



**Huntington Union Free School District  
District-Wide Shared Decision-Making Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024**

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Regular Meeting of the District Shared Decision-Making Committee of the Huntington Union Free School District was held on Wednesday, February 28 at 4:00 p.m. at the Jack Abrams Administrative Office, 50 Tower Street, Huntington Station, N.Y. A motion made by Jeanine Caras and seconded by Sara Baliber to begin the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**ATTENDEES:**

Nancy Allard, Sara Baliber, Heather Barfuss, Stephanie Campbell, Valerie Capitulo-Saide, Jeanine Caras, Stacy Fiore, Paula Gasparino, Kacey Knauer, Joseph Leavy, Nicholas Matarazzo, Beth McCoy, Valerie Murray, Olivia Roberts, Kerri Roskot, Catherine Schaeffer, Rosecindy Siegel, Thomas Van Bell

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion made by Valerie Capitulo-Saide and seconded by Stephanie Campbell to approve the minutes of the District Shared Decision-Making Committee meeting of 11/8/2023.

**REPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS:**

***Flower Hill Primary School (Jeanine Caras)***

Family Engagement Night – 1/25/24 – Over 15 teachers facilitated various workshops including:

- Developing Math Fluency
- Phonics and Early Literacy
- Empowering Parents in Coding and Technology
- Executive Functioning
- Assistive Technology for Communication

PS I Love You Day/Week of Kindness – (2/5/24 – 2/9/24)

- Theme: “Love is Meant to Be Given”
- All week long, the students were spreading love with: positive affirmations, kindness grams, pictures, cards and their beautiful smiles.
- The purple that permeated throughout our school symbolized love, friendship and unity as we raised funds and awareness to the issues of mental health. 💜💜💜
- Each day was a theme-  
Monday: ‘Mirror Monday’ – Mirror Monday and Make a Friend  
Tuesday: ‘Thank You Tuesday’ – Appreciation Stations  
Wednesday: ‘Who Will I Be Kind to Today?’ – Create Kindness grams  
Thursday: ‘Thoughtful Thursday’ – Share a Compliment  
Friday: ‘Friendship Friday’ – Wore Purple – make a new friend at recess, smile at someone  
The entire FH community went outside and created a human heart and took pictures

PARP – Theme “Huntington – Our Town, Our Story”

- The school will be decorated to celebrate the Huntington community. During PARP, students will learn about the many places and people that make Huntington great.
- Mystery Readers will come each day for a week

### ***Jefferson Primary School (Valerie Capitulo-Saide)***

#### **SMART Goal #1: Parent Engagement**

At Jefferson Primary School, we are committed to creating a welcoming environment for families, where we invite them to participate as partners in the education of their children.

- We hosted 150 parents and guardians for American Education Week (November 13-17) in our classrooms.
- We hosted following Parent/Guardian Engagement Nights:
  - Math/STEM Night (November 8, 2023) – 140 people attended
  - Holiday Read Aloud (December 6, 2023) – 185 people attended

#### **SMART Goal #2: Community Outreach**

By June 2024, our school aims to actively engage with our local community through a variety of initiatives and partnerships. We will strive to enhance our students' leadership skills and foster a sense of responsibility and empathy by organizing at least two community service projects, collaborating with local organizations, and hosting community events that promote positive connections between our school and the community. Through these efforts, we seek to make a lasting, positive impact to both our students and the wider community.

- We created a Grade 3 Leadership Team
- We facilitated a Thanksgiving Food Drive
- We facilitated a Holiday donation drive

#### **SMART Goal #3: Social Emotional Learning**

Jefferson Primary School is committed to fostering the social and emotional development of our students. Over the course of the school year, our goal is to create a safe and inclusive environment where students can develop their emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. We aim to implement SEL activities that promote empathy, resilience, and conflict resolution.

- PTA purchased kindness posters for all classrooms. All teachers and staff will be provided stickers to award individual classes when they are observed displaying kind behaviors. We hosted a Kindness Celebration for all K-3 classes that filled up their posters with kindness stickers.
- We planned on implementing a new "Golden Spatula" award system in the cafeteria where lunch monitors will distribute a monthly award to a class that exhibited kind, safe, responsible, and respectful behaviors.

#### **SMART Goal #4: Cultural Responsiveness**

At Jefferson Primary School, we are dedicated to creating a culturally responsive learning environment that values and respects the diverse backgrounds of our students and their families. Our goal is to ensure that every student feels seen, heard, and valued in our school community. By the end of the year, we aim to foster an inclusive atmosphere that celebrates diversity, where students can engage in meaningful cross-cultural experiences and gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and those of others.

- The PTA and school continues to update bulletin board and television displays.
- We continue to display multilingual displays throughout the building.
- We continue to showcase student work, pictures of the students, and translated labels.

### ***Southdown Primary School (Valerie Murray)***

**Goal #1:** By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, 100% if the Southdown Families will participate in responding to a survey to provide feedback and highlight areas of opportunities and grow for building

relationships with the school community which will include administration, support staff, teachers, school aides, specials teachers, custodial staff, lunch and security

- PARP Kicked off January 22nd - Theme was Reach for the Stars
- We had School- Wide - Read in Day and welcomed families to come in and read on January 22nd
- For Two weeks we invited families and parents to come in to classrooms school-wide to read a book to their students' class and encourage reading for PARP
- January 30th- Visit from the Planetarium for PARP
- January 17th- 1st and 2nd Grade Social with families
- January 25th- Family Engagement Night- Annual Math Night which was a huge success with 100 families. This year we added a GLOW Room in which the students got to Code the Ozo bots and crack the code in the glow in the dark room. Surveyed families and received such positive feedback
- January 24th- Social Emotional Learning Assembly by Ruth Escobar
- February 8th, we had the Blizzard Ball- Annual Someone Special Dance and had almost 100% attendance across all grade levels
- We began giving out our Welcome Bags and Folders for New Families joining our school- positive feedback from families

**Goal #2:** By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, the Southdown school community will participate in monthly book talk and read alouds celebrating students' character built through the character trait conversations and literature.

- Highlighted the Book of the Month at our Monthly Splash Assemblies. Classroom Teachers carry lessons and discussion into the classroom during our SEL- Harmony lessons. So far this year we have read and highlighted the following books:
- September: Stick and Stone by Beth Ferry
- October: Alma and How she got her name by: Juana Martinez Neal
- November: I Believe I can by Grace Byers
- December: I am Enough by Grade Byers
- January: The Big Umbrella by Amy June Beats
- February: Selve by Lupita Nyong
- March Current Month Kicking off later this week will be Si Se Puede Yex, We Can! By Diana Cohn

The Library Bulletin Board highlights the book of the month.

**Goal #3:** By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, the Southdown community (families, students and staff) will continue to participate in two activities implemented over the last two years that support in giving back to their community. We will embed a third and new activity for this school year, that will teach the characteristic of giving back while supporting the Down's syndrome Community.

- Annual Breast Cancer Walk on October 23rd
- Baby Blessings back in December
- Currently Organizing "Tommy's Day" to be on March 21st supporting Down's Syndrome Community - Currently have student named Tommy in 1st grade who we are supporting and building awareness for the community.
- We will be fundraising using John's Socks which is an organization started by Huntington students who sells socks to raise money for Down Syndrome and gives money back to different organizations and charities.

**Coming Up at Southdown:**

Bingo Night: March 7th

School-Wide Ice-Skating Event: March 16th

Annual Pancake Breakfast: March 23rd

***Washington Primary School (Nicholas Matarazzo)***

- November, 2023
  - Veteran’s Day Celebration November 9, 2023
    - each grade level recited a poem and sang a song of dedication honoring all Veterans
  - Multicultural Night November 17, 2023
    - over 20 countries were represented
    - parent, faculty/staff members displayed artifacts, games, and food related to their respective country
    - students visited each table and had their passport stamped once they learned about the respective countries
- December, 2023
  - Family Engagement Night - Read with Me Aboard the Polar Express
    - Families came together for an evening of enchantment and read alouds inspired by the book "The Polar Express"
  - Computer Science Spirit Week-December 4-8, 2023
    - students and faculty/staff dressed in a specific theme each day i.e. Make Your Mark: dress in your favorite dot attire; Mismatched Day: use an algorithm to mix up a wacky outfit
    - At-Home Activities for each night encouraged families to engage in coding activities, virtual field trips, etc.
- January, 2024
  - Bring Wolfie Alive Campaign - Families raise money to purchase Wolfie mascot costume \$400 total
- February, 2024
  - Kindness Campaign “Spread Kindness the Washington Way!”
    - Kick-Off virtual assembly with interactives to support the campaign
    - students created kindness posters to display throughout the building
    - faculty/staff distribute Wolfie stickers when they see acts of kindness
    - PS I Love You Day: February 9, 2024
      - Virtual assembly
      - building wide “What Makes Your Heart Happy!” activity with purple hearts that were displayed throughout the building
  - Word UP Wednesdays
    - students and faculty/staff wear shirts with words every Wednesday in the month of February
  - Art & Math Family Engagement Night February 7, 2024
    - families visited various stations to engage in art and math activities: Jewelry Making; Math Glow Room
  - Wear Red for Healthy Hearts February 27, 2024
    - Morning announcements about ways to keep the heart healthy
    - Line dancing ‘dance breaks’ throughout the day

**Jack Abrams STEM Magnet School (Heather Barfuss/Kacey Knauer)**

Goal 1: Increase parent engagement through expanded communications pathways and offer opportunities for students and families to share cultural backgrounds and make connections.

- Our First Cultural Expo was a huge success. Feedback from families, students and staff was very positive. We discussed doing a better job of promoting the event for next year. This led to a discussion on our use of social media. Ms. Lohse, Ms. Johnston, and Mrs. Guzman offered to lead an Instagram presence for our school. Future events will be promoted through this outlet.
- Ms. Barfuss posts events on the STEM PTA Facebook page.
- PTA Sports Night on February 1<sup>st</sup> was attended by over 100 people.
- PTA is hosting a 5<sup>th</sup> grade movie night on March 4th
- Paint Night has been scheduled for March 27

- RTI Game Night is scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>

Goal 2: Increase opportunities for students to feel represented and connected to teachers and the larger school community. Increase student exposure to leadership through community service.

- The House system expansion has been a big success. House Ambassadors have stepped up as leaders and having student voice in House activities has had a positive impact on this program
- House Meetings will be scheduled for a date in February for Houses to identify a charity to support.
- Our PTA – Student Council connections have been another positive experience for all. Our students presented their ideas at a recent PTA meeting and the feedback was positive.
  - Students expressed interest in more clubs. PTA will be sponsoring an afterschool Art Program starting in April.
- Our PTA is helping to get the word out on the House Box Top collections.
- The student council collected over 250 items of winter clothing to be donated to Helping Hands.
- We have scheduled our Community Market Day for May 4<sup>th</sup> (Teachers will meet on February 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss combining this event with the color run to encourage more participation). Additional planning is needed for this event but in general we would have a car wash and if families could set up a table to “sell” something to raise money for our House Charities. A Pancake Breakfast will be organized for this event.
- The student council will be researching charities at the Monday March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Houses will vote on the charity they want at the house meeting scheduled for March 27<sup>th</sup>.

Goal 3: Increase opportunities for students to feel connected to the school

- Our Mentoring program has expanded this year to almost double the size it was last year. Feedback from the program has been positive.
- We tentatively scheduled a June 1<sup>st</sup> color run. Money raised will be donated to a unity and inclusivity organization. We will continue to plan for this event at a future meeting scheduled for February 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Our Health teacher continues to work with all students on making healthy choices.
- Our Mental Health team continues to push into all classes with short mental health lessons.
- We celebrated the Great Kindness Challenge the week of January 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - Kindness themed spirit week
  - Daily kindness quotes on the morning announcements (chosen and read by the student council)
  - House points were given to anyone who completed 25 items on the Great Kindness Challenge checklist.
  - Kindness quotes were posted in the cafeteria and a kindness station was set up where students could recognize students that were kind by writing it on a kindness shout out and it was hung in the cafeteria.
- P.S. I love you day was celebrated on February 9<sup>th</sup>. All were encouraged to wear purple and a P.S. I love you photo booth was created in the cafeteria by our mental health team.

### **Woodhull Intermediate School (Stephanie Campbell)**

SEL Goal:

PBIS committee surveyed students regarding being - safe, responsible and respectful  
 Created an infographic titled Woodhull Way from their responses to the google survey  
 This infographic will be displayed in hallways, classrooms, and sent home to parents  
 Midyear assembly reviewing Woodhull Way expectations occurred 2/27 - 8-minute video displaying students showing these positive characteristics was shown

Eagles of the Month - connected to character traits  
students get a water bottle and picture taken - now there is a video shared in the lobby, cafeteria, and sent home through parent square

Bulletin Board in lobby - tree- reflects monthly traits  
Mentor program has expanded - originally mentors were assigned to new students. Now new students still get a mentor but are also assigned a peer buddy. Additionally, students in emotional need are now paired with a mentor to give additional support.

AWOD came early to Woodhull. This positive program reached our 5th grade students - thank you Suzie

PS I Love You Day - students engaged in Restorative circles all week long. Mental health team went into classrooms to help support these circles. Friday wrap up - all wore purple  
Positive notes were created to be sent out to friends, family, and faculty.

#### Multicultural Goal:

Increase in field trips - each grade is going on 2 this year.  
TV display showcases all learning and in addition: slideshow presentations for Heritage months (currently Black History Month)  
Dual language presentations in grades 4&5 Cultural representations (posters, reports, dances, etc.) in their classrooms

Career Day moving forward. Date is May 23rd

PTA Bingo night 2/28

HollRock Game night TBA in March

Reading Night TBA in March

#### ***Finley Middle School (Olivia Roberts)***

##### Goals:

1. Maintain the district's commitment to enhancing its culture of appreciation for the diverse nature of our school district community and its' students through associated analysis and alignment of curriculum and instruction, recruiting and hiring practices, and professional development.
  - a. For the month of the February, we have created Black History Month bulletin boards around our school as well as have weekly announcements highlighting notable African American people in our history.
  - b. P.S. I Love You Day – We had students write on a purple heart way they can show love to themselves and others. With these hearts, we made a beautiful display in the Blue Zone. On February 9<sup>th</sup>, staff and students were purple in honor of P.S. I love You Day.
    - a. Our Student Ambassadors are in full swing and continue to be the voice of Finley, meeting every week and every day in the homeroom.
      - i. They are using the responses from No place for Hate to create a public service announcement for the building to demonstrate the response from students.
2. Implement and evaluate programs that support the social and emotional well-being of our students and staff to build upon interpersonal connections throughout the district:
  - a. Restorative circles are going great. Students are participating and taking the time to reflect on the topics discussed. We have a circle once a month. The month of Februarys theme was Hope.

- i. No place for Hate: Advisory period last month was focused on Bullying where students watched a Burger King Video then did an activity on how they would stand up for hate.
- b. Our mentoring program is going great! We recently had a check-in PD for all mentors where we discussed different things we can do and how the program is going. Some things we discussed were lunches with all mentors/mentees and some activities we can do together. For example, last year we had a Hot Chocolate bar for all mentors and mentees.
- c. We continue to have therapy dogs come and visit classrooms.
- d. The community club recently had an event at the Huntington Library where parents were able to come in and learn about apps/software we use to help better parent communication.
- e. Implementing caught with kindness program where students earn rewards and hoping test this in April/May.

**Finley Updates:**

- Our Robotics Team has made it to the State Championships for the first time! They are preparing to compete this Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Before the break we had Spirit Week where students dressed up in different themes throughout the week.
- Our Book Nook in the blue zone is very popular. Students are free to grab a book whenever they need as well as leave any books.
- The first ever Mock Trial club at Finley is preparing for their Competition in March. We had so many students interested, and everyone is practicing hard and learning all about how to object, enter evidence, etc.

***Huntington High School (Joseph Leavy/Thomas Van Bell)***

1. PBIS – committee up and running
  - a. Solid Student DEI Experiences
    - Afro-Caribbean Club
    - AP African-American Studies Course
    - United Amigos
  - b. Guidance
    - Career speakers
    - College applications / unique year
    - PSATs gr. 10/11: progress 1
  - c. New clubs at student initiative
    - Chess club
    - Investment club
2. Restorative circles/training
3. QTEL / teacher training in June
4. Seals
  - Bi-lingual seal
  - Seal of civic readiness - quadrupled
5. Video club – broadcasting class – production
6. Elective fair – success in presenting students
7. Therapy dogs - visit – to be co-readers with
8. New grade requirements
  - a. AP Seminar open to grade 10
  - b. AP Anatomy & Physiology
  - c. St. Joe's co-seat education courses

### **PTA (Sara Baliber)**

Mr. Stein is giving Presentation on district security to all PTA Units. Stem and WH went first and it was held last night. The High School PTA will see the presentation on Monday 3/4, the Primary one will be held on Tuesday 3/5 and FMS will be at their April PTA Meeting.

This Friday the Arts in Ed committee will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Arts Night at the High School starting at 6pm. \$5 at the door, raffle baskets and art work and performances by HUFSD Staff.

### **SEPTA (Sara Baliber)**

Grant applications due this Friday 3/1

We're collecting donations and sponsorships for this year's Sunset and Sounds to be held 5/18

Planning a special meeting involving the siblings of special needs kids for April

### **Title Funds (Nancy Allard)**

- American Rescue Plan (ARPA) review is complete and went well. Currently, a Consolidated Grant and ESSA Funded (CARES/CRSSA/ARP) review in the process.
- Grants continue to fund our many programs. RTI teachers/Coaching/After-school/summer school/Freshman Seminar/Parental Engagement/Mindfulness club
- Each Title I building will be reviewing the Family Engagement Policy and their school-level compacts in the next few weeks, as part of the annual review.
- Student participants on building level teams needed.
- UPK is now full. Our lottery application is open for 24-25 and there is a UPK (virtual) informational meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Links are on the HUFSD website.

### **Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction**

- Building Action Teams going well. Mid-year meeting in February
- Stronger Connections Grant recipient
- Restorative Circles and PBIS
- Full transition from Rtl to MTSS
- Elementary Summer Program
- Math and Dual Language Extended Learning After School Programs

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- HFEE event honoring Suzi Biagi

**Future Meetings:** May 15, 2024

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion made by Nicholas Matarazzo and seconded by Rosecindy Siegel to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes compiled and prepared by Kisha Fowlkes