

## **Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council (SPAC)**

Monday, Sept. 14, 2020

### **Members present**

Alisha Lopez, Las Animas ES  
Katie Hilton, El Roble ES  
Marisa Rodriguez, El Roble ES  
Honey Gubuan, Solorsano MS (and Christopher HS)  
Moji Kazemi, Solorsano MS (and Gilroy HS)  
Sandra Vargas, Christopher HS  
Shalini Jampani, Brownell MS  
Ashley Bortolussi, Rucker ES  
Domicila Mendez, Eliot ES  
Centeotl Merino, Christopher HS  
Lorin Squatritto, Las Animas ES  
Lauren Moller, Rucker ES  
Dawn Johnson, Gilroy HS (and Solorsano MS)  
Judy-Ann Rosti, Brownell MS  
Trevor Van Laar, South Valley MS (and Rod Kelley ES, Gilroy HS)  
Maria Diaz, Glen View ES (and Christopher HS)  
Ashley Bortolussi, Rucker ES  
Lindsay Millea, Rod Kelley ES  
Dr. Debbie Flores, superintendent  
Lucy Huerta, translation  
James Pace, Board trustee

### **WELCOME**

- These monthly meetings are with parents from throughout the district. The superintendent shares her report; each member gives a report about what's going on at their schools;
- Dr. Flores discussed the roles and responsibilities of SPAC members: SPAC members are encouraged to bring issues and questions of general concern from parents at your schools. Questions about individual students should be discussed at another time.
- Parents will also help identify topics for future agendas.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- Dr. Flores discussed the first four weeks of the school year. Many of the technical issues have been addressed. Calls to IT are down to 50 calls a day, compared to hundreds of calls in first days of school.
- Dr. Flores has started her regular site visits, which she does every fall, winter and spring. She and some board members have been able to observe teachers working from their classrooms since school started. She's also been able to go into Zoom classes as they're happening, even when the teacher is working off-site. She is impressed by the rigor and delivery of curriculum through the distance learning platform.
- Staff development day is Friday. One of the focus areas will be how to deliver the curriculum better in distance learning and there will be workshops for teacher support.

- Reopening schools update:
  - She discussed the Public Health Department announcement about reopening schools: The state moved the County to Tier 2, the red level. If the county remains at this tier for 14 days, a district could choose to re-open. The fine print is that the district needs to meet the Santa Clara County's public health guidelines as well, which are additional layers of restrictions. For example: Elementary students would have to be in cohorts of 12, maintain social distance minimums, and adhere to specific PPE requirements. The document will be sent to the group tomorrow for reference.
  - The district re-opening committee will start to meet again to discuss what conditions have to be met to re-open. The committee will be considering the CDC's data, the county's numbers and the reality of COVID resurgence. The plan is to meet with labor unions and parent groups to gather feedback. There will be a survey of staff, parents/guardians, and students about returning to campuses. It will go out soon.
  - A lot of work has to go into preparing schools before a proposal can be taken to the board for its decision.
  - Most other neighboring districts are approaching re-opening in a similar, cautious way.
  - The district is interested in bringing back targeted groups back to campuses, with restrictions: special education students in special classes; students who can't access the internet from certain parts of Gilroy (NE and SE corners of city). Some students are being brought back to Rucker ES to access their distance learning in a special child-care program. Power School provides supervision and assistance, not direct instruction.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM GROUP REGARDING DISTANCE LEARNING SO FAR AND RE-OPENING PREP**

- Q: Are you taking temperatures? A: The county has changed its stance on taking temperatures. People are presenting asymptomatic without a fever so taking a temperature is not as valid as once was thought. We are requiring people to enter one entrance at each site, answer health questions, and wash hands at hand-washing stations.
- We have a mix of staff working remotely, working in classrooms/on campus or a combination.
- Status of ventilation systems. HEPA filters will be replaced three times this year. They've been replaced once already. Dan McAuliffe, maintenance manager, will be asked to attend next month's meeting for an update to the group on this, cleaning procedures, etc.
- What is the most important requirement that can't be met at this time? Cohort numbers and staffing. We can't bring all students back and meet cohort, social distancing requirements with staffing and spaces we have now. Also, it is a challenge to figure out cleaning schedules and to have enough cleaning and sanitizing supplies on hand.
- Distribution of Chromebooks and hotspots. Since school started, 5,000 Chromebooks have been distributed (in addition to what was given out in the spring). Every student who has requested a Chromebook has received one. By the end of September, 1,000 hotspots will have been distributed this fall. The priority for hotspots is for families who don't have any connection; next, priority will move to families who need hotspot for connectivity boost.
- What steps is district taking to address lack of internet for some families? The district is working on a solution for these students, including working with internet providers for the two areas of the city with connectivity problems (and bringing some students to a school to access internet).

#### **ENROLLMENT UPDATE AND IMPACT ON BUDGET**

- The declining birth rate has continued to dramatically impact enrollment.

- This year, there are about 600 kindergarten students. High school classes are 900-1,000. Overall, enrollment is down about 250 less students between 2020-21 and 2019-20. GUSD anticipates the district will be continue to decline.
- Declining enrollment is not unique to Gilroy. It's happening in 27 out of 31 districts in the county and similar patterns are seen in the Bay Area and the rest of the state. It affects staffing, budgets, etc.
- This is the biggest challenge for the district next to COVID.

### **SROS, SUSPENSIONS AND EXPLUSIONS**

- School Resource Officers (SROs): Recently had a presentation about School Resource Officers, suspensions and expulsions. A community group recently spoke to the board and advocated for the elimination of the district's two SROs.
  - District didn't renew the contract with the SROs this year because of distance learning. We don't know what we will do when school returns in session.
- Expulsions: In 2008, there were more than 100 expulsions a year in the district. Last year, 15 students were expelled. Introduced hearings, focused on PBIS techniques, restorative justice, etc. This has also slowed down the suspension rates.
- Staff can discuss this at a future SPAC meeting.
- The money saved on SROs will be part of budget development talks in the next couple of months. The funds haven't been allocated at this time.

### **ATHLETICS**

- Fall sports have been postponed to the winter. Some districts in the county have allowed conditioning with strict guidelines. GUSD will resume athletic conditioning for high school in late September or early October to give time for proper safety protocols to be put in place. Middle schools sports will not return at this time.

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FROM THE GROUP**

- Q: Will state testing occur this year? A: Not waived this year at this time.
- Q: Do we know when we will be getting more hotspots? A: Pending requests will be prioritized and distributed by 1) students who don't have connection otherwise; 2) students who have internet but have spotty connectivity. The hotspots are due by end of September.
- Q: What mental health services are being offered to students? A: At next month's meeting, Dr. Flores will speak about the services being offered and the cooperation between the district and agencies.
- Q: Can students have some opportunities for social gatherings or connections? A: Principals have talked about clubs, opportunities for interaction. Dr. Flores will discuss further with principals and bring back ideas next month.

### **SPAC REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

*How has school been going? What has been happening at your sites?*

- **Rod Kelley ES:** Material pick-up times have started and will continue every three weeks or so. Spirit days on every few Fridays. Back-to-School Nights (BTSN) have started via Zoom.
- **Brownell MS:** BTSN via Zoom was success. Band met Thursday for all three middle schools and instrument pick-ups happened. Two virtual concerts are planned. Chromebooks have been

passed to students who have requested them. School modernization project is continuing well. Middle school administrations have been collaborating more this year.

- **Luigi ES:** After a rough start, things have smoothed out. Two fundraisers already completed. Two more restaurant fundraisers and book fair are planned. Parent Club is trying to figure out how to do work and activities virtually and would like to hear how other schools are handling.
- **Gilroy HS:** About 75 percent of students have come to campus for ID pictures. Makeup days are being scheduled. ASB held class elections and students are working on activity ideas they can do virtually. Distance learning and textbook distribution has been going well.
- **Solorsano MS:** Counselors have been meeting one-on-one students. BTSN was via Zoom and successful. Distance learning has been going well. Parent Club has met once and second meeting is coming up.
- **Glen View ES:** Distribution of supplies (including backpacks and supplies for all students) has happened. Picture day, by last name, is scheduled for late September-early October. Thirty-plus families are still in need of hotspots. (Dr. Flores will follow up at the Friday technology meeting.)
- **Eliot ES:** BTSN was a success. Backpack and supply distribution also have gone well. Basic training for parents to help with online skills and distance learning. Picture day, by grade, is coming up.
- **Rucker ES:** Arts Alive program is being transitioned online, thanks to Parent Club. Lessons are being developed and materials will be distributed soon. Garden has been growing well, including two giant pumpkins that are going to get bigger and a butterfly garden. Restaurant fundraisers are on calendar.
- **South Valley MS:** BTSN was a success but tough to have been at the same time as Rod Kelley's BTSN. The modernization project has launched.
- **Christopher HS:** Communication has been great and through different platforms. Club rush happened this week. BTSN and picture days went well.
- **GECA:** Picture days, textbook distribution, BTSN have gone well. School is emphasizing connection and self-care this year. Parent Club will meet soon and fundraisers will be added soon. Would like to connect with other schools for ideas for yearbooks and activities.
- **Las Animas ES:** Biggest challenges are getting to know each other with new parents, during distance learning. Materials pick-up and picture days have been scheduled. BTSN meetings have been going on.
- **James Pace:** Thanks from the board for all that families are doing during distance learning.

## TOPICS OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Mental health services
- PBIS

**MORE QUESTIONS:**

- Did district hear any feedback about camera (during Zoom) recommendation? Dr. Flores: Not a lot of push back reported. Principals are working with cases in which students are preferring to not turn on cameras.
- What happened with the kindergarten class with no teacher at Luigi? Teacher transfers to VLA created a couple of openings right before school started. Teachers were hired but it was a little rough for a week or so. Those classes are now situated.
- What's the situation with substitutes? It's difficult and we have shortage, as do most districts in county. Suggestion of super subs are mostly based at one site.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** 8:27 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:** Oct. 12