at Home).
- We had our kindergarten Harvest Festival last Friday. We have costume parades coming up on Friday. Math STEM Night scheduled in November. Reading Night in March. May possibly have Language Nights as well. Mrs. Callahan will host workshops for our English Language Learners.
- Have structures in place to communicate with our families using technology to communicate using different apps or Blackboard Connect, Google Classroom, newsletters from classroom teachers and hopefully Parent Square when that's up and running.
- PTA Parent No Homework Nights activities. The first was an Affirmation Web where we gave the kids some string and let them get crazy with giving each other positive affirmations to themselves and their parents so it was a good parent child engagement as well. The second was a STEM activity where we did the dancing ghost. We gave the child a balloon and a piece of tissue paper shaped like a ghost. They blew it up and learned a little bit about science, math and static electricity. When have the next one scheduled for November with our Thankful Turkey that will be coming. We're getting some really positive feedback on our social media from the parents on it so I hope that it continues.
- PTA Class Parents who have direct involvement with the teachers have been booking out the tents to create crafts. We're doing Halloween currently and are trying to get something together for Thanksgiving.

Southdown Primary School (Valerie Murray/Melissa Stark)

- Goal: Will focus on the social emotional learning and well-being of all students to ensure that everyone is feeling safe and growing in their healthy learning environment.
- Continuing to work on implementing Sanford Harmony in our classrooms daily. We are going to start focusing on really having a mindful minute each day. We have developed a daily social emotional learning screener where each day the students come in, open their Chromebooks and to get started with the day, they will choose an emoji that depicts how they feel that day. This way, we can see immediately how they feel and it allows us to be proactive in that moment if the child is sad or angry.
- Goal: To create a path for students to reach their highest potential in each grade for the 2021-22 school year which we measured in our families surveys.
- We developed our action plan on providing a variety of different parent workshops throughout the year. We established a parent survey, which we will send out to the families to see what needs they have and then we can be proactive in establishing different workshops towards those needs.
- Doing "A Day in the Life of My Kids" so parents can see what their student is doing throughout the school day and what their school day looks like by letting the parents get into the classrooms because over the past year and a half, it's been difficult and we haven't been able to have many parents at our events.
- Goal: Promote community involvement with students, staff and families by participating and implementing various activities, community service, and clothing, toy and food drives toward the end of the school year.
- We are doing a Breast Cancer Awareness Walkathon tomorrow so everyone will be wearing pink. Each class will be able to walk around the building with their families. Families are invited

and the class walks are scheduled by the class PE blocks, so that we get that movement in there. We are actually raising money by donations that we will be donating towards Pink Aid, which is right here in Huntington.

- Trying to come up with a theme each month, so next month we're going to be working for the veterans
- In December, we're going to work towards Baby Blessings. The Huntington Helping Hand Rescue Mission holds a Baby Blessing Event where the mothers and families can come with the kids to a nice big space where we feed them breakfast, they get to pick up items that they need for their kids like diapers, formula, toys, clothing, and all kinds of things that we're collecting. The Baby Blessing Event will focus on the moms. What has been done in the past is we put together little gift packs for the mom like Bath and Body Works lotions and sprays, and things like that just to make them feel like we're doing something for them too. They sacrifice so much for their families, so we want to really help. We will be partnering with Daniel Gale and collecting at our local offices and Southdown.

Washington Primary School (Michelle Richards)

- Goal: Foster that home school connection and this year we will focus on parent engagement and parent involvement.
- We've made great headway with our social emotional learning, as well as our building our cultural proficiency so the committee decided that we want to put our efforts into bringing our parents in virtually and in person when we have the opportunity. We are hoping that at least 65% of our total parent population will be actively engaged in student academic and social emotional learning initiatives.
- One of the steps towards that is monitoring our parent portal. Engaging and supporting our parents in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Haitian Creole in their native language. We work closely with our neighborhood aide Minerva to help support parents. There is a group of families that are affiliated with a church in our community and we do work with them to help our parents as well gain access to academic and social emotional resources. Either monthly or weekly parent newsletter communications that go out in English and Spanish. Our main focus as far as academics is concerned is to make sure that all of our parents have those parent tools that are connected with our curriculum, so that they have an understanding of what the children are learning.
- This year we have two of our faculty members that sit on the PTA as liaison to help foster that communication.
- We have four Parent Engagement Nights planned this year. We're trying to incorporate the cultures of families in our building into our Family Engagement Nights. We had our Hispanic Latino Heritage Month Celebration where Glenn Edwards came and gave us an overview of the dual language program so that all of the parents have an idea of what the dual language program entails. The children and the families played Cahoots where they learned about contributions that people of Hispanic and Latino heritage made throughout our world. Our PTA sponsored the prizes.
- Principal's Book of Month: For September, in celebrating Hispanic Latino Heritage Month the book is Pepe and the Parade. Our October book was All the Way to America celebrating Italian heritage. For November, we have We are Still Here and that celebrates Native American heritage. All cultures come together in December with The Shortest Day celebrating the winter solstice.
- We love our outdoor learning spaces. All of our classes have at least one parent volunteer for the class. Many classes have two or three so we are excited that our parents want to be involved and are using the outdoor spaces.
- Our Harvest Fest was spearheaded by our PTA and parent volunteers. Our costume parade is going to take place on Friday, weather permitting. Our Virtual Veteran Celebration will take

place in November. Our students are starting to practice their songs so that we can celebrate the veterans.

- Book Fair is in two days. Excited to have our parents in the building.

PTA (Toniann Mangan)

- Trying to help all of the units this year because of all of the COVID restrictions. We do also have a lot of insurance restrictions as well.

SEPTA (Denise Murtagh)

- On Monday night, we're doing a Guys Night Out, not just guys but we're calling it guys over at Rust & Gold. They have a heated tent and the football game will be on and it's a suggested donation of \$20. We're going to do a couple of raffles and things. We're trying to raise money to be able to give back again with faculty grants and our distinguished senior scholarship.
- Trying to increase membership. Some people don't feel that SEPTA is for them and maybe don't realize that it is.
- We will try to do some fun things. Will send email blast and so some fun raffles and try to find some good speakers this year.

Title Funds (Nancy Allard)

- Typically, we have our Title Grants. This year we also have our ARP Grant which is the American Rescue Plan. The ARP Grant is helping to fund the social emotional learning program, the virtual homework help program, the ELA extended learning program, homework assistance programs at the secondary level during lunch periods.
- Help to fine some of our Rtl teachers in reading and math.
- Meet the Reading Teacher Night took place for grades K through 6 virtually. There was a great turnout for that.
- Title Funds help to support the parent engagement programs that are going on.
- There are often surveys that are given to parents that help the district decide how we're going to be spending our funds this year and in future years so any feedback anyone has is always welcomed.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction (Beth McCoy)

- ARPA Fund
 - We have several programs running. The Dual Language program should be up and running next month. The ELA After School Program started yesterday to help a small group of students hone their ELA skills. The Social Emotional Learning Program is starting after school in December. It's not for students who need counseling and therapy, but for students that might need a little bit more socialization. After COVID-19 pandemic we wanted to provide students with more social interactions with their peers. The Math After School Program will begin in January for grades K through 8.
 - We're also funding Home Visits at a much larger rate this year to help us reconnect with students and families that perhaps weren't as connected last year or the year prior because of hybrid learning or virtual learning. These students may be less comfortable coming back to school so we're asking teachers and staff to go into the homes to support our families and meet with them beyond the school day.
 - Hiring an additional instructional coach that will be able to support teachers K – 12 in math and science. We're also hiring an ELA and social studies instructional coach on the humanities side.
- We are able to hire a third neighborhood aide this year which has been an asset as we have had two aides for the past four or five years. Ms. Cortes works with grades K - 3, Ms. Rivera

works with grades 4 - 8, and Ms. Mendez works with grades 9 – 12. We're able to reach out to more families, help parents with the parent portal and support the transition to Parents Square which is a new communication tool that we're looking into.

- We are continuing our action planning that we started two years ago by laying some foundation with regard to cultural proficiency in the district. We trained a group of teachers in understanding what that meant and how we could create a more inclusive environment for all in our buildings. Last year there were teams at each building that created action plan and this year they're in the process of implementing those action plans.

NEW BUSINESS

- N/A

Future Meetings: 12/14/21, 3/2/22 and 5/4/22

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Edie Pulizzotto and seconded by Lucia Laguarda to adjourn the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kisha Fowlkes