

Gilroy Unified School District
SUPERINTENDENT'S PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 12, 2021
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Members in attendance:

Shalini Jamapni (Brownell)	Judy-Ann Rosti (Brownell)	Susan Rodriguez (Christopher)
Centeotl Merino (Christopher)	Sandra Vargas (Christopher)	Kenny Moreno (El Roble)
Jenny Swigart (Home School)	Melissa Avila-Carroll (GECA)	Cindy Wargocki (GECA)
Mari-Ann Gallagher (Gilroy)	Maria Diaz (Glen View)	Esmeralda Ramos (Las Animas)
Lauren Moller (Luigi Aprea)	Lindsay Millea (Rod Kelley)	Ashley Bortolussi (Rucker)
Dawn Johnson (Solorsano)	Mojgan Kazemi (Solorsano)	Honey Gubuan (Solorsano)
Coyo Anhder (South Valley)	Trevor Van Laar (South Valley)	Teresa Perez (Virtual Learning Academy)
James Pace (Board Member)	Melissa Aguirre (Board Member)	

Welcome & Introductions

- Dr. Flores began by thanking everyone for coming. She expressed her appreciation for all the SPAC members for attending the SPAC monthly meetings, and acting as a liaison between their school and the school district.
- She listed the five topics that she would like to give an update.

Superintendent's Report

Reopening Plans

- Dr. Flores added this item to the agenda to make sure that everyone has the same information.
- At the March 18 Board Meeting, staff presented recommendations for the reopening. At this meeting the Board approved the recommendation for the elementary schools to reopen but did not approve a secondary plan for reopening.
- At the March 25 Special Board Meeting, the focus was on the secondary proposals for reopening. Several schedules were presented as well as the original one. The Board did not approve any of the four options. Secondary will remain in distance learning for the remainder of the year.
- Dr. Flores said she is really excited to say that elementary students will begin in-person on April 15.
- Around 60% of students will be returning. The District has received commitment forms from parents, and know exactly who will be coming back.
- One of the benefits of not reopening secondary schools is there are secondary staff who can help with the return to school for the elementary students.

Governor's Announcement

- On Wednesday, April 7, Dr. Flores watched the Governor's Press Conference.
- The Governor announced that if all things remain the same or better in regards to COVID-19 by June 15, the State will eliminate the Tier system, and things may go back to normal.
- If the State gets to this point, the expectation is that all schools will reopen fully including all colleges.
- The State Superintendent has also issued a similar statement saying that all schools will reopen in the fall assuming that the conditions are as good as now or better. State officials also hope California reaches the other goal of 75-80% of Californians getting vaccinated.

Q: Has there been any changes on the committee members? At the Board Meeting, it was said that all the parents on the Reopening Planning Committee are GUSD employees?

A: Dr. Flores did tell the Board that she would like to invite several members of SPAC to join the Reopening Planning Committee; she was planning to bring this up later in the meeting. If members are interested in attending those meetings, she asked the members to please let her know, and she will do a lottery if there is a lot of interest. Dr. Flores talked about the diversity of opinions on the committee, she said there are people on the Planning Committee that did not support reopening; it was not a unanimous decision by the Planning Committee for reopening. The Committee represented the diverse viewpoints that Dr. Flores hears from the community.

Q: Will the District require vaccinations once they are available for the younger children or staff?

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- A:** No, the district cannot require them but are highly encouraging staff to get vaccinated. The District sends out memos to staff almost weekly regarding pop up clinics which are in addition to the GHS vaccination clinic. 65% of the GUSD staff is already vaccinated. The last couple of weeks, the GHS center has been doing a thousand or more a day. She is pleased with the number of staff that have already been vaccinated. The district cannot require it unless the State mandates it. Right now, for 16 and under the vaccine is not available. She hopes it will be by August. Pfizer is saying they have the vaccine available. Right now, all district staff can do is encourage families. However if the State were to mandate it, the district would support that.
- Q:** Will there be a backup plan for the fall? For example, models for the fall, if there are some cases, so that something is in place and the district is ready to go. She thinks the parents in the community want to make sure there is a backup plan that is set for the fall.
- A:** Currently in the Tier System, once districts reopen, even if there is another surge the districts can stay open. The State is giving more control to the districts, so the local control is in the district's hands as far as reopening. The district has backup plans. Our plan is to reopen, obviously with safety measures in place and distance learning or virtual learning for the parents that do not want to send their children back to in-person learning.
- Q:** Committees have no power, just like before when they had the Committee that came up with some options. The Board is the one that has the power to say yes or no. Before this is done again, is there a way to get the temperature of the Board? When it comes to reopening schools, if the Board is not on board it is all for nothing.
- A:** The law prohibits any attempts outside of regularly scheduled Board Meetings or Special Meetings to reach a decision. It would be a violation of law even if staff tried to assess each individual Board Member's opinion or position outside of a Board Meeting. Only certain items can be discussed in closed session. Everything else, all of the Board's business has to be conducted in public. The law prohibits the Board Members from trying to reach a collective consensus outside of actual Board Meetings. Dr. Flores mentioned there have been lawsuits and filings with the DA (*not in our district*) when this has happened. The law applies to not only the School Board Members, but any Brown Act governed publicly elected officials. All of their discussions have to be done in public. It is a safeguard to the public's trust; you do not want your Board Members making deals outside of a Board Meeting. She suggested the SPAC Members google the "Brown Act" if they wanted to know more. The Board Members receive two or three trainings, when they come on as Board Members - from both Dr. Flores and the district's legal counsel. They also attend a training with the California School Board Association, and there is another one with the County School Board Association. The Brown Act is very descriptive on how elected officials do their work in public.
- Q:** 1) Thinks that it is the job of Board Members to represent. One of the problems or issues parents have been facing throughout the year is not the lack of communication - the information is out there, you just have to look for it and read it, and some do not want to do that. It is the clarity after the Board Meetings. Most of the people she talks to are mostly upset because they feel they did not get a choice, and that is being taken away from them. She referenced the models that were presented. The one-hour a day, was the first and was not very convenient. When the others were presented, that helped them understand why the first one was presented. She thinks it is because she was one of the parents who emailed the Board Members expressing her concern, and what she would like to happen, what they would like to present. There was definitely inequalities (between in-person and distance learning). If parents like it or not, whatever the choice or decision that the district came up would have felt more fair. 2) If the families had a survey come out to parents after explaining, which said here are the different options, what works for them, this is the survey, here is the plan this is what they are presenting. Also, the Board has time to receive information to vote on what the people want them to do. What she feels, while communication has gotten better, at the end of it all, what she has been hearing is that they don't have a choice, or that

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they are wasting time? She thinks that if the plan can be presented without breaking the law saying this is the plan, she can email her Board representative, then at the end, knowing what the people want. When they saw the four plans it made so much more sense. However, they did not really have time to put the vote where she wanted. Getting communication, understanding, clarity, and then hope, those that are representing them are really representing. Let us present it to the Board, but let us not vote on it at that time?

A: Dr. Flores shared it is difficult for some to understand because staff has to present the options to the Board first. However, there can be an interim step, where staff presents to the Board then they survey parents, then the Board can make a decision at the next meeting. The information has to be presented to the Board; they are the officials of the entire district.

Q: 1) Did the committee look at just sending back sixth grade, at least at middle school, they have the same teacher in most classes, and because they are younger, they have less risk? 2) Where are our numbers as far as families pulling out of the district whether it be moving or going to a private school?

A: 1) The Reopening Planning Committee has teaching and learning subcommittees - subcommittee for elementary and secondary. The secondary subcommittee created and recommended the four options. Number 1 was the original option and the other three were options they had talked about in prior meetings. They did not talk about a grade level; they were discussing K-12 and coming up with options about returning. 2) As far as families leaving, staff are not hearing this currently. Some families did leave at the beginning of the school year. It may depend on what happens in the fall. GUSD is a declining district; districts are declining all over the County, and the State. We have contacted all the families that have left and have reached most. We can only assume that they left the State. The district created the VLA for those families that did not want their children to return to in-person.

Comment: As a parent it is a little frustrating. She understands that it has to be presented to the Board first, and does agree it may have to be an informational item first, then an action item. If it is put out there as an informational item, for parents to be able to look at that and make a decision. It is just like if you did not have a bus driver on the transportation committee. This gives the parents more time to see the item and digest the information. Maybe it should have been middle school. GECA was not even talked about with the two options presented. Not all the particular things that could have been considered voted on were voted on. What people see and what they perceive is their reality. Some of the parents may have been on the fence, if the process can be reversed and build some time in, if they cannot do it at all. Why not just send the seniors back, one of the things to consider is the vaccine center. The agreement runs through July, just like have an agreement with the county for staff to get vaccinated. See if there is a way to get some availability there so that they can publicize it to GUSD parents, that if there is any choice the more eligible students that are vaccinated. It protects the people that can be vaccinated. She knows it is tricky because of the age thing. She knows MHUSD is trying to coordinate this.

Q: The Board had to direct the Committee to look at options of one grade level, and the miscommunication was talking about what was happening at the Board Meeting. When the meetings happened, it seemed like it was not very clear. Wondered if the Board knows that they could say we can look at just sixth grade, seniors or can we look at just GECA. Feels like maybe the Board Members were not clear on what the options were?

A: The way Robert's Rules work, a Board member has to make a motion, and a second Board member has to second, and then the Board votes. That is the way Robert's Rules work.

Q: How does returning look like if things continue this way, like they used to be?

A: That is a question she wants to talk about during the next Reopening Committee. The District still has to follow safety measures, based on the Governor's plans, the State expectations and schools reopening in the fall. It is still the Board's decision as that is how school districts are governed by the elected seven members.

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Q: They are hearing the Governor say if everything goes well. Obviously, as if they said face coverings, but when they talk about distancing, how can they say it for reopening? How are we going to fit all the students, assuming we can all go back with face coverings? What does it look as far as the plans go?

A: She cannot predict the future, but staff can plan for various scenarios.

State Testing Update

- California and many states submitted a waiver request to the federal government so they do not have to give the CAASPP this spring.
- The federal government did not agree to waive the test entirely.
- The good news is they did agree to let the States and districts determine their own local measurements, instead of the State CAASPP testing.
- At the secondary level, the district already uses a test called MAP that tests both ELA and Math.
- The test is in place, except for 11th grade which will be added.
- It is a much better alternative and it still gives the district a measurement to look at.
- Dr. Flores said from her standpoint, it is a very good compromise in lieu of doing the CAASPP test.

Q: What if a parent decided to go on a campaign and get everyone in the district to not do a CAASPP test, how would that affect what happens in the district?

A: The district is not giving CAASPP this year. There is a State requirement that 95% or more of students must participate in the assessment. There are also certain sanctions if that does not happen. For instance, several years ago at Gilroy High School, they did not have 95% of the students take the test. The school got identified, and it had to go through many steps to rectify that issue. The expectation for CAASPP- which the district is not doing this year, is that 95% of students take the test. The State can take certain actions which she will need to research since it's been a while. The district has a very high participation level on the CAASPP and schools do meet the 95% participation rate. This year the testing will be minimal, but the benefit is we will get some test data on how students at the grade levels tested are doing in ELA and math. The elementary and middle school assessments have already been done; they are just going to add another benchmark, which takes an hour or two a day.

Graduations/8th Grade Celebrations

- Secondary administrators are planning the high school graduations for this year.
- The district was waiting for the California Department of Public Health to issue guidelines and we now have those.
- One of the requirements is that there can only be 33% of capacity, at whatever facility is used. For this reason, staff are looking at our largest facilities - which is the football stadiums.
- The number of adults will be limited and we may have to break the graduates into groups. They will have the same ceremony, but in different groups.
- There will be two hours between each graduation ceremony, and there are many more requirements.
- This week, the seniors and their parents are being surveyed, about two to three options, to gather input and then finalize plans for graduation.
- The ceremonies will still take place on the same days as listed on the calendar.
- Staff are starting to plan and talk about eighth grade celebrations to be held at the middle schools.

Summer School

- Staff is looking at ways to provide more services during summer school.
- At the May 6 Board Meeting, staff will be making a presentation to the Board regarding summer school.
- The district cannot provide services to all 11,000 students.
- Summer school is not an extension of the school year. The district received funding from the State to provide services. The district receives funds from Migrant Education and for EL students and Title 1 funds.

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- What the district would like to do is to expand services for some general education students. This does not mean the district will be able to serve all students in the district; it is going to be 2-3 times the normal size.
 - The district also needs to see there will be enough staff willing to work.
 - The reopening discussion will also be on the May 6 agenda.
- Q:** There was a lot of talk whether going back to school is equitable? As it is right now, education is not equitable, she said her son is doing really well because she is his one on one aid. She wants parent to think about it, that just because it works for their child it may not work for all students.
- A:** Equity was one of the major factors under consideration. There was not a perfect plan that would address this problem. Dr. Flores said she feels good about the elementary plan. There is a 15-minute difference in the instructional time between distance learning and in-person. As far as direct instruction from the teacher, it is close between the two groups. The secondary plans were a different story. Because of the class schedules and multiple subjects and teachers, every plan led to less instruction for students in distance learning. Equity was a big concern.
- Q:** We talked about GATE testing at the previous meeting and wanted more information, when will they receive this?
- A:** Dr. Flores said she would ask Kathleen Biermann, to respond to that question in an email.

SPAC Representative Reports

Brownell Middle School

- Not too much going on besides the modernization of the school site.
- The band program is trying to do another online concert, they are practicing and the students are recording their piece. The students are recording their pieces.
- Continuing to do Fun Fridays.
- Two students (Alina Carbajal & Catalina Tompkins) won and were honored for the 2021 Silicon Valley Reads Multimedia contest, for poems that they wrote. They will be honored at the Silicon Valley Reads Virtual Celebration on Thursday, May 20 from 4:00-4:30 pm.
- With very few weeks left of school, they hope the time and funds can be invested towards students who are struggling and really need help.

El Roble Elementary School

- So excited for the elementary school to open up again, the Home and School Club is planning for a wonderful welcome for the students, especially those who have not been on campus before.
- A surprise for the teachers.
- They are looking forward to this week, it has been so long.

Christopher High School

- Going on now: choir, band and sports.

GECA

- They had a SEES candy fundraiser, sold over \$2,600 and got over \$700 in profits.
- For the March meeting, they had guest speakers from the Gilroy Strong Center, they did a presentation on trauma and COVID19 pandemic. The month's meeting, they will be doing a stakeholder input for all parents.
- In May, they will be having elections.
- The Senior Year Committee is working on activities for the students to have for graduation.
- They are going to have senior project judging virtually.
- The Peer Support Group is still meeting on Mondays.
- GECA had two seniors (Claire Wang & Daniel Tran) that are part of the National Merritt Scholarship finalists.
- Senior, Ephraim Aung received a Marine Scholarship.

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Rod Kelley Elementary School

- Yearbooks have been submitted.

South Valley Middle School

- The student body has been doing well, they have continued spirit days.
- Principal Ramos and Vice Principal, have been trying to get ELAC involved, they had a meeting on March 3 with almost 30 participants.
- They are also trying to get the SVMS parent club going again, with the first meeting coming up in a week.
- Today they had another meeting for South Valley reconstruction, there is going to be some new pictures coming out of ongoing designs that are going to the Board next week.
- Fun programs going on.
- Different programs with Rebekah's Children Services with supporting parents.
- Principals Ramos, is trying to keep the teachers a resource as well.

Gilroy High School

- The students had an Among Us tournament.
March Madness Bracket Tournament.
- They had a joint paint night with Christopher High School, it was sponsored by SLS.
Upcoming, they have homecoming, which is Mardi Gras theme, they prepared goody bags, there will be a virtual parade, and students will build floats out of shoe boxes.
- Looking forward to the surveys, it is great that they are going to get input from both parents and students.

Las Animas Elementary

- They had a contact less distribution prior to Spring Break, in those packages the Home and School Club provided goody bags to all students.
- The yearbook team completed the yearbook.
- On Thursday, the students go back to school, and they want to make it a fun event for them.

Glen View Elementary

- They did a SEES candy fundraiser that is going well, the profited over \$1,000.
- Glen View has a new playground which is almost complete and it looks amazing.

Rucker Elementary:

- They had a second SEES fundraiser it went very well.
- Working on finalizing the yearbook, the families have been very helpful in sending photos in.
- Working to get the school decorated for the students to return to campus.
- Sent out nomination forms to fill the secretary position for the 2021-22 school year, via parent square.

Topics for future meetings:

- May 10 – VLA & Technology presentations.