

# Parkland Community Advisory Council

March 18, 2021

## CO-PRESIDENTS

Melanie St. Hill  
Michelle Wahlmark

## SECRETARY

Andrea Scott

**ATTENDEES:** Benjamin Gullledge, Jennifer Jones, Nicole Mandry, Lisa Petrocilli, Melanie St. Hill, Michelle Wahlmark, Doreen Wynn, Annette Wilcox

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:** Valeria Quintanilla, Lauren Wahlmark, Sydney Esquieres, Tyler Bartman

**SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:** Linda Perlman-McKenna, Lisa Roth

**ADMINISTRATION:** Dr. Rodney Troutman, Tracy Smith, Kelly Rosario, Brenda DeRenzo

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Michelle Wahlmark at 7:02 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion to approve the minutes from January 21, 2021 was made by Benjamin Gullledge and seconded by Nicole Mandry.

## PRESENTATION:

**“State of the District Educational Program 20-21 Online and Hybrid” presented by Kelly Rosario, Tracy Smith, and Brenda DeRenzo.**

Full Presentation can be found on

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/18S6\\_moxywzrAXTCZ2M0yGjb5qtVhSvIEr3V3DGDU0NE/edit#slide=id.gbbaac61b64\\_0\\_0](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/18S6_moxywzrAXTCZ2M0yGjb5qtVhSvIEr3V3DGDU0NE/edit#slide=id.gbbaac61b64_0_0).

Parkland School District’s transition to online learning was built on the foundation of experiences and calls to action occurring in the spring through the summer of 2020.

In March 2020, device distribution and home internet solutions were a priority. On the 11th, students in grades 5 thru 12 were messaged via Schoology to ensure their devices went home. Using survey data, arrangements were made for the distribution of an additional 2,000 devices for students in grades K thru 4. Currently, PSD is supporting 8,000 families using a support ticket system and physical repair option for students’ PSD appointed devices. Also, by purchasing Kajeets and partnering with Service Electric, RCN, and EveryoneOn.org, all Parkland students and staff have Internet access.

In the spring of 2020, 300 physical repair calls were made to the Ad Center, 1,200 support tickets were resolved and 2,000 devices were distributed to students. All the while, professional development was ramped up to help support teachers transition to building their classroom community in a digital space. New ways had to be developed to encourage engagement and provide feedback. Almost immediately, Tech Coaches trained new Tech Mentors/Leaders who in turn trained all teachers on Digital Learning Resources and eLearning Instruction.

In preparation for the 2020-2021 school year, staff focus groups were developed in June and July. The goal of the focus groups was to develop detailed guidance for three potential scenarios, 100% eLearning, hybrid and social distanced traditional classroom learning, in the 2020-2021 school year. In preparing for the new mental health needs the students will face, new training was also held for the counselors.

When the 2020-2021 school year began, an average of 70% of students were enrolled in hybrid learning while 30% were enrolled online. (67% of elementary students, 77% of middle school students and 73% of high school students). By February, the number of hybrid students dropped to 61% of students enrolled. The greatest change was that of high school students. Only 48% of high school students are now enrolled in hybrid and 52% choose to change to the online learning model. (68% of elementary students and 64% of middle school students continue to learn via hybrid learning.)

By the end of the 2020-2021 school year Parkland's K-12 digital curriculum, Parkland Online, will have complete digital versions of all Parkland curriculum in Schoology. This curriculum will be ready and accessible to staff and students in the fall of 2021. Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Project Lead the Way (PLTW), Gifted High Potential (GHP) and Encore Courses will all be available.

Training on tools and strategies to build a bridge between students learning at home and at school at the same time was conducted. This model, known as the concurrent classroom, is very challenging but many teachers have become adept at it this year.

Data on student engagement has shown that almost three times the amount of assignments, discussions, tests and quizzes have been completed in the first 12 weeks of the 2020-2021 school year compared to the last 12 weeks of the 2019-2020 school year. This shows the bar was raised from last year and additional structure and rigor of classwork has occurred.

Special education students' needs were met in an individualized approach. Student data review meetings were held in September, November and January. IEP as well as early intervention meetings were held via Zoom and Google Meet.

School counselors hosted a variety of groups and programs throughout the school year. At the elementary level, BounceBack Groups, schoology share links, virtual lunch bunches and mindfulness practices sessions were held. At the middle school level, organizational and mindfulness groups, resource room assistance and quarantine counseling video series sessions were held. At the high school level, a variety of mini seminars to address organization, adjustment, emotional well-being and other topics were held in addition to 32 students in the mentoring and 37 students in the academic coaching programs. District wide, the YESS program via St. Luke's has 39 clients. YESS stands for Your Emotional Strength Supported and helps students dealing with anxiety, depression and other mental health issues.

Remediation plans and options are being developed for students who are struggling. Team meetings focusing on student driven planning with core teams, targeted intervention during the school day and after school opportunities, as well as opportunities for continued learning over the summer are being planned. Potential remediation options may include extended time and instructional support for students to complete courses successfully as well as various outreach opportunities that are not one size fits all. Students will be asked to create a plan for success that includes accountability and ownership of their own path.

Seniors who failed a first semester course may have the opportunity to add a second semester course to make up the half credit. If the course does not fit into the second semester schedule and the student needs the

credit, online courses through Edgenuity can be completed at home during the summer with PSD teacher guidance and support.

Plans to return to school this school year are developing as we speak. Beginning April 12, 2021, in-school instruction at the elementary level will increase to 4 days per week, maintaining Wednesday as an eLearning day. The fully online option is still available and the daily time schedule for elementary instruction will be maintained to allow for instruction of students in quarantine. This recommendation will go in effect as long as Lehigh County is identified as being in "moderate" spread for two weeks or longer or all elementary staff with sustained close contact to students have had the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Instruction at the secondary level will not be changing along with the elementary schools. Stricter CDC guidelines for older students, students not maintaining cohorts, more difficulty maintaining 6 ft of social distance for lunch without impacting other programs such as PE, music and athletics, and more stress in the art rooms, FCS and other electives with social distancing and use of materials all went into the decision to not recommend an increase to in-person instruction at this time.

The 2021-2022 school year is still unknown. Data collected in the winter, spring and summer will help guide the district's instructional models offered. Surveys for parents to indicate a preference for instructional models, in person or online, for next school year will be sent home in an email at the elementary level and through the home access center at the secondary level.

To bring the district back together, there will be community outreach and the Kindness Crusade Festival held this summer as a 2021-2022 Welcome Back to School! Be on the lookout for more information and mark your calendars to attend.

**SCHOOL BOARD REPORT:** Linda Perlman-McKenna, School Director and Board Liaison to the CAC, presented a report highlighting the topics discussed during the Board committees meetings on Feb. 8th and March 8th, and the full School Board meetings on Jan 26th, Feb. 16th, Feb 23rd, and March 16th 2021. For more details of any meeting, please view the minutes and recordings online found on the PSD website.

#### Personnel Changes/Announcements:

- In light of Tracy Smith's retirement at the end of the school year, Tom Derhammer will be promoted to Director of Technology and Edward Kobus will become Assistant Director of Technology effective June 12, 2021.
- Mr. Mark Stutz, Director of Visual and Performing Arts, will be retiring after 19 years, effective next winter, Jan. 2022. Mark's role was to oversee and expand opportunities for all district students in the areas of art, music, theatre, and dance to enrich their overall education. He was instrumental in developing the Festival of the Arts which has become a wonderful tradition enjoyed every year by our community.
- The board voted to approve the contract for the new superintendent, Dr. Mark Madson, on Tues., March 16th. Dr. Madson will officially become Parkland's next Superintendent starting on July 1, 2021. He will, however, begin sitting with Mr. Snizak and Dr. Troutman to plan for his transition immediately.
  - Dr. Madson currently serves the Nazareth School District as Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education and Support Services. In addition to his current duties, he has served public education as a teacher, coach, assistant high school principal and a central office administrator. He is highly regarded for his knowledge of teaching and learning. He is a bright,

articulate, innovative and gracious man of demonstrated integrity and he's very down-to-earth and approachable. In addition, he has a proven track record as an advocate for all that is good about public education.

#### Financially-Related Matters

- New Money Borrowing and Bond Refunding:
  - At the 2/16/21 meeting, Parkland School Districts' financial advisors, Mr. Scott Shearer, Managing Director of PFM Financial Advisors, and Mr. Ken Phillips, Managing Director of RBC Capital Markets, presented their financial analysis for Parkland as it relates to new money borrowing and bond refunding.
  - The current financing plan calls for borrowing approximately \$15 million in 2021 for construction funds and another borrowing of approx. \$13.6M in 2022 for the remaining required funds.
  - They also discussed bond refunding opportunities. Assuming the current market interest rates, a refinancing of the District's 2012A & 2016 Bonds into one new bond issue would save the District close to ½ Million dollars (net of one-time issuance costs).
  - They highlighted that the district has a good debt portfolio, and explained that we are able to borrow at low interest rate because of our excellent credit rating with minimal impact on our budget because of the way we've structured our debt.
  - On Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Board considered and approved a Parameters Resolution (as we've done in the past) that allowed us to move forward with the proposed financing plan—it spelled out the conditions under which we authorized our advisors to act on our behalf, allowing them to take maximum advantage market conditions.
  - At the March 8<sup>th</sup> Committee Meetings an update on New Money Borrowing was presented. Actual savings from Parkland's new money borrowing came in significantly higher than anticipated with ~\$1.19M (\$1,192,364) in savings. In addition, the life of the bond structure will decrease by 1 year saving the district \$1.35 million over the life of the bond. Parkland will have access to those new funds in April.

#### Regarding the Health and Safety Plan:

- On Tuesday 3/16/21, Board approved the plan to increase the number of days in-person instruction at all district elementary schools (K-5) to 4 days/week beginning on Monday, April 12, 2021. Elementary students will attend Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, with Wednesday remaining an eLearning day.

#### Calendars/Dates:

- The Board approved various calendars for 2021-22 including the School Calendar for Students and Holiday Calendars for employees. School start date for students will be Monday, Aug. 30th. Kids will have classes for 4 days during that last week of Aug, and will then have a 4-day weekend for Labor Day.
- An update to 2020-2021 School Calendar — changing April 30th from an early dismissal/ professional development day to a full day of learning for Hybrid students M-Z - was approved.
- Summer School Dates for high school and middle school students were also approved. Summer school will run from June 28, 2021 to August 5, 2021.

#### March 16<sup>th</sup> Board Workshop:

- The Board heard an update on the 2021-2022 proposed budgets from LCTI, LCCC, and the CLIU, and Mr. Vignone presented a report on Parkland's 2021-2022 Budget

#### Upcoming Meetings:

- Board Meeting is Tues., March 23, 2021 @ 7pm – Dr. Troutman will be talking about staffing for next year
- P & F Board Committee Meeting – Monday, April 12, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
- B & G Board Committee Meeting – Monday, April 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
- AAA Board Committee Meeting – Monday, April 12, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
- Board Meeting – April 20, 2021 – 7:00 p.m. Workshop, 8:00 p.m. Meeting
- There will be no board meeting on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 because the Board will be having a Budget Seminar – Friday, April 30, 2021 - 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. – Administration Building

#### STUDENT REPORT:

##### Academics:

- The SATs were hosted at PHS on March 13th.
- World Language Week occurred from February 22th- 26th.
  - The language teachers hosted virtual activities throughout the week including a Trivia Contest and a Virtual Baking event.
- The National Honor Society began tutoring at the middle and elementary schools via Zoom.
- Parkland's 2021 Senior Class Officers are preparing to announce formal prom and graduation plans shortly.
- SAT prep courses are beginning at the high school for the upcoming May 2021 SAT test.
- AP teachers are preparing for the AP tests in May.
- PHS Mental Health Awareness Club has posted their first newsletter of all time!

##### Arts:

- The spring musical was just announced... it is *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat!*
- Casting for the spring musical has already been done and rehearsals have started.
- The performance is on one stage but with masks and socially distant.
- Show Dates pending.

##### Athletics:

- Girls Basketball fell to Nazareth in District Playoffs
- Seniors Sonya Shivok and Lindsay Berger were selected to a PA All-Star west team
- Parkland Boys fell to Allen in District Playoffs.
- Elgado Rolle and Jake McLean were selected to a PA All-Star west team
- Parkland hosted the wrestling District 11 championship, but Parkland had no winners this year

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**ROUNDTABLE:**

- Prom and graduation planning has started! Prom will be outside in tents at the SteelStacks in Bethlehem, Saturday, May 8th from 6 - 11 pm..

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** At 8:24 pm Melanie St. Hill called for a motion to adjourn. Nicole Mandry moved, with Lauren Wahlmark seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Andrea Scott