



Huntington Union Free School District
District-Wide Shared Decision Making Regular Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2022

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 March 2, 2022 virtually via Zoom conference. A motion made by Valerie Capitulo-Saide and seconded by Lucia Laguarda to begin the meeting.

ATTENDEES:

Nancy Allard, Jill Amott-Erwig, Heather Barfuss, Lauren Biscardi, Valerie Capitulo-Saide, Vincenza Caruso, Carmen DiBartolomeo Paula Gasparino, Jennifer Gregory, Sarrit Haik, Erica Jessen, Lucia Laguarda, Liz Matthews, Beth McCoy, Priya Mondkar, Valerie Murray, Denise Murtagh, Jenna Prada, Edie Pulizzotto, Diana Rich, Michelle Richards, Catherine Schaeffer and Meredith Shanley.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion made by Sarrit Haik and seconded by Michelle Richards to approve the minutes of the District Shared Decision Making Committee meeting of 12/14/2021.

REPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS:

Huntington High School (Erica Murphy-Jessen)

- One goal was to involve more students. We now have four students consistently joining us for the Shared Decision Making inputting from a student perspective.
- Another goal was to establish collaborations with local community businesses to support a “No Homework Night” or “Family Connections Night” district-wide. Feedback has been very positive. We have about 15 restaurants and businesses that are willing to work with us. We are currently working on a flyer to send to them and then they will be providing us more information in terms of the discounts they will offer. Working on creating a sticker to place in the businesses windows so that when people are out in town, they will know that that establishment supports our district goals.
- Family Connection Night – Offering different activities. We’re in the process of working on that, but looking to do it in the fall as opposed to before the end of the year.

Finley Middle School (Carmen DiBartolomeo / Lauren Biscardi)

- One of our goals is working on trying to motivate students due to the learning loss and try to meet their social emotional needs. We introduced “On A Roll Awards” for those students showing improvement, not just those students making honor roll. During second quarter, we had about 50 – 80 students in each content area that were identified that received this award. Overall, we had 20 students that improved more than 5 points on an overall average. They were honored with a picture kit and photograph. There will be an article showcased on the HUFSD website that highlights the “On A Roll” program.
- We are noticing a nice change of moral in building with the “On A Roll” and Spirit Week. At the end of Spirit Week on Friday, we had a flash mob with the teachers and students dancing. That

energy is just carrying over. We would like to thank Ms. Biscardi for instituting a hot chocolate bar and cookie bar for staff.

- Brainstorming ways to involve parents with better communication. Considering plug for restorative circles to have parents be more aware of how that's happening in the classrooms.
- Spring book fair in May.
- Built a social media virtual presentation for 7th grade students to watch in their social studies classrooms on March 21st.
- Implementing a new mentoring program for students and teachers. Mr. Bell is going to present it at the faculty meeting on Monday. There are many students in our building that need support and positive role models. We felt that if we could target certain students who need that type of support, we could pair them up with a staff member willing to mentor them. This is for students who struggle academically, but maybe also behaviorally. The teacher would form a relationship with a student and meet with them once a week to be a guide for support and cheerleader/motivator. They would spend a period with the teacher each week. We are still working out the details. We will try it out from now until June and if it goes well, will begin again in September.
- Homework Help during lunch periods. It has been going well. We're looking forward to piloting a homework help database.

Woodhull Intermediate School (Priya Mondkar / Paula Gasparino/ Meredith Shanley)

- Our two goals were for building beautification and for enrichment during the school day.
- Discussing the outdoor learning spaces. We have the help of Mr. Bergman (Flower Hill parent) who is going help us come up with a design for use of the space. One of the two courtyards is completely renovated. Coming up with a plan for it be used by students and staff. One of the ideas is a "Zen Den" where students are able to go to this space that may have a waterfall, outdoor seating in terms of wooden benches and to create a space for the students to have to if they need to take a break or get some movement, fresh air or sunlight. Discussions regarding using the space for structured and unstructured usage. 4th and 5th grade students may need a structured setting with a staff member and 6th grade and small groups may have an unstructured setting, but the fact that it is a fish bowl lends itself to everyone making the right decision while they're in the fish bowl.
- The building has been painted blue and white so all of the hallways have white on the top and blue on the bottom. Things look fresh and new and inviting. The kids have been commenting on how things are looking so great. Our next step is to stencil creative statements and inspirational quotes. The Student Council is helping to draft those ideas and help to create the layout on the walls so it's student centered and student driven. The students created a Google form so the staff is going to review it and help them plan. Student Council members will also help paint. We've designated three dates that we're going to start with the murals and stenciling - May 6th, 13th and 20th. Mr. Meyers is coordinating with Mr. Hiscox the materials, paints, brushes, techniques.
- Meredith Shanley is working with PTA to coordinate some Friday afternoons where parents can come in and help. The first session we will have some faculty assistance.
- We have a new swing set that was installed over the break and kids are loving it. It's also blue and kind of pops in the back.
- We have received new desks for 6th grade so every 6th grade classroom has these modular desks that are able to fit together and they're in different colors that is very bright and inviting.
- Discussing ordering the tents again as we did last year for outdoor time and outdoor space for educational and recreational time.
- Looking to improve the playground equipment. We have chess tables that are made out of concrete with the game board in the concrete. We're looking to improve the seating area so that there may be either more or children are able to use them to play chess and checkers outdoors. Dr. Fletcher is going to contact SEPTA to see if they're able to help and support us in the area of social and emotional learning.

- Looking into something called “Love on a Leash”. We heard that Finley MS was doing it. We are going to contact **Mary D** and if it’s possible.
- Mary Guzman, our bilingual social worker has implemented a newcomers meeting for our new students who have arrived here from different countries to meet with them during the school day to talk about the experiences that they’ve gone through, where they’ve come from, and how they’re adjusting in transitioning here. She met with them today and they had a very powerful and emotional meeting. The students were asking for more time to have these types of meetings so it was very encouraging.
- Adam Welcome, an author and teacher, was at our faculty meetings and he will be returning on Monday to meet with the staff virtually.
- Mr. Oshrin purchased a new book for the entire faculty called Discipline Wins to for us to delve into and have a book discussion.

Jack Abrams STEM Magnet School (Heather Barfuss / Sarrit Haik)

- All about books goal. We got all of the books from Angela Berner. The librarian and the innovation lab teacher are working on the bulletin board with those books for March Madness. It goes from Sweet 16 to Elite 8 to Final 4 to what they think the best book is.
- House system goal. Every Friday this month, we’re going to have the house colors as our Spirit Day.
- We had the Super Bowl in February collecting soup. The house that collected the most soup got the most points.
- House Hero program starts on March 7th. On March 25th we’re having an assembly and there’s a link being provided to share with the students. They can give a shout out to any students have demonstrated whatever the monthly trait is. At the end of the month, we’ll have an assembly recognizing those students and they get to spin the wheel to earn extra points for their house. The trait for March is “Perseverance”. The trait for April is “Respect the Environment and Commitment”. With the respect the environment trait, we’re working on a whole school bulletin board on climate change where every class and every student participates in building this bulletin board on how we can help the environment. The trait for May is “Service to Others” and June is “Humility”.
- As far as students’ identities and cultural representation, we have been posting things around the building that the kids have written. In November, it was what they’re thankful for. In December, it was sharing family traditions. In January, every student got a snowflake and got write “I’m unique because...”
- Mental health team have been pushing into classrooms and targeting needs based on teacher input.
- When we did the parent survey, the parents really wanted more art. Had Paint Night on February 10th and it was the largest response we’ve had. We had 110 families participate. With the help of the neighborhood aides, we had a huge increase in the Hispanic population participating. They did a James Dean, the author of Pete the Cat. They made little hearts.
- We are doing a weekly art show. Every week one class is represented. Ms. Moro sends out a link and you can walk this whole art show of the work of that particular class.
- Family Engagement Night / Reading and Math Rtl night on April 7th in person. Parents will be able to select a couple of workshops/activities for math and reading. Giving away door prizes to entice them to come and engage with their kids.
- Natural Helpers program is peer helping peer program. We’re just starting to talk about it to put ideas out there. It would just be for the 6th graders. Students choose a classmate that they feel is a good role model and then those students selected get training to be a student that their peers can go to for little issues.

Flower Hill Primary School (Jeanine Caras/Jenna Prada)

- Welcoming Committee is continuing to have positive feedback. Every time a new student arrives to Flower Hill, they are greeted outside with music, posters, dances and goodie bags.
- School Beautification – We have been doing murals throughout of the building. High school students have been volunteering to help out so they are really brightening up the place.
- The 100th Day of School – Decorated the kindergarten and 1st grade hallway with pictures of items like toys from 100 years ago. In the 3rd grade hallway is “Step into the Future” showing what school and life might look like in 100 years from now. Decorated with space, did research and students made creative inventions.
- Kindness Squad – Are involved with the Welcoming Committee. Gives tours of the building to the new students. Mr. Edwards has a program, “Pennies for Peru”. Each class is collecting coins in a Ziploc bag that will be sent to students in Peru that are in need.
- Ms. Conlon’s third grade class read The One and Only Ivan and they’re adopting endangered species.
- Working with the high school Honor Society. They’re going to be hosting an assigned story night next week. Chose two books for them to read. One in English and one in Spanish. To tie in with Women’s History Month, selected books on women scientist.
- Promoting and adding resources to our virtual museums to share with all of the schools and teachers.
- Family Traditions – Months ago, we sent out a survey asking families to share any traditions or customs they have. We didn’t get the response we hoped for. We received responses from seven families and the responses were very broad. Jenna Prada reached out to those families to get more details with the aim of coming up with a Family Cultural Night.
- PARP – “Take Me Out to the Library” theme. There will be some images related to baseball, but we’re mostly excited to lean hard into helping the Flower Hill families access many of the free resources at our libraries. Examples are Libby’s so that families can access the free audio books and Canopy for free streaming. Including families from all of the Flower Hill community by setting up events at both the Station Branch and the Main Street Branch. We want to try to give as many people knowledge and access to the library.

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

- Our goal to foster a positive relationship between students, staff and parents. To do so, we have our Parent Buddies, Welcoming Committee and cheerleading that’s ongoing. We have welcomed many new students this year.
- We invite families to participate in various events. We’ve had an in-person College and Career Awareness Day on February 1th.
- We celebrated Black History Month and Lunar New Year celebrating the year of the tiger in February.
- 100th Day Collection – Worked with Family Service League. We donated sanitizer, masks and letter to hospital workers at Huntington Hospital. Sent letters to service members in the military. We dressed like we were 100 years old.
- We have a new artist corner. Our goal was to really be inclusive and to showcase student’s work throughout the building. We’re finding new exciting locations to display their work. It’s exciting to see the kids point out their work throughout the building.
- PARP – Kickoff was yesterday. Theme is “Unboxing the Magic of Reading”. We had this really great collaboration with the parents where every class received a box and they unboxed books. Inside their box, they had balloons, some of them had confetti flying, some of them had trinkets and books. The PTA gifted every student with a bookmark. Every child went home with at least up to three books in their hand that night. We had a video to really get them motivated to pick a reading partner at home. We have a BINGO board of activities that are optional. Every Friday throughout the month of March, we have guest readers. We also have PARP school spirit wear days. We try to be inclusive so people won’t have to buy something to wear. In Person Reading Night and Scholastic Book Night is on March 24th.

Southdown Primary School (Valerie Murray)

- Jeans for Troops – Sending home flyer to parents to donate to our troops. The flyer has a QR code that families can scan to donate whatever they can to our troops. We're looking at the bigger picture to teach our children. If they donate, they get to wear jeans on Friday, March 11th.
- Drop Everything and Write – School wide initiative. Journals were distributed to all of the students. For 10 to 15 minutes a day, they're unplugging from their devices, SmartBoards are turned off, and students are working on a daily "Prompt of the Day" writing linked to social emotional learning. This came about based on looking at data and trends and wanting to build up the whole child through writing and have them gain confidence through their writing. Since we started this initiative, the teachers and aides in the classroom drop everything and write as well so it's great for the students to see the adults writing too. It's amazing to see the growth in the students' writing, in their stamina, in their confidence and wanting to share. We tell them that we know this is your private work, but you can share if you want to. Seeing the confidence and smiles on their faces when they're sharing their writing has really come such a long way.
- Cereal Dominos – The students started coming in with their cereal boxes. All of the cereal boxes will be lined up in the hallway and we will knock them over. It's a whole school wide event and we will stand in the hallway and watch them fall down. We pay it forward to our own community because all of those cereal boxes will be donated to the local food pantry.

Washington Primary School (Michelle Richards)

- BINGO Night – Virtual event. Sent home the BINGO cards and some children were very creative with what they used to mark their spaces.
- Cultural Night – Celebrated Chinese New Year on January 28th with how to make fried rice. Virtual event partnered with PTA. We were able to purchase all of the materials/ingredients. One of our parents, Mrs. Adcock was able to lead us and guide us in how to make fried rice.
- Focused on Korean heritage during our morning announcements and some of our students from the Korean culture were able to share some things about their culture during the morning announcements.
- 100th Day of School – We had a goal of collecting 100 cereals boxes to donate to Helping Hands Mission. We collected a total of 126 boxes within a week's time.
- No Homework Night/Family Engagement Night on February 16th – From our SEL program we revised and adapted one of the game boards to "Getting to Know You, Things We Have in Common". The game board was sent home with directions in English and Spanish and families spent that evening really seeing what they have in common based on the different aspects of the game board. They were able to take pictures and share the pictures with us. Surprisingly, some families don't have too much in common.
- Black History Month – Our principal's book of the month was Change Sings: A Children's Anthem. Our announcements were also focused on the contributions that Pan African people made to not only our country, but to the world.
- February 11th was one special night. In place of the annual dance, we sent home packets with materials so families could create bird feeders. This was done virtually. Each package contained two pinecones and two packs of bird seeds and families used some type of nut butter to spread on the pinecones and create bird feeders.
- Over the winter break, we had a Winter Staycation Reading Club that was spearheaded by Rebecca Krauss. It was a BINGO card filled with various types of books that our students were encouraged to read with family members. We are still collecting those BINGO cards. At the end of the week, we will be able to give out various level prizes based off of the books that were read.
- PARP – For the month of March, we had our PARP Kickoff that took place on Tuesday. Our theme is "Reading is Magical" and it's inspired by Harry Potter. On Tuesday, Head Mistress Dr. Richards and the Sorting Hat along with Professor Dicker went around to all of the classrooms. The Sorting Hat was able to assign students to the various houses. We are looking forward to our students picking a reading partner and our houses earning points based on the number of

minutes read. We also have a 'House Cup'. We will have a virtual closing assembly to see which house will earn the House Cup based on the minutes read throughout the month of March.

- Family Night Book Fair – On March 16th 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. where families will be able to come shop at our Spring Book Fair.
- Family Engagement Night – March 17th is our PARP and STEM Night. It will be virtual with various breakout rooms. Rebecca Krauss has a STEAM room where they will be actually creating magical wands and learning about magnetic forces and building things using materials from our Maker Space.

PTA (No Report)

SEPTA (Denise Murtagh/Heather Barfuss)

- We did a couple of fundraisers over the break. One was at the Main Street Games Café. Anyone who bought something, there was 10% donated back to SEPTA.
- Plaster Funhouse in Commack. It was \$20 per child and they got to paint their item. They also had a dance room. They offered delivery for those who could not attend. A percentage of that went back to SEPTA.
- Faculty grants, which is happening now. We are meeting this week. If anyone has any last minute grant proposals they want to send in, shoot Denise an email.
- Meeting on April 7th. Looking to do a yoga meditation at the end of the meeting. More information to come.

Title Funds (Nancy Allard)

- Grants have been funding school homework help, after school homework help, math and ELA support, dual language, and SEL programs.
- Professional development – We have our tech mentors who are working with teachers, executive functioning PD, Foundations reading training.
- Helping to support a lot of the parental engagement opportunities at the building level.
- The ARPA grant allowed us to find a couple of new Rtl teachers.
- We are beginning to the process of prepping for next year. Will have a little bit more about the scope of what the 22/23 budgets will encompass.
- Our Title I buildings (Jefferson, Southdown, Washington and Woodhull) should have received their parental engagement policy and school-parent compact as part of the Consolidated App. The buildings have to review those each year and decide if there's any revisions or if they're fine the way they are.
- The UPK lottery applications are out. All of the households in the district should have received the UPK postcard. The link to the online application has been up for a couple of week, so we actually already have over 100 applications. There are also paper applications if any of the buildings need those. Last day to submit an application is April 9th. The lottery is on April 13th.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction (Beth McCoy)

- SmartStart Grant focuses on computer science in grades K-8. We have teachers participating in that this year and it will continue for the next four years. Teachers were able to work with one another to start creating a scope and sequence of resources and lesson plans that they're already doing in both the large setting classroom as well as in the library in grades K-8. We will be making adjustments which was presented at the December Board of Education meeting on computer science for grade 7-12. Implementation isn't until 2023.
- We got furniture through the ARPA grant to help start developing 21st century classrooms. The furniture is bright, vibrant and is flexible. It groups together.

- Discussing a contract with a vendor provides 24/7 access to tutors in multiple languages. It services grades 4-12 for all subject areas and courses. We thought this would be a good way to support our students in addition to the things we're already doing. Our 5:30 homework help, doesn't assist the child who has a lacrosse game or is working after school. Some kids have varied schedules based on their life, and we want to be able to provide them with support based on whatever it is that they need and when they need it. We're excited about the potential of it, but it has not been approved yet.
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NEW BUSINESS

- No Report

Future Meetings: 5/4/22

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Erica Jessen and seconded by Jenna Prada to adjourn the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kisha Fowlkes