

Hillside Middle School Community Council Meeting Minutes December 8, 2020

In attendance: Landon Clark, Cari Fifield, Christina Leavitt, Carrie Caldwell, Christina Leavitt, Holly Moss Rosen, Monty Eyink, Liz Buirley, Rebecca R, Ginny Goldberg, Rebecca Pittam, Amanda Shirley, Kelly Lear, Jeanne Riley, Jenny Kearl, Jen Kiou, Lizzy Conde, Carla Were, Carol Lear, Aaron, Sarah Clinger, Tony, Sydnee Dickson, Kristi Swett

SCC Business:

Guest Speaker: State Superintendent of Public Education, Sydnee Dickson

- Early learning is a primary focus, as well as effective teachers, mentally & emotionally safe schools, and personalized learning with an emphasis on particular student interests, which can be followed through graduation.
- These four goals – early learning, effective teachers, mentally & emotionally safe schools personalized learning are also a focus for legislative asks
- Pre K has no base. We have Higher Ed and then K-12. There are DWS, Head Start programs, but birth to 5 years is a space that nobody owns – this is a challenge for us as we get students ready for school.
- In our feeder program, KEEP, Utah’s Kindergarten entry and exit inventory which lets us know key performance data. Current profiles demonstrated that 50% of our feeder kindergarteners were school ready. This measure involves information such as counting and letter recognition. Statewide that number is normally 20%. These patterns are critical to look at, as early learning is the start that boosts kids up through the system
- Ms. Dickson appreciates that we think of about all our students’ interests - plays, musical performances, etc., as part of the personalized learning experience at our school
- The superintendent asked about Hillside programs for reading strategies. Principal Berntson stated we have the Husky Den, Barton reading used last year, resource teachers and Kagan structures as some strategies for helping with emergent or struggling readers, but it is a challenge.
- Parent expressed concern that younger students, kindergarten age are the crucial months and this is a struggle with concerns about moving forward. Suggested making parents aware of tools to help parents. Working parents have struggles to help their students keep up so must do a lot of catch up on weekends. Canvas is not so easy to navigate and this trickles down to the emotional piece affecting missing assignments and teacher feedback is delayed.
- Ms. Dickson stated that the social emotional part, the trauma of the brain we are aware of but also the stress of food insecurities, loss of a job of parent, stress at home, homelessness, how trauma affects the brain needs to be considered. Districts are using the knowledge about stress and the brain to lean into stress reducing strategies. She referred to the Murray District example of teaching mindfulness to make kids feel safe.
- What is way forward for social emotional learning? A teacher gave examples used in class such as a chat box check in, rich language, conversations with students, teaching students how to communicate with each other and adults as ways to check in and help students advocate for themselves.
- Key skills and abilities students need to have by the time they leave school are outlined in the Utah Talent MAP which stands for mastery, autonomy and purpose. How do you

make decisions, get a sense of direction. Academic mastery, wellness, civic, financial & economic literacy, digital literacy are all part of the needed skill acquisition.

- Autonomy – creativity & innovation are challenging online but doable. Aspirational characteristics are hard work, resilience, honesty integrity, responsibility.

SIC/Counselor/School Representative Report:

Counselor Report

- Working with and assisting in coordinating Wednesday's in person student groups. Currently we are working with around 40 students and are discussing more ways to support students when we return in January.
- College & Career Readiness 8th grade individual conferences in session now and will continue until we can catch as many students/parents as possible.
- Working with Mr. Streba's classes for career training lessons so students can learn differences between certificates, Associates, and Bachelor's degrees
- Working in Ms. Platt's on mindfulness and cognitive distortions (Thinking errors) Zoom lessons.
- Doing live support lessons through Zoom in Digital Literacy for suicide prevention lessons.
- Asked for feedback from parents on Weds. Digital support group for social emotional assistance. We have had a pilot group based upon feedback about students needing support. Most students forget to get into Zoom. Perhaps some Zoom fatigue. Time may also conflict with teacher office hours. Counselors reviewing parent ideas and suggestions to see if this can be evolved to something else in the future.

Principal Report:

- Hearing from phone calls and emails that it is really the social-emotional aspect that needs help. Always looking for motivational strategies to get students coming back week to week.
- Hillside staff and school groups are working on a care package giveaway for December 17. Teachers and staff want our students to know we miss them and care about them.
- Feel free to email Principal Bernston about ideas and comments.

School Board Report:

- For now a comprehensive plan for opening schools in person is focused on lower grades, elementary school
- If virus levels drop, Kristi says she imagines there will be more heard about middle schools and high schools moving toward a plan.

- Becky Pittam said discussions have been based solely on the numbers. They are getting more and more data all along from the county. January plan is to look again at high schools and across the board.