



Huntington Union Free School District
District-Wide Shared Decision Making Regular Meeting Minutes
December 14, 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 December 14, 2021 virtually via Zoom conference. A motion made by Jenna Prada and seconded by Jill Amott-Erwig to begin the meeting.

ATTENDEES:

Nancy Allard, Jill Amott-Erwig, Heather Barfuss, Valerie Capitulo-Saide, Vincenza Caruso, Paula Gasparino, Jennifer Gregory, Sarrit Haik, Lucia Laguarda, Toniann Mangan, Liz Matthews, Beth McCoy, Tracey McManus, Valerie Murray, Denise Murtagh, Jenna Prada, Edie Pulizzotto, Debra Ravo, Eric Reynolds, Michelle Richards, Catherine Schaeffer and Melissa Stark.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion made by Denise Murtagh and seconded by Lucia Laguarda to approve the minutes of the District Shared Decision Making Committee meeting of 10/27/2021.

REPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS:

Washington Primary School (Michelle Richards)

- November Highlights
 - November 10th – Virtual Veterans Day Celebration
 - November 23rd – First Grade Poems and Pies partnered with the PTA to donate pies to the Helping Hands Mission.
 - November 30th – Aaron’s Law Assembly. Tom Diener came to provide some support to our teachers and colleagues on the various applications that we have throughout the district.
- December Highlights
 - Celebrating Diversity. Principal’s Book of the Month is The Shortest Day. It focuses on how different cultures celebrate the winter solstice.
 - Virtual Announcements focuses on Chinese culture.
 - Adopt A Family for the holidays
 - 50th Day of School activity took place with a math-based focus
 - Last week we had our STEAM Week 2021. Every day was a different theme focused on science, technology, engineering, arts and math. We had a makerspace extravaganza where we provided our students with bags of materials so they could go home and create whatever they wanted to. Then the students shared their creations and the materials they used in a Flipgrid, which we shared with the community.
 - Had a virtual trip to the zoo
 - Constellation Night where the students were able to look up at the night sky and try to identify different constellations and share on Flipgrid.

- December 9th – Family Engagement Night – Reading the Rainbow with Mrs. Kraus, our librarian and Mrs. Burn, our ELA coordinator. The focus was on scholastic literacy pro for our parents and students.
- Our kindergarten students will be making gingerbread houses this week.
- Our family message are now transitioning to Parent Square, so for the past few weeks we have shared our weekly messages via Parent Square and Blackboard on Sunday nights to help us make that transition.

Southdown Primary School (Valerie Murray)

- October – Breast Cancer Awareness Walk was a huge success. Raised \$1,150 donated to Pink Inc.
- November – Food Drive for Thanksgiving
- December
 - Focusing on Baby Blessings where we’re teaming up with Helping Hands to donate items for new moms. Will be sent out this week and celebrated at their event on 12/21.
 - Random Acts of Kindness Month – Each Friday, we are doing team kindness, so one day we wore team blue, sports team jerseys. Crazy for Kindness is this upcoming Friday.
 - Our Splash Assemblies are virtual and kicking off celebrating different leaders in each class that represent our Southdown beliefs.
 - Adopt-A-Family
 - Next week we’re doing a whole team week. Grinch Day, Ugly Sweater Day, Candy Cane Day and Pajama Day. Teaming up with PTA to do a school-wide Polar Express Day where each student will get a golden ticket. The PTA is teaming up to get us some good treats for that day.
 - 50th Day of School Celebration – Did a lot of hands on math activities

Jefferson Primary School (Catherine Schaeffer)

- Thanksgiving celebrations out under our tents and the families were invited to attend, where we did crafts and read alouds
- STEM Night in November. Lucy Marotta headed that up where we shared a book called Dreaming Up and the students all got materials at home beforehand. They were able to build differentiated activities by grade level.
- Did a holiday virtual read aloud this past Friday with three books. All of these events were well attended.
- We’re sending out parent surveys and getting really good feedback for some of the things we’ve been doing.
- Songfest is going to be recorded this year so we’ll be recording this week and putting out the recording.
- Mrs. Flora, one of our building aides decorated the stage with a holiday theme.
- Just completed our toy drive

Flower Hill Primary School (Debra Ravo)

- 50th Day of School
 - We had a theme for “Happy Days at Flower Hill”. Each student did a writing piece on what makes your days happy at Flower Hill. The PTA helped us make a jukebox and they put all their notes in there and we decorated the main hallway bulletin board with the notes so all the kids can see what makes Flower Hill a happy place.
 - Displayed a timeline of toys setup for the 50’s, which was a collaborative effort of everyone in the building contributing what toys they still had at home, so all of the kids got to look at the different toys that were displayed.

- Topped off with a hula-hoop contest. Each class went outside separately and then we were able to have a winner from each grade level.
- Holidays – Set up a Google classroom of read alouds for the eight nights of Hanukkah. A faculty member read a book for the Google classroom each night. We're going to be continuing into next week, having Christmas and Kwanzaa books also read for families.
- Updating our murals which was one of our action planning team goals. One of the special ones is outside of Glenn Edwards dual language class. We have a book represented called Waiting for the Biblioburro/Esperando el Biblioburro which is about Luis Soriano Bohorquez who was a teacher who brought books to urban areas of Columbia to show kids in different aspects of life in other areas. The mural is up. The next step is to paint it.
- Continuing to add to our "What Brings You Joy" bulletin board so the students have been putting up stickers of the bulletin board as they go around as a class or anyone who is bonding with a child. As they walk along, there are markers and stickers up for them to use.
- Cultural Nights – In collaboration with PTA, thinking about including traditions such as birthday traditions, food traditions, summer traditions, etc. just to open it up a little more.
- Welcoming Committee has been working really hard. A spreadsheet was created to match up new families to existing families to connect families that speak different languages.

Jack Abrams STEM Magnet School (Heather Barfuss)

- Holiday Cookbook – All of the submission were submitted by this past Friday, 12/10 and we had over 50 submissions. We plan to blasting out a digital version of that to the whole school community. We were looking culturally diverse and what's specific to your family. We got a little bit of that from the entire school community.
- Mental health staff developed a schedule to resume the program where they visit classes and do 20 minute sessions on whatever is needed. Surveys were sent out to the teachers and parents for fifth and sixth grade to assess what areas they need support with. Parents wanted Family Reading Nights, Math Night, and the Paint Night which was a big success last year with over 100 participants. They really like the idea of the Art Show so we're going to work on doing a weekly art show by each class so a class will be showcased every week.
- Continuing with Ron Clark House System. Working with the student council on that. In September and November, we did the food drive and everyone earned house points for donating. This year we're collecting hats, gloves, scarves, and mittens and that's again associated with the House System. Every month, the winning house gets a party where they've brought the party up a level by having games outside, knock hockey, ping pong, DJ. It's something the kids really want to work for.
- Worked with Angela Berner on updating classroom libraries.
- Student Council
 - Thanksgiving Project – Everyone decorated a feather for what they are thankful for and placed on turkey.
 - Decorating presidents and talking about the holidays they celebrate and what their family does to celebrate.

Woodhull Intermediate School (Vincenza Caruso/Paula Gasparino)

- Focusing on our beautification goal and connecting it to our action planning team to create a more open and welcoming atmosphere. Mr. Oshrin is having our walls painted, so we will be having blue and white throughout the whole building.
- Debating on decorating our walls with inspirational quotes or "Hello" in different languages. Will talk to Student Council and let them give input of what they would like to see on the walls. Once the walls are painted by January or February, we are going to have multiple painting parties on a few Saturdays.

- One of our former Flower Hill parents, Mr. Bergman has offered to come in and donate time as well as materials to create a learning space outside for our students. We're just trying to figure out where would be the best place to create a really nice atmosphere outside for learning. Considering the first courtyard as a possibility.
- October – Had a Unity Day where almost entire staff ordered shirt for unity and wore them to represent the whole school and asked the students to wear something orange.
- Mr. Oshrin is ordering Spheros. There's been coding going on in our technology classrooms. Mr. Cumming is using these ball robots in hallway and all over the place that the kids are really enjoying.
- Mr. Oshrin just finished the 6th grade 3-on-3 basketball tournament, which worked out really well to try to build some camaraderie and sportsmanship. Even though only the 6th graders played, the 4th and 5th grade students got involved by cheering different groups on. Mr. Oshrin is trying to implement for 4th and 5th grade as well.
- Eagle Awards at the end of every month as well as Staff Shout Outs. Staff Shout Outs are giving recognition to staff members in the building who are going above and beyond.
- Mr. Oshrin has invited Adam Welcome. He is a former principal, motivational speak, and author of Kids Deserve It. We were asked to read the book before school started. Adam was scheduled to come three times. The first time he left us with an assignment to figure out a way to surprise your students and give them a little sparkle and shine. He just visited the second time where he told us to look at a way to remind ourselves that we don't teach one lesson 25 times, but to keep every year as a new year and do something different to really be on top of it and excited for it. He also discussed having balance in our lives. Our next meeting is in February.
- Trying to continue with being unified, we all decorated our doors.
- Had an Open House on Wednesday sharing Woodhull's instructional programs given in both English and Spanish.

Finley Middle School (Liz Matthews)

- Working towards encouraging the extra help in the building. Principal Roethel sent around the schedule of the list of teachers and when they offer extra help. It seems to be well received because after that, there was an influx in participation.
- There are going to be workshops in conjunction with Huntington Library which are being publicized at the PTA meeting right after the holidays to encourage parents and students to use Brainfuse, which is an online tutorial platform that's free to the library patrons and is available every day from 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. It provides additional support to our K-12 students.
- Started celebrating characteristic theme months. December is our Caring month so there's been discussions, home videos and encouragement of caring.
- After 2nd and 3rd quarters, we are implementing Honor Roll, which is "On A Roll" which is for students that are showing improvement, but not necessarily on honor roll or high honor roll, but they are "On A Roll".
- Assemblies are being planned for January on the topic of social media.
- November's food drive was successful. We had a book fair right after the Thanksgiving break, which was very successful. We will do it again in the spring and tie it in with our summer reading program. The students finished collecting toys in December.
- We are starting to communicate via ParentSquare.

Huntington High School (Edie Pulizzotto)

- First goal was to recruit students to be in the Shared Decision Making committee because we are a PTSA where students are involved. We were able to recruit three students to attend the last meeting. Hopefully, they will stay on or we might have to get some others, but we are actively recruiting to get the students to be involved in this committee.
- Second goal is to involve the PTA to reach out to local businesses to offer incentives for the district-wide No Homework Nights. Working on creating a sticker or flyer to get the families engaged in No Homework Night.

- Third goal was a Health and Wellness Fair. We're still working on that, which will involve the parents and students. We are reaching out to different groups for partnership like the service clubs.
- In November, the high school hosted an Open House and Elective Fair. The drama production was early November. We have holiday concerts coming up in the next few weeks.

PTA (Toniann Mangan)

- Encouraging the unit presidents to reach out to the Share Decision liaison and would like to have each liaison speak at the PTA/PTSA meetings to share all of these ideas from the Share Decision Making committee.

SEPTA (Denise Murtagh)

- Selling a winter craft to do with your child over the winter break. This week is the last call to order from SEPTA's website. You can have it delivered for an extra fee or you can pick it up from Christian Peter's house.
- Recently did a Pizza Night. Raised \$400. Will probably do another one in the Spring.
- Had a membership raffle where we're currently at 129 members. Hoping to get to about 150. Raffle prizes were gift cards for town businesses. Will probably do another at the turn of the New Year.
- Reaching out to some of our psychologists to see if we can get them on our next agenda to speak at one of our meetings or a couple of our meetings. It always draws a nice crowd. They're usually fantastic in terms of the topics that they deliver to our SEPTA members.

Title Funds (Nancy Allard)

- All of our grants were approved.
- After the New Year, I'll be reaching out to our Title I buildings to review the Title I policy that must be reviewed each year just to make sure there are no changes or to get recommendations for changes.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction (Beth McCoy)

- We have multiple after school programs in full swing.
 - SEL program which is running K-8 and we have two sections at the high school as well which are supporting students with some opportunities to socialize and interact with one another after having the last two challenging years.
 - Dual Language program to help students that due to the virtual nature of the last year and a half, may have some skills they need to catch up with regards to learning the target language.
 - ELA program is winding down in January.
 - Math After School Extended Learning program K-8 will begin at the end of January.
- We have some courses that were just approved last night. Finley Advisory course which will provide students with time for community circles with their teachers during homeroom periods. Next year once per month they'll have an extended advisory which will be a period in length where they can meet and establish connectedness to school, to their classroom, their peers and their teacher and talk about things that may be affecting them as students.
- We have a Virtual Enterprise course. It like a junior version of the high school course that we will be rolling out at Finley in the 8th grade next year.
- Had a proposal we shared with the BOE and community last night to roll out computer science standards K-12 will full implementation by 2023.
- We will have our follow up action plan meetings with our teams from each building in January where we'll be continuing the work and making sure that all students feel included. Each building has their own action plan template that they're working on.

- Some of our ARP funding was allocated towards improving our classrooms and purchasing more 21st century types of learning furniture. We have our first batch ordered and each building will get a couple of classrooms that will have new furniture. The desks are different shapes that can morph into different shapes when put together. They are mobile pieces of furniture for grouping/collaborative purposes. The chairs are similar in nature so we're really looking for a bit of a facelift.

NEW BUSINESS

- Jennifer Gregory
 - PTA going a Giving Tree giving hats, scarves and mittens.
 - Did Reflections this year and had a great turnout of 61 submissions. Winners got their photo taken and a \$5 gift card to Einstein Attic in Northport.
 - Disguise the Turkey Contest where we had 10 kids out of 141 submissions win gift cards.
 - Holiday Beautification of the school inside and out.
 - No Homework Night gratitude craft for this month.
- Sarrit Haik
 - Brain Fuse through the local library. It's amazing. My own kids use it. It's basically like free tutoring every single day. They answer any question you have on anything and it's confidential because there's no camera. You get on this online whiteboard. All you need is your library card number and you can do it from home. I have a flyer hanging in my classroom in Spanish and English. It's just a great resource to have for all students.
- Liz Matthews
 - Our librarian Carmen DiBartolomeo is also over at the public library. For us, she would be a great liaison.

Future Meetings: 3/2/22 and 5/4/22

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Edie Pulizzotto and seconded by Jill Amott-Erwig to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kisha Fowlkes