

**Gilroy Unified School District**  
**SUPERINTENDENT'S PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, September 13, 2021**

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*Members in attendance:*

<i>Susan Rodriguez (Christopher)</i>	<i>Kenny Moreno (El Roble)</i>	<i>Megan Caspary (El Roble)</i>
<i>Ruby Rodriguez (Eliot)</i>	<i>Melissa Avila-Carroll (GECA)</i>	<i>Cindy Wargocki (GECA)</i>
<i>Dawn Johnson (Gilroy)</i>	<i>Maria Diaz (Glen View)</i>	<i>Esmeralda Ramos (Las Animas)</i>
<i>Ruby Ramirez (Las Animas)</i>	<i>Lauren Moller (Luigi Aprea)</i>	<i>Martin Russo (Rod Kelley)</i>
<i>Mojgan Kazemi (Solorsano)</i>	<i>Trevor Van Laar (South Valley)</i>	<i>Teresa Perez (VLA)</i>
<i>Melissa Aguirre (Board Member)</i>	<i>James Pace (Board Member)</i>	

**Welcome & Introductions**

- Dr. Flores began by welcoming all of the SPAC members (new & returning) to the first meeting of the school year.
- She gave the parents the option to participate in person or virtually.

**Roles and Responsibilities of SPAC members:**

- Dr. Flores shared the roles & responsibilities document with SPAC members.
- As a SPAC representative, they are the person that communicates and acts as a liaison between the school site and the Superintendent. It is a very important role.
- Dr. Flores said she takes this committee very seriously, and added that it is also one of her favorites.
- The parent reports a great way for her to know what is happening at the sites. The committee provides a two-way communication as she provides them with information, and the members share that with the people at the school site.
- The SPAC members will give monthly reports - this is voluntary.
- If the members cannot attend the meeting, she hopes that they can find an alternative member that will attend in their place, so that someone is attending from the site every month.
- The SPAC members can take their own notes. Minutes are taken at the meeting, however, they are not always timely. In the meantime, the representatives are encouraged to take their own notes. Once the minutes are given to the SPAC members, they are also posted on the [GUSD website](#).
- Another role is to bring up topics that they think parents at the sites would like to know about, and those will be added to the future topics list. Dr. Flores will make arrangements for her staff to give reports as needed.
- She asked that SPAC members not discuss their individual children during the meeting, because of confidentiality. She told them they could wait and speak to her individually following the meeting. The same applies to a personnel issue. If there is an issue with a staff member, she asked them to please wait until after the meeting, to speak with her.
- She shared the norms that were listed on the document.

**Superintendent's Report:**

- At every meeting, Dr. Flores will provide the Superintendents Report. She discusses topics that she thinks would be of interest to SPAC members.

**Reopening of Schools**

- Dr. Flores and district staff were out at the school sites on the first few days of schools.
- The first few days; traffic is always challenging. It was pretty challenging at almost every site. It is like this every year, however, this year was exasperated by so many parents driving their children, and the new routines, such as parents not being able to walk onto the campus.
- The district has new routines, new procedures, and it took time. After about a week, the traffic pattern at all schools were pretty much as they were two years ago.
- Rod Kelley Elementary was more challenging-overall it got much better. Some parents were waiting in the vehicles for 45 minutes to one hour. However, last week, Rod Kelley's pick up was under 20 minutes.
- Beyond traffic, her observation is that it is almost business as usual, minus the masks and the hand washing stations.
- Dr. Flores has been in many classrooms. The teachers are teaching as usual, and using instructional materials/textbooks.

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- Everywhere she has gone (not initiated by her); the teachers/students are telling her how happy they are to be back at school.
- Overall, the reopening is going fairly well. 10,600 students returned to school, along with 1,100 staff.

**Vaccinations**

- Things are going really well with vaccinations and COVID cases are minimal.
- 90% of staff are vaccinated.
- Prior to the beginning of the year, the district was asking staff to share voluntarily if they had been vaccinated. The Public Health Department (PHD) asked to schools to ask for that information. Now the State/Governor has passed an Executive Order that requires employers to ask for proof of vaccination. Dr. Flores said she is glad to say that what was self-reported and what has been provided as proof are closely aligned.
- That leaves 10% of staff that is not vaccinated.
- The Governors order requires that if staff are not vaccinated as of October 1. That they must do mandatory weekly testing.
- Dr. Flores credited a couple of things for the vaccination rate - mainly the Gilroy High School vaccination clinic that the County and the PHD operated for four months. The clinic provided over 60,000 vaccinations.
- This school year, Dr. Flores is working with the County PHD and mobile vaccination clinics-are being held at district schools. They have already scheduled clinics at six to seven of the school sites. You do not have to be a parent or student at that school. Anyone eligible can go. This information is being posted online and is included in the Friday letters.
- 73% of 12-17 year olds have been vaccinated. That means there are 27% that are not. Dr. Flores does not have numbers specific to Gilroy- these are only the county numbers.
- Under 12 year olds cannot be vaccinated yet. She heard today on the news to expect that to happen late October or early November. Dr. Flores hopes they do have vaccinations available for 12 and under.
- One out of four cases are children getting COVID. That is happening because they are not vaccinated and adults around them are probably not vaccinated. Staff are looking forward to when the vaccinations are available for 5-11 year olds.
- Santa Clara County is one of the leading counties in the state in vaccinations, with 87.8% that have one shot. 82.6% are fully vaccinated. The county is the leading in the nation for vaccination rates.

**COVID19 Cases & Testing**

- Dr. Flores said she is a little worried about the number of cases 19 and under. 19% of cases in the county are 19 years old and under. This could be a function of many of them not being vaccinated. However, all the other numbers are going in a really good direction.
- Dr. Flores closely watches [the 7-day rolling average of cases](#) in the county. Just a week ago, it was at 350, and on this day, it was at 269.
- The PHD cautioned that it may not be a new trend, however, they are optimistic that we have reached the peak for this surge.
- The district is seeing cases in the district in staff and students. However, these cases did not originate at schools. Unfortunately, most cases that we are aware of are outside cases – family members exposed to COVID.
- The district has not had to close any classroom, so far and, the schools have not had any outbreaks.
- The district is hoping with this new trend in cases declining in the county and trend in vaccinations going up there, we will not be as many cases at the schools.
- There is a worry throughout the county and state about staff being out and the lack of substitutes. Dr. Flores is talking to other superintendents about this. There are so few substitutes; this is a national issue not only in Gilroy. She heard that about 1,000 school districts have had to close because the districts did not have substitutes and were having to close because of that.
- On September 16, staff is recommending to the Board, a big increase to substitute pay. The district is hoping this will attract more substitutes. Dr. Flores is hoping that the Board will approve this rate because the district will put it into effect immediately.

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- Principals and literacy facilitators are covering classes, retirees are covering classes, because the districts cannot find any substitutes.
- Q:** Did they happen to mention any other surges that might be coming?
- A:** Dr. Flores said the Superintendents used to meet with the PHD every Tuesday. Now they are meeting every other Tuesday. The only thing the PHD talked about at the last meeting was this surge and that it appears the peak has passed. They are a little worried about a new variant called the MU variant. The number one thing that they are watching right now is the Delta variant.
- Q:** Did they mention anything about more testing sites?
- A:** As it relates to COVID19 testing, the state set up a testing program. Clearly, they don't have enough companies or products to cover all public schools. The district is on a waiting list. A few weeks ago, Dr. Paul Winslow and Dr. Flores started reaching out to private companies. The district is entering into a contract with a company called Avellino Labs. As of October 1, the district has to do weekly testing of staff, and some student testing. The district can not test all students as GUSD has 10,600 students. Dr. Flores approached the County Office of Education, and there will be five days of testing at the Santa Clara County Office of Education Annex (the former ADB). They were down to two days a week of testing. The County Superintendent, Dr. Dewan, responded very favorably and has already arranged to go back to five days of testing. This will be starting soon.
- On the [County PHD testing website](#), parents can find where the testing sites are located. There are very limited testing sites in Gilroy.
- As mentioned, GUSD is on the waiting list for state testing and Dr. Flores said her understanding is that there are about 100-200 districts on the wait list. Staff also contracted with another company to provide staff to do this testing. Both of these items are on the Board agenda.
- Q:** At the old ADB site (SCCOE Annex), previously if you took your student and said they had the sniffles, they would not take them, because it was indoors. Especially for those who do not have cars and they say you have to go through the drive through?
- A:** Dr. Flores said she would have to ask about this practice.
- Q:** The [chart on the district website](#) that has the COVID cases between the schools, why aren't the numbers matching to what is being told?
- A:** The data is accurate. The district does not report every case. There is a very [complicated chart](#) which cases are to be reported. Many cases do not have to be reported to the PHD. The district is only posting those that have to be reported, and the chart is being posted week by week. It is not cumulative.
- Q:** When a student has come in close contact, a call goes out to the parent of the possible close contact. The question is being asked is the student vaccinated or unvaccinated or masked, and needs to be quarantined. As far as verification of vaccination. Can we feel secure that we are getting the correct answer?
- A:** Dr. Winslow is a member of Cabinet and is in charge of the COVID program and contact tracing. He meets with the nurses. Dr. Flores is going to ask Dr. Winslow to come to the next meeting and he may bring the nurse from the testing team so that parents can ask these questions directly to him. If you look at the [decision tree](#) from the PHD, in regards of verification from vaccination, we do not know if we can do that right now. However, the nurses can ask, she does not know if they are going to ask for proof or not.
- Q:** The question that was asked to parents is - is your child vaccinated or unvaccinated. No proof was asked for. Is your child vaccinated, do they wear a mask? To bring back negative results, even the negative results were followed up upon. The investigation was very fast in the beginning, and then in the end there was no follow up.
- A:** Dr. Flores said she will share these concerns with Dr. Winslow and will ask him to respond at the meeting.
- Q:** If your student is out sick, the office told us they have to stay out until they have no symptoms, even with a negative COVID test. Her oldest son has been sick over a week, but still coughing and she brought that up to the nurse and asked if they can get a doctor's note saying he is not contagious. Is that how it is supposed to work?
- A:** Dr. Winslow will address these situations. They have to be symptom free. Dr. Flores recommended that they talk to the nurse. The nurses are assigned to 2-3 school sites. They can call the school sites and then the nurse can talk to you.
- Q:** Both of her students are at two different school, and on separate occasions, they tell her that there is not soap in the handwashing station. Do they refill it?
- A:** It is one of our practices, to refill them during the day and the custodians check them daily.

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**Q:** How many handwashing stations are there?

**A:** We have quite a few; at each site. Any Entrances have a handwashing station. The district ordered them very early so we have a lot.

**Q:** Is there supposed to be a hand hygiene protocol?

**A:** Dr. Flores has heard principals and staff tell students that they have to wash their hands when they enter, at recess, etc.

**Q:** If it is supposed to be a protocol, she is telling them to wash their hands but not all teachers are telling them?

**A:** It is definitely a protocol that we all agreed we would implement across the district. There is a video on handwashing.

**Q:** Are they handwashing sinks or units? As a school district, did you buy electrical units, or are they the type that you pump?

**A:** They are the type that you pump with your foot.

**Q:** Are the units being serviced?

**A:** Yes, the vendors and maintenance maintain the equipment.

**Q:** I do not think that the PHD is recommending it. It is not a mandate, but if we made it part of the plan like what we intended to do then as a school district it should be followed. It might cause a huge bottle neck, how is it after lunch?

**A:** Dr. Flores said she has seen all the kids washing after lunch at other sites, when they are released. She said if they feel that this is a concern, across the district, she could talk to the principals about it. Even though it is not recommended by PHD, it is just good practice. Staff have been emphasizing it and using handwashing stations all over the district.

**Q:** With handwashing stations, is there any type of shelter?

**A:** The handwashing stations will probably have to be moved; she said she does not see getting shelters for 100+ units as a realistic option. Staff have started talking about what to do when it rains. They did not talk about shelters for handwashing stations. Dr. Flores said she would talk to principals and members of cabinet about these topics.

**Q:** What are the new requirements for substitutes, if parents know someone?

**A:** Dr. Flores said she would share this information with the members and encouraged SPAC members to spread the word about substitutes.

***Interactive Displays***

- The Interactive Displays are essential to the district back up plan if for some reason the PHD decided to close schools down again (although it is unlikely). Staff recommended to the Board that these displays be purchased for all secondary schools.
- The displays are 81" and two were ordered for all secondary teachers.
- They are arriving right now, and the teachers are being trained on the new displays. Recently they trained all of the Brownell staff and invited two teachers from each school to attend. This way, there are at least two teachers at each site to train all other teachers.
- This is the new district standard.
- Teachers are using them and they really like them. Once they receive the training, the display can act as a computer, and it is touch screen. The teachers can display right off of the internet.
- Some teachers want one on the wall and one on the mobile cart. This is going to happen during the next month or two.
- All secondary staff will get training. Once that is accomplished, they will move on to the elementary classrooms.
- The district is getting them, while many districts are not, because we moved so fast and it took us all these months to receive them. The Board approved the purchase of these displays at the June 2021 meeting.

***Facilities Projects***

- The Brownell Middle School project is completed. They had a wonderful grand opening. Dr. Flores said the building is just incredible, and she is so excited about how it turned out.
- She said she is equally excited about the South Valley Middle School rebuild. The groundbreaking was on 8/26. The project is underway.

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**Q:** When will the schools be getting more water refill stations?

**A:** The district already made a decision to add more. Currently, there is one per school (at least), and the district will be adding 2-3 more to each site. Dr. Flores said she cannot give them a timeline, but they have agreed to add more water filling stations. Staff do not anticipate that they are going to be able to use the drinking fountains any longer. One-time government money for these kinds of expenses will be used. It takes time because it involves plumbing; each site needs to be assessed to see where they can do it more efficiently.

**SPAC Representative Reports**

**South Valley Middle School**

- They had the groundbreaking ceremony. It was well attended by various officials, students, and principals.
- The Back to School Night happened on 9/9.
- The school is currently trying to get music instruments for band kids.
- Sports are starting.

**Q:** As you enter into the quad area at South Valley just beside iron gates, there are plaques from many different years, in the concrete. One of the former class presidents would like to know what is going to happen to those?

**A:** We actually already talked about this. At every site that has had major construction, we try to preserve those. It is not easy. There are things in the gym that they have already told her about that had to be preserved. They do try their best, and most of the time it works.

- This is from Gene Sakahara, he was president of his class, and they paid to put it there. (Dr. Flores said she would direct it to Alvaro).

**Luigi Aprea Elementary School**

- The school will be having a Yogofino fundraiser on 9/14.
- Spirit days are coming up.
- The parent club meeting has been moved four times, it is now on 9/22.
- They had Back to School Night.
- Pick up is getting better.

**Q:** Is Luigi Aprea a Title I school now?

**A:** Yes, it is title I, they applied for a waiver, and it was granted. Staffing – not likely to hire additional staff, will have to have existing staff help with the intervention, we have been advertising and getting almost nothing. We don't know what the plan is at Luigi, Dr. Flores has not seen SPSA. She will be hearing about plans of intervention during the SPSA.

**Glen View Elementary School**

- Traffic control was great when maintenance was there. Teachers have been amazing and helping out with dismissal.
- Glen View has a new yard duty, and they are hoping to get an additional one. (Dr. Flores did say they did authorize two yard duties for each elementary.
- Intervention is being worked on. Ms. Vasquez said reading is a focus.
- Parents are getting used to the new process of picking up students.

**Q:** We get many parents asking about Power School for kindergarten and first grades. Why do they have Power School at other schools for kinder and first, but not at Glen View?

**A:** Dr. Flores said she would ask Mandy Reedy, the Director of the program. She will have her respond to this question. Dr. Flores said she guesses it might have something to do with funding.

- Glen View had Back to School Night, and that went very well (Dr. Flores attended this event).

**Gilroy High School**

- They are excited about the new crosswalk with functional lights.
- The welcome back rally was postponed - there were still a lot of events that week.
- ASB elections are this week.
- The students did senior parking spots over the weekend. The parents were very unhappy that they could not attend. (Dr. Flores said they could not contact trace with all there).
- The Homecoming dance is postponed for all (Dr. Flores said they are still talking about it, she is very concerned

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- Why students cannot be outdoors, it is a big frustration.
- Homecoming dance is postponed for all (DF said they are still talking about it, very concerned about having dances with such close contact).
- Homecoming floats, are parents going to be able to help with that? One frustration is getting a few answers, just getting all the information so that parents are well aware of what is going on.

***Las Animas Elementary School***

- Esmeralda Ramos introduced the new representative, Ruby Ramirez.
- They had the first school fundraiser at the Ice Factory, and it went well.
- Parents were able to do a welcome back, staff appreciation week, right after school started.
- The first spirit day is on 9/17, it will consist of cultural peace day. All students are encouraged to wear their cultural attire.
- Scholastic Book fair will take place on 9/20 to 10/1 and will all be online.
- Dr. Flores, thanked Esmeralda for serving as long as she did.

***Christopher High School***

- Students had a welcome back week, and did a great job.
- Sports are in full swing.
- Club Rush on 9/22.
- Honor roll lunch on 9/10, went very well.
- Even though the lunches are being provided free, the lunch line is so long that the students get in line and cannot get their lunches.

**Q:** The parents from the high school are upset about the senior dinner dance and homecoming, and they do not understand why there can be a football game with many people but not these events. Is that a no on these activities?

**A:** Dr. Flores said she told the principals that they would re-evaluate it every Monday when Cabinet meets. They are still holding on senior dances or proms, however, that does not mean they are not going to change decisions next Monday or the following Monday. As the conditions improve in the county, that is one of the things they are watching, all this is relevant.

***El Roble Elementary School***

**Q:** As a campus supervisor if they see students fighting across the street, can they intervene? Unfortunately, parents are trying to step in and stand up for the students that are getting into fights. To what point for the safety of staff can they intervene?

**A:** The Education Code allows staff to intervene at a fight across the street, if that needs to be clarified, Dr. Flores said she could remind the Principals. The students are the school's responsibility on the way to and from school, and they can intervene. She will make sure that the principals makes this clear.

- They had a paper drive, that they do every year, it brought over 200, 000 sheets of paper.
- Parent club had to reorder apparel because of the high demand.
- TK, Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> grades, the drop off takes 10 minutes; the pick-up takes 15-20 minutes depending on the day.
- The BBQ 152 fundraiser is coming up on 9/16.
- The Book fair is going on right now. You can purchase online.

***GECA***

- School started on August 5 for GECA students, and Gavilan classes began on 8/23.
- They had spirit week.
- ASB Elections.
- Club Day.
- Back to School Night 8/31.
- The students are in school for GECA, but most Gavilan classes are online only.
- The students have to stay on GECA campus during college study classes, as they are online or Gavilan and they do not have staff to supervise them. The district is adding a couple of part time positions of campus supervisors to help.

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- There was a power outage at Gavilan, so school was closed.
- The first general meeting was on 8/25, they introduced the new board. Because there are no parents on campus, they will do the rest of the fundraisers online, directly shipping to families, as it progresses they will update parents, if things improve. Working on a wish list on amazon, or things they can put in the office, and they will get them delivered. Mrs. Flores was the guest speaker about GECA and Gavilan College requirements.
- On the 9/15 meeting, they will talk about fundraisers that they have coming up. The guest speakers will be Dr. Rose, President of Gavilan College, and Jean Wallace who is the Board VP to the Gavilan College, which should be great, because they have two classes full of kids, who have not been on campus, the older students have taken them up to show them Gavilan. They are still learning how that works, and the partnership between Gavilan and GECA.
- The Gavilan Board of Trustee meeting will be 9/14, and they will have some interesting things to talk about, hopefully they will have news that can be reported back to GECA families in terms of vaccination requirements.
- The students are happy to be back. The teachers and staff are happy to be back. They are having a great time.

***Solorsano Middle School***

- Back to School Night was a success.
- The Parent club met in August, and they are going to continue meeting virtually.
- Cross-country and softball has started. For cross-country, they had to remind everyone that there are no spectators allowed.
- They had a post on Solorsano parent club about adults coming into different classes today asking the students to raise their hands to see if they are vaccinated or not. If they were vaccinated they were passing out permission slips and offering gift cards.  
-Dr. Flores said that they should not be asking the students if they are vaccinated and that she would follow up on this.

***Virtual Learning Academy (VLA)***

- The students are being acclimated and they have many new students.
  - There was a lot of discussion, which was necessary between the teachers and Mrs. Guenther. Students are getting settled into their classes.
  - The daily check-ins are doing good. If there are any issues, they are being addressed.
  - The outreach is appreciated from the teachers to the parents.
  - They had the Back to School Night online. The students got to see each other, and the parents got to the classrooms, meet the teachers, go into breakout sessions. Questions that were asked were answered.
  - A lot of questions are being taken care of as far as what is VLA. Is it good for the child and what is going to be expected of them through the year.
  - Some questions that have come up as far as chrome books. She knows they talked about it last year.
- Q:** When are the chrome books going to be distributed or did the new ones comes in, and when will they be exchanged to especially the VLA students? They were asked to contact the school, and they did and the school has no information.
- A:** This has been a topic for weeks on the Technology Committee. A few chrome books have arrived, not all, but many have. The elementary students turned in their chrome books when school was out in June. IT is currently in the process of determining, which ones need to be taken out of the circulation and replaced by new ones. At the secondary, they are about to roll out a one to one technology plan, where every student will have a computer and it may or may not be an older one, or a new one. The district has 6,056 new chrome books, which have some wonderful features that the older ones do not, and some of the older ones are about to expire. Right now, the staff is going through the entire inventory and determining who needs one of the new chrome books. Hopefully over the next few weeks, there will be new computers for those that need one. At the secondary level, we did not ask the students to bring back the chrome books as we did for elementary. Every Friday afternoon, the Technology Committee meets (about 12 people), and chrome book distribution is one of the big jobs right now. We have not talked about the VLA distribution, we will add that to the next agenda to figure out what the distribution plan is going to be.

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- Q:** It was brought up that at the semester VLA would end at the semester, and some students would not be able to go back to VLA and would have to go back to school, it is not a year commitment as it was last year. This year an administrator said that we are hoping by next semester to be back on site. Do we have a commitment from the school district that this will be a yearlong program, or is there a possibility that student need to return to in-person mid year?
- A:** The program will continue all year, you have the district's commitment. The law changed regarding independent study. VLA falls under the independent study code. The code is that the district is required to allow the parents to go back and forth. We asked parents to make a commitment of the semester, we don't think it is good for kids to move back and forth. The district plans to operate the program all year. With the new law, we cannot require a one-year commitment from the parent - that is not permitted by the new code. She hopes this answers the questions.
- Q:** When will GATE testing resume? As far as curriculum for those wanting to be challenged, it provided that challenge. The parent guide we used from Calvert, was awesome, really gave the insight on what they needed to express for themselves. That helped VLA especially the structure, engaged children. This year it is still through Edmentum. It is a progress and assignment three-day tool that parents have. It does not provide examples of how students should be having as a response. Was there a reason from the change from Calvert to what is being used this time through Edmentum?
- A:** Dr. Flores said she would share her concerns; she will ask and follow up.

**Topics of future meetings**

- District's COVID-19 Plan & Response Team