

Gilroy Unified School District
SUPERINTENDENT'S PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)
 Meeting Minutes
 Monday, November 8, 2021
 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Members in attendance:

Sue Rodriguez (Christopher)	Kenny Moreno (El Roble)	Melissa Avila-Carroll (GECA)
Cynthia Wargocki (GECA)	Dawn Johnson (Gilroy High)	Coyo Anhder (Gilroy High)
Maria Diaz (Glen View)	Lauren Moller (Luigi Aprea)	Susan Lomeli (Rucker)
Mojgan Kazemi (Solorsano)	Trevor Van Laar (South Valley)	Teresa Perez (VLA)
Melissa Aguirre (Board Member)	James Pace (Board Member)	

Welcome & Introductions

- Dr. Flores began by thanking all those who participated.
- She introduced the staff members who presented the topics of the night.

Topics of the Night:

Water Conservation, Dan McAuliffe, Maintenance Manager

- GUSD has been following Level One-drought restrictions, defined by the City Of Gilroy since 2016, so it was not a hard transition to go into Level Two. GUSD was in Level Two back in 2014, 2015, 2016, maybe even earlier.
- The staff is doing their part. The district has always led the way with “brown is the new green”. The district has reduced the watering levels greatly.
- GUSD works very closely with the City. All of our water meters are monitored and the City can tell if the district has a running toilet in the middle of the night. Maintenance staff will get an alarm from the City and maintenance staff can react to that quickly. As well as the underground leaks, they have been good about pointing that out. The Maintenance Department has two irrigation technicians that are constantly looking at malfunction of devices.
- Several of the GUSD sites have a smart watering system where staff can control water usage, see the water usage, and see if something is malfunctioning from either their phone, tablet, or laptops. These are in place at Christopher High School, Gilroy High School and Brownell. A few other sites are partially “smart”. The district is converting as we can.
- Improvements have already been made on all fixtures, restrooms, urinals, and showers.
- As new schools are built, there are state guidelines that need to be followed, for very strict water conservation.
- There is a water usage platform called FLUID. It is irrigation water and GUSD has about 8-9 sites enrolled. This gives a view of the entire year water usage, what they think it should be and what it actually is being used.
- Some landscapes have been converted to drought resistant plants. Grasses, if established, do go dormant but they do come back.
- Maintenance staff does use an organic product for killing weeds. The product is expensive, but it does work. They also have a steam machine that cooks the weed.
- Staff closely monitors the athletic turfs; the artificial ones also require water to properly clean them. They have water cannons that flood the fields to clean them. GUSD staff does notify the City because they do see a spike in the water usage. They are not cleaned as often as they used to be, however, they still do it to keep the field safe.
- GUSD has two and a half irrigation techs and two plumbers so we can react to issues very quickly.
- There are a lot of facilities, a lot of underground piping some which is pretty old.
- The pool covers are kept on as much as possible: Even at this time of year, there is a lot of evaporation. During the summer time, there is a lot more evaporation and this creates an issue

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where staff has to use a lot more chemicals. The new pool at Gilroy High School has a great cover.

- GUSD is following the city, county and state restrictions. Mr. McAuliffe belongs to a few organizations. He is on landscape committee with the county. He gets updates and good resources. He feels good about where our district is at and how it is fitting into the community.
- Right now, staff is watering the fields two times a week for 15 minutes each.
- Staff is also washing work vehicles at a do it yourself car wash. There are a lot of vehicles and they do get dirty (this car wash uses reclaimed water).
- GUSD has not been able to tap into reclaimed water. That is very difficult for schools. It is also very expensive. GUSD does have purple pipe in place at Gilroy High School, Solorsano Middle School, and Las Animas Elementary, as well as a couple of other sites.

Q: Not sure how often you walk the grounds. Every day, he walks through El Roble park and it's like walking from an oasis to the desert. Not sure what schedule the City is watering on, but they are obviously not watering at the same level as the district. What is growing today is not grass. What is growing now is weeds. Is there something that is going to take place once things do grow back for the fields to be rehabbed and what are the kids going to be playing on?

A: There is a process for restoring fields. There are limited resources. There is a turf renovator that is very effective, staff has been using on the athletic fields. It is a combination of extreme detaching and aerating and then they top dress it and re-seed. Dan said he will take a look at El Roble. This process does not work unless you can get a lot of water on it.

Q: Any news of replacing athletic fields to artificial turf?

A: It is not as low maintenance as people think; it tends to cause more injuries, it is less forgiving. GUSD has it in certain places and it is very expensive. They looked at costs, the pros and the cons, there are some turf fields on some sites. Dr. Flores said she believes there is one area planned at South Valley Middle School that has artificial turf. The initial outlay is very expensive and it only lasts 10-12 years.

Dual Immersion Program – Kathleen Biermann, Director of Educational Services, Elementary

- This program has been part of GUSD for many years, about 20 years.
- GUSD has a dual immersion strand - the two elementary schools Las Animas and Rod Kelley accept 50 kindergartners, between the two sites. They enroll 100 dual immersion students in Kinder annually.
- Currently there are 297 students in DI at South Valley Middle School, which is 100 per grade. Those are students that come from both Las Animas and Rod Kelley.
- Gilroy High School has 140 9th graders, 10th in classes (approximately 70 students).
- [She shared the informational brochure that is given to the parents, as well as the website that has the program's information.](#) Following the winter break, staff will be updating the information for the spring (2022) process.
- GUSD has the 50/50 model (50% English and 50% Spanish). Teachers work hard to maintain this balance in the schools.
- The GUSD DI program was recognized by CAFE, in 2016 and in 2018; one for Las Animas Elementary and one for Rod Kelley Elementary, this is an extensive review process. They look at DI programs throughout the state, and both of these schools were recognized both years.
- The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE), for a number of years (3), had a showcase for instructional excellence. They had student speakers and that showcased students in the DI program. These are former DI students who were once part of GUSD's program.

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- Q:** She has three kids in the DI program, and has seen that the program looks great on paper. However, it seems as they move up (with her experience at Las Animas, South Valley, and GHS). She has seen the numbers drop in classrooms and as the program goes on, she has heard teachers say that they wish they had more support, as well as continuous training. Over the last few years, the programs are not supported as much; often the training materials are not easily available. Currently, for example in AP Spanish at Gilroy High School, they do not have many books, in comparison to the programs at Christopher High School; they seem to have a lot more books. What can be done or when was the last time the program was reviewed?
- A:** Dr. Flores said they will follow up on these concerns. They would like to hear directly from the teachers that are sharing concerns about non-sufficient materials, which neither she or Ms. Biermann have heard. These programs are rare; there are only two to three programs in the state. GUSD will commit to following up on concerns. Deb, Kathleen and Dr. Flores will get together and talk to the teachers, and see what the issues are.
- C:** As a parent she feels that the program is good in elementary, and there has been a shift and somewhat of a shock when it gets to middle school. She is sorry to hear that math and science are no longer in Spanish. Once the students are in Gilroy High, what she would like to see it to make sure those students continue to invest in that and keep trying, if they want to pursue the seal of illiteracy.
- A:** Dr. Flores said that she has only known a few teachers in her entire career with a math and science BCLAD. They do not have a general multiple subject credential, and it is very difficult in both middle and high school. GUSD staff still has trouble finding BCLAD teachers for the middle and high school level. That is the limiting factor in middle and high school. Mr. Chavez at Gilroy is just so unusual to have someone teach four subjects. She shared regarding the Seal of Biliteracy, GUSD has successful graduates from both comprehensive high schools. She said she does not know how many there are at GECA. She has seen a list of students that have earned the Seal of Biliteracy.
- Parents expressed concerns about the decrease in GATE options. In the future the topic of GATE will be placed on the agenda. The number of parents interested in the program has dwindled over the years.

Superintendent's Report

Vaccinations

- The current focus is on the 5-11 year olds, and the first clinic is taking place on November 9 at Las Animas and at Eliot Elementary the following day. There are several schools scheduled next week and two schools the day before Thanksgiving.
- Dr. Flores wanted to clear up a rumor that she heard – The rumor was that a parent's signature on the Emergency Card allowed the district to vaccinate children without parents present. GUSD would never give shots to a child without the written permission of the parent and without the parent being present. The clinics were scheduled after school so that parents can be there. The clinics are run by the Public Health Department (PHD). The PHD has done one entire round for any age, and these required written permission by a parent and their presence.
- Another thing to clear up regarding vaccinations. At the November 4 Board Meeting, the Board discussed vaccinating staff on the agenda. There was a number of people protesting thinking that the Board was considering a mandate for students. The district is not going to consider a mandate for vaccinating students. The Governor on the other hand is; it sounds like sometime next school year. GUSD's Board considered and approved the vaccination for staff, at the

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November 4 meeting. This Board policy is detailed. Dr. Flores will send out a letter to staff on Friday about the new vaccine mandate. This new mandate will apply to parent volunteers (when they are allowed on campuses).

Q: If a child is 11 years old and in middle school in 6th grade, can they still go to an elementary school to get the vaccination?

A: The first round focused on 12-17 year olds and that round is already completed. If you have an older child and want to bring them to these clinics, you can. Dr. Flores suggested that VLA parents go to the school of residence.

Q: For 5-11 year olds, parents have been asking if they need to show proof if the student has received the vaccine, in the event that it does become a mandate next year, this way it can already be on file, in case they lose it?

A: No, when the state clarifies what the process will be and it becomes a mandate parents will be notified. It will be part of the process and staff should not ask for it right now – legally because it is not a mandate. Let parents know that the district is not collecting vaccination information for students at this time.

Q: Just to clarify you can go to a different site for vaccination?

A: You can. If you cannot go to your school site, you can go to another one.

Q: Will there be boosters available at the clinics?

A: My understanding is that they will have vaccinations for 5-11 year olds; Dr. Flores said she would ask them if they will be offering boosters, and will follow up with SPAC members. (She confirmed later that shots for all age groups would be available as well as boosters.)

SRO's

- GUSD has had SROs for a long time. The MOU with the City was not renewed last year due to the shutdown.
- There has been a lot of behavior issues at sites since reopening. There has been an increase in fights.
- Dr. Flores began engaging with the principals about these issues and it was unanimous – principals, assistant principals, Cabinet members – to renew the MOU for SRO's.
- The police rarely arrest students on campus, that is not why they are there.
- There is a collaborative relationship with SROs and the admins who have proven to be very beneficial.
- The soon-to-be SRO was at the Gilroy High School Homecoming Parade.
- GUSD has a unique, special model, which makes a very big difference. SRO's are there, if there are fights between students, if someone pulls out a weapon, etc.
- GUSD will have two SROs, however starting with only one for now.
- This item is on the City Council's agenda, it is jointly funded by the City of Gilroy and GUSD.

Q: The City also has to approve it?

A: Yes, it was approved by the GUSD Board of Education, with a 6 to 1 vote. And now the City has to approve it.

Q: What does SRO stands for?

A: School Resource Officer. It is a police officer who has experience working with the youth. This is someone who has experience with youth as well as specialized training, and they are assigned to schools.

Counseling & Mental Health Services

- The presentation was shared with the SPAC members, GUSD's is a comprehensive plan.

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- The district has almost 50 mental health staff available as district staff or from counseling agencies.
 - There is a half time therapist at each of the elementary schools. One is shared between two schools. Three years ago there was not any.
 - GUSD has a wide range of people involved helping the students.
 - Trustee Linda Piceno told us that when she ended her career in the GUSD, there was about 20, so this is more than double. Staff is working on a grant right now to increase this number.
 - Eliot Elementary has the first Wellness Center, which has a mental health therapist. This was through a grant.
- Q:** What is a Wellness Center and how does it work?
- A:** They have a dedicated space for Wellness Center staffed by two staff, one mental health therapist; Dr. Flores believes is an RN or an LPN. Developed through a grant that GUSD was able to receive for Eliot Elementary. Dr. Flores said she would report back to the SPAC members, and invite the Principal of Eliot, Maricela Rivera, as well as someone from the county.
- Q:** Can we get an update about hiring two additional campus supervisors?
- A:** Yes, GUSD has hired two for every site. Some sites have between six to eight supervisors. The Principals are telling her it has made a huge difference.
- Q:** They are interested in knowing the number of students that they are able to reach for mental health services. She completed her child's referral and has not heard back from anyone about the referral.
- A:** Dr. Flores apologized for the delay. She will follow up. She also said she will report back the number of referrals and services received by students.
- Q:** Water filling stations- can you give us an update about when schools are getting them?
- A:** Maintenance is going to install three at every school and spread them around the campus so that they are easily accessible. Dr. Flores said she would ask Dan when they would be doing this.
- Q:** Is there any reasons why the fountains cannot be turned on?
- A:** Yes, Dr. Flores did ask that question, this has to do with the plumbing.
- Q:** Are the sinks in the elementary classrooms allowed for use? The ones in the elementary classrooms are taped up by the teachers.
- A:** Dr. Flores will be having a principals meeting next Thursday, and will get an answer from Dan.
- Q:** Does the CDC recommend not turning water fountains on yet?
- A:** The PHD is still advising that students not use the regular drinking fountains.
- Q:** Are the eight RBT only for schools with SDC?
- A:** It is primarily what they are used, most of them are for students with IEPs. This is part of a service identified in their IEPs. RBT stands for Registered Behavior Technician. They provide primarily services for students that have IEPs.
- Q:** When will volunteers be allowed to help on campus again?
- A:** Currently, the district cannot allow this; the problem is staff having to manage 500-700 parent volunteers. GUSD has 1,300 staff that they are barely managing the process for those providing proof of vaccination or required testing weekly. GUSD has 130 staff that are not vaccinated, two weeks ago staff began testing the 130 who are not vaccinated. If GUSD is to allow volunteers, they will need weekly testing, and that is a huge cost to the district. GUSD has a very small HR department, and currently they are spending a lot of time doing this for the unvaccinated staff.

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Q: Do you anticipate this changing with the vaccination numbers increasing? She is hearing feedback that the teachers and staff could really use the help in the classrooms; it would be great if those vaccinated could have first priority, and be able to help the teachers and students. Do you anticipate with the vaccine rates increasing and that this will happen soon?

A: Dr. Flores said that she hopes it will happen soon. GUSD has an obligation to provide the safest possible environment for the students. Right now, most of the younger students are not vaccinated. 90% of the staff is vaccinated. However, HR staff has to test the 10% that are not. Dr. Flores said she would love to be able to have volunteers again.

Q: When the times comes to allow volunteers, can they be told they have to be vaccinated if they want to be on campus?

A: The district has to not only monitor vaccination status but also people displaying COVID symptoms. These are layers that only an HR department can track and monitor. Parents are asking the district to introduce another entire group to the school campuses. This is something that the district cannot do right now. Staff will continue to talk about it.

SPAC Representative Reports

South Valley Middle School

- The construction is continuing, and many of the play areas have been taken out, the students are trying to be creative.
- Students have had some successful spirit days over the Halloween holiday.
- They are all looking forward to Thanksgiving.

Luigi Aprea Elementary School

- They hosted a Halloween event, and it was successful, they had 300 students in attendance.
- They have been successful in various fundraisers, the Book Fair raised \$4,500 in scholastic money that will go directly back to teachers. The Read-a-thon made \$8,500.
- Parent club is trying to come up with something for the winter holidays that can be done outside.

Gilroy High School

- The school had the mid-year check in for the six-year WASC accreditation – Mr. K. feels that they are in a good spot.
- The fall sports are just finishing up and they are beginning the new winter season. Varsity did not get to finish the senior night, as they did not have the football game.
- The Cal-SOAP tutoring is starting, they are providing tutoring services afterschool.
- During homecoming, the students worked on their floats, and it was fun.
- The seniors are pushing for four or two-year colleges, they would like the portfolios to be open to trade schools, the parents do not feel that it is presented to the students. They would like to help the students understand that there are other paths where they can be successful.

El Roble Elementary School

- They just completed the Tea Leaf fundraiser.
- The SEES candy fundraiser has started.
- The students had a trunk or treat event at the front of the school that was a success, it was far beyond what they thought it would be and the students had a great time, as well as the teachers and students.
- On November 13, they are doing a fundraiser at the Garlic Country Golf Range in Gilroy; they are giving them 100% of the proceeds. Parent club passed out flyers this week.

GECA

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- They are in the middle of the application window, which opens on November 19, this will be an online platform, which worked very well the previous time.
- The seniors took the SAT, and the sophomores and juniors took the PSAT.
- The high school contracts are due this week, they can begin registration for Gavilan classes for the spring semester.
- Gavilan College is requiring all students who take classes at Gavilan College be vaccinated or have an approved exemption, the register and upload status is going on now.
- Parent Club will have the general meeting; they have invited Maricela Gomez, from Inspire Ed.
- GECA was nominated as a National Blue Ribbon School; last week was the ceremony in Washington DC. Principal, Sonia Flores, and Teacher of the Year, Ana Benich went to Washington DC to accept the award.
- Principal, Sonia Flores also received the Terrel H. Bell Award.

Solorsano Middle School

- They had a fashion show for Halloween and it was a success.
- Students in grades 6 and 7 had a presentation from California Colleges and it was a success.
- The Counselors held the Cookies with Counselors event; they are trying their best to support the students in need.
- The Gizdich pie fundraiser ends November 12.
- The Tea Leaf fundraiser begins on November 10, mention Solorsano Middle School, when purchasing something.
- There will be a fundraiser at BBQ 152 beginning December 2.

Rucker Elementary School

- The Home and School Club has a new board, they are doing a good job of catching up and figuring things out.
- The first event they held was the pumpkin patch, which was held in the garden, they had about 160 participants, and they had to reschedule the date due to the storm.
- The student club held spirit week, and had many participant dress up and show school spirit throughout the week.
- They are having a canned food drive the month of November, and running a contest for the class that brings in the most canned food.
- They are currently having a SEES candy fundraiser.
- ELAC meets on November 9 at 1:45 p.m.
- Future events – dining for dollars.

Glen View Elementary School

- Did a Book Fair online.
- They had a BBQ 152 fundraiser.
- The Character Parade was fun, it was nice to see all the students laughing and smiling, they put music on the intercom.
- She asked why it is called Story Book Character day at the elementary level, and the secondary calls it Halloween?
- The SEES candy fundraiser will be starting soon.
- On November 12, they are having Camouflage day.

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- During the next Parent Club Meeting, Aurelio Rodriguez, has agreed to join the meeting. The parents had many questions regarding the different drills that they do not understand. He will be explaining the differences in drills for the parents.

Topics of future meetings

- School Safety Drills – Aurelio Rodriguez, Emergency Preparedness and School Safety Coordinator – December 2021.
- Wellness Center –January 2022.
- GATE, GECA, BIOTECH, and Computer Science as well as other special programs – February 2022.