

Parkland Community Advisory Council

January 21, 2021

CO-PRESIDENTS

Melanie St. Hill
Michelle Wahlmark

SECRETARY

Andrea Scott

ATTENDEES: Benjamin Gulledge, Jennifer Jones, Nicole Mandry, Lisa Petrocilli, Jay Rohatgi, Melanie St. Hill, Andrea Scott, Michelle Wahlmark, Doreen Wynn, Lauren Will, Samantha Edwards, Uma Purani, Reva Gandhi and Aishwarya Suresh

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Valeria Quintanilla, Lauren Wahlmark

SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Linda Perlman-McKenna

ADMINISTRATION: Tracy Smith, JR Renna

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Melanie St. Hill at 7:01 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve the minutes from December 17, 2020 was made by Valeria Quintanilla and Seconded by Nicole Mandry.

PRESENTATION:

“21st Century Classrooms/Girls Who Code” presented by Tracy Smith, Samantha Edwards, JR Renna, Lauren Will, Uma Purani, Reva Gandhi and Aishwarya Suresh

The Parkland Ready 21 initiative was born to help transition to a more digital learning environment and to prepare students for a changing world with different expectations of student skills. PR21’s objectives are to foster learner centric classrooms by supporting student voice and choice, provide authentic projects, build 21st century skills and create upstanding digital citizens. Girls Who Code is a great example of students who embrace and excel in this new environment.

Girls Who Code (GWC) was started by a group of 8th grade girls, led by Uma Purani. The girls, now in 11th grade, are growing the program exponentially each year. More than 100 girls have moved through the program first learning, then teaching, creating and fulfilling projects throughout the Parkland Community. Examples of GWC club’s amazing accomplishments include: implementing both Python and Artificial Intelligence (AI) training, hosting a virtual Hour of Code program and creating chromebook teacher training. In addition, GWC presented at an Equity Symposium at Lehigh University, developed technology tutorials for teachers and parents during an online school setting, and created the Parkland C.A.R.E.S. Food Pantry website.

The digital learning environment expanded rapidly because of COVID-19. Using Schoology reported statistics, overall usage of online resources were quantified and compared from the Spring 2020 emergency elearning period to the current rigorous e-learning environment of the 2020-2021 school year. March 13th to June 13th, 2020 there were 890k Schoology submissions compared to the period of August 30th to November 30th, 2020, where there were 1.7 million submissions, close to an increase of 1 million additional submissions.

Digital learning that began prior to and then as a result of COVID-19 are: the (Virtual) Trojan Tech Team, art and digital badging, Veteran Memorial Elementary School's Virtual Nest, school updates via Schoology, and Clever apps like Edpuzzle, Nearpod and Kami.

Also developed was a "digital pantry" of 175 Accelerated Education courses aligned to the secondary curriculum, and converted to Schoology. There is now a Virtual Professional Development Academy Catalog for teachers to keep track of traditional academies and meet new challenges with unique new options. Access to the virtual academies can be from the Intranet or a Schoology collaboration course. Wednesday morning Professional Development for elementary and secondary teachers includes a Q&A session and Tech Mentor building based activities.

The presentation was closed with one last thought: "Technology is an important part of teaching and learning, but it will never replace the power of a great teacher. The best 1-to-1 device in the classroom is a great teacher. It is the teacher, not the technology, and its headwear & heartwear, not hardware, that makes the difference."

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT: Linda Perlman-McKenna, School Director and Board Liaison to the CAC, presented a report highlighting the topics discussed during the Board committee meetings on January 11th and the School Board meeting on January 19th.

Jan. 19th Workshop

- Angel Green, Assistant Director of Business Administration, presented an update on the 2021-2022 General Fund Budget. We'll hear more about the development of next year's budget at our February CAC meeting.

During the Regular Business Meetings on Jan. 19th:

- Act I Index-- The Board approved a Resolution stipulating that PSD will limit any school tax increases for fiscal year 2021-22 to a maximum of 3%, the Act I Index for Parkland calculated by the Department of Education. By passing the Resolution, the Board certifies that increasing any tax at a rate of 3% or less will be sufficient to balance our final budget 2021-2022.
- Amended Health & Safety Plan-- The Board approved updates to the Health & Safety Plan for Covid-19. These changes are highlighted in Amendment #2 of the Plan, and reflect changes associated with the Universal Face Covering Order, Recommendations for Pre-K to 12 Schools following Identification of Case(s) of COVID, the signing of the Attestation Form, and general edits and updates to reflect current practices. The amended Plan will be submitted to PDE as required and will be posted on the district website.
- Athletic Equip-- Approved purchase of athletic equipment and supplies for Spring sports, including baseball, softball, lacrosse, volleyball, tennis, and track.
- Personnel Items-- Board approved leaves of absence, changes of status, new hires, resignations and retirements, and additions to the day-to-day substitute list.
- Tuition reimbursements to staff for graduate credits were also approved.
- Tax Collector Compensation-- Board approved a resolution that sets forth the annual compensation for the elected tax collectors for South Whitehall Township, North Whitehall Township and Upper Macungie Township for the period commencing January 3, 2022 to January 5, 2026.

- The last Change Order for Veterans Memorial, which was an unused contract allowance will result in a credit of approx. \$2,000.
- Approved several contracts for professional services, including proposals from:
 - KCBA Architects to begin planning for a 12-classroom addition at Kratzer Elementary School. The additional classrooms will be needed to accommodate enrollment growth, especially important given that the Ridge Farm development is moving forward.
 - Spillman Farmer Architects for design drawings necessary to complete the remainder of the Roof Replacement project at Kernsville Elementary. "Note: This item was tabled at the Jan 19th meeting and brought back to the board on Jan 26th, the week after the CAC meeting. The Board officially approved this item on Jan 26th."
 - Alvin H. Butz for construction management services related to the Kernsville Roof Replacement project during the summer of 2021. These services include things like producing the project manuals, managing the bidding process, and performing construction safety inspections.
- Approved proposals to upgrade our Firewalls; to upgrade our Fiber Connection to the CLIU for the district's internet, email, & other services; and to purchase Wireless Controllers and Access Points.
- More details can be viewed on the meeting agenda that's accessible online. Or by replaying the recorded meetings.
- Next Board Meetings are: Tues., January 26, 2021 @ 7pm, February 16, 2021 with a Workshop @ 7:00 p.m. and regular @ 8pm, and February 23rd @ 7pm . Committees will meet on February 8th: P&F at 5pm; B&G at 6pm; and AAA at 7pm.

STUDENT REPORT:

Academics:

- The last day for optional science Keystone testing took place January 21, 2021.
- Teacher recommendations and course registration for students were due January 18, 2021.
- Guidance counselors will set up zoom meetings to talk to students about course selection.
- Many AP teachers began AP practice with students for the May AP tests.
- The second marking period and the first semester end this January 22, 2021.
- Optional literature Keystone testing will take place on February 2nd and 3rd.
- Clubs are continuing with virtual meetings and Leo Club continues to offer volunteer opportunities.

Arts:

- Since chorale already had their concert, the chorale season is now over.
- There have been no recent FOTA or PAC meetings.
- Classes are still practicing pieces and working on art just not in preparation for a concert or showing since everything is currently on hold.

Athletics

- Basketball began their season.
 - Boys basketball played the Zephyrs, at home on January 21, 2021.
 - Girls Basketball beat Central Catholic, 27-23 while boys fell to Central 40-43.
- Parkland's Wrestling team took down Whitehall 34-25 and were set to face Allen, Friday the 22nd.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

ROUNDTABLE:

- Multiple members sung the praises of the Girls Who Code representatives. It was wonderful to listen to their experiences and their passion for coding.
- 2300 students participated in this year's Hour of Code.
- The essay requirement and the subject portions of this year's SATs have been cancelled.
- Kelly Rosario and Andrew Weber will be present "Teaching Students Good Citizenship/Tolerance" at the upcoming February meeting on 2/18/2021.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: At 8:06pm Melanie St. Hill called for a motion to adjourn. Jay Rohatgi moved, with Michelle Wahlmark seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Scott