

Gilroy Unified School District
SUPERINTENDENT'S PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPAC)
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, September 12, 2022

Members in attendance:

James Pace (Board Member)	Melissa Aguirre (Board Member)	Jennifer Waltrip (Las Animas)
Hyon Chu Yi-Baker (Christopher)	Coyo Anhder (Giroy)	Andrea Gamble (Rucker)
Dawn Johnson (Gilroy)	Kenny Moreno (El Roble)	Lauren Moller (Luigi Aprea)
Judy Rosti (Christopher)	Cindy Wargocki (GECA)	Trevor Van Laar (South Valley)
Rosalie Cripps (Brownell)	Josie Kim (Solorsano)	

Welcome & Introductions

- Dr. Flores began by welcoming all of the SPAC members to the first meeting of the school year.
- She introduced the Public Information Officer Melanie Corona. Mrs. Corona shared the following information:

Resource Fair –

- Mrs. Corona invited all of the SPAC representatives to the Family Resource Fair, on Wednesday, September 14, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- The fair will take place in the parking lot between the district office building and the Annex, and in the Annex as well.
- The Resource Fair will offer a number of different opportunities for families; parents can complete finger printing, as well as get assistance on signing up and how to use Aeries and ParentSquare.
- There will be seven other district departments represented such as the Power School program.
- GUSD has partnered with Safeway to offer COVID and flu vaccines.
- There will be 19 community-based organizations present as well.
- Parents can fill out the meal application, and when they do, they will get a ticket for tacos. These meal applications are very important; we encourage every family in GUSD to fill one out. These provide Federal Funding for the district in the amount of close to \$3 million, for programs funded by the district. If your child qualifies, free and reduced program, you can also get a break on some City resource programs. September 28, 2022 is the cutoff date.

GUSD Website Content –

- Melanie and Natalie Martinez do most of the website content for the school sites.
- Mrs. Corona and Ms. Martinez have sent messages to elementary school site parent clubs. She invites them to provide as much information as possible.

GUSD Parent Boot Camp -

- Training is provided for parent club parents. This is also known as the “Parent Club Boot Camp”. This will be provided on two different dates, and two different time frames.
- Mrs. Corona said this is done make life easier as a Parent Club Board Member.

Roles and Responsibilities of SPAC Members

- Dr. Flores shared the roles and responsibilities document with the SPAC members.
- As a representative, this is a very important advisory committee.
- This committee meets once a month and members attend to ask questions, bring concerns, and share what is happening at the school site they are representing.
- Over the course of the year, Dr. Flores provides information that she believes the parents would like to know about.
- There will typically be one topic per meeting. She likes to plan those in advance as it often involves other staff members.

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- Dr. Flores said she hopes the representatives can attend the monthly meetings. She understands that sometimes things happen and they cannot be there. When the SPAC representative cannot attend, hopefully the alternate can be there.
- Notes should be taken by the representative so that they can report back to the sites.
- Representatives should identify topics for the future meetings.
- If concerns are brought up during the meeting, they should be global concerns. If it is about a staff member, that is a personnel matter. Members can bring this to her attention after the meeting.
- Concern with member's own child should also be shared after the meeting, or a time can be set up to talk about these concerns with Dr. Flores.
- She listed some "Norms and Expectations" and asked that the members review these so that they understand what their roles and responsibilities are.
- In the past, she would ask everyone to give a report; now she asks for volunteers. Most members give a report. The report should be three (3) minutes or less.

Superintendent's Report

Start of the school year-

- Dr. Flores said she was pleased with the start of the school year. It is not perfect, but she can see the contrast between this year and last year. It was a rough fall last year.
- This year is different. The culture, the climate are much improved. She said she has been walking around the campuses, and principals and other staff are saying that it has been a smooth start.
- Traffic was the only thing that has not gone so smoothly. It is to be expected. It is always tough at the start of the year, and it is like this for the first couple of weeks.

Volunteers & process to sign up- <https://www.gilroyunified.org/families/volunteer-information>

- A number of people have attended the Board Meetings to talk about volunteers.
- In the spring, the Board approved a policy, and opened up the campus to volunteers.
- GUSD has had close to 500 parent volunteers sign up.
- What was stated at the Board Meeting by a parent is that we do not allow volunteers on the campus is not accurate. Many teachers want volunteers. It is only restricted by the availability of parents.
- What we discovered about the parents that made public comments, is that some parents do not want to be vaccinated, and the Board Policy requires all staff, interns, contractors to be vaccinated.
- OSHA is a state agency that is the regulatory agency for employees and employers; they set many of the standards.
- In terms of the real specific issues, employees have to be vaccinated. GUSD have 1,200 that are vaccinated and a very small percentage have a religious or medical exemption. There is no exemption for parent volunteers, parents are either vaccinated or they cannot volunteer.

Q: In any event, do people have to go through the volunteer process?

A: In order to be a volunteer during the school days, parents must be vaccinated as they are considered workers under CDPH/OSHA regulations. They must complete the online registration process.

Q: Does that include school functions?

A: We do not collect vaccination data, for example, for parents that come to Back to School Night. The reason that is so important for in school is they are going to be in the classroom for a number of hours. The school day is the district's concern. It is a Board Policy. The Board was asked to reconsider it by a parent at the last Board Meeting.

Q: For cheer and band, parents that volunteer to drive are they exempt from the vaccination?

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A: For the cheer part, Dr. Flores said she was going to have to get back to him that is a school activity. For driving, parents do have to go through this process. It is just logical if you are working with students in a school activity. She said she would ask Dr. Paul Winslow, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and will prepare a memo to SPAC with a response.

Q: Fingerprinting-the concern of the cost of fingerprinting is rather high. Just curious has there been any discussion, is there opportunities for families to waive that fee, and for the district to pick it up?

A: Funds have been allocated to every school site, for five (5) years, for parents that cannot afford it, GUSD covers the fee.

Q: How is that communicated? Because this is the first time, I heard about this?

A: This is on the [website](#). Every year in the beginning, the principals are reminded of what their allocation is.

Enrollment update-

- Parents and other question why the district is declining with all the new housing. Dr. Flores heard this on Saturday at the South Valley Open House.
- There are many houses being built but the birth count for Gilroy is taking a nosedive. The birth rate has dropped dramatically for Gilroy, and for every district in California and the Nation.
- The decline started a while ago, when Gilroy used to have births of almost 1,000 and now it's in the low 800's.
- Staff has been tracking this data for many years. First the decline hit kinder, and now it is up to middle schools. The number of students at the middle school is much smaller, they are holding in the mid-700s. The high schools have big cohorts.
- This is not a phenomenon unique to Gilroy Unified School District. The Bay Area school districts are declining, statewide and in the nation.
- She shared enrollment charts with the representatives. Dr. Flores pointed out Santa Clara County's enrollment. Midway through the historical and projected enrollment in GUSD, you can see there is a significant decline.
- The projection that is used is from professional demographers that have worked for many districts in California including GUSD.
- There are numerous articles on this topic. All you have to do is Google "Birth rate decline in the U.S." It has a lot to do with adults between 20 to 40 years of age not having kids.
- Generations ago, parents would have four to seven children, and that was normal. This generation, or for several generations now, they are not having children or delaying having children.
- Why is that important? The district cannot operate the same number of buildings. As you know, Antonio Del Buono Elementary was closed right before the pandemic. The reason is that the enrollment was so small that the district could not afford to operate the school. At some point, the board will probably talk about closing a school again at a public meeting.
- The decline is worse at the elementary level. It is important from the standpoint of how much funding the district receives for ADA, and the operational costs of having 14 schools.
- The decline is one of the biggest issues that the district has to face. If the decline continues at the current pace, some difficult decisions will have to be made. Staff is going to closely monitor the enrollment numbers. This will be a topic at a future board meeting.
- The state collects enrollment numbers from districts on the 1st Wednesday in October. Typically, it goes up and then it declines as the year goes on. Nothing has been typical the last few years.
- Other districts are closing schools. One north of GUSD, a couple of years ago, closed three schools, and in Oakland there has been some debate about closing 6-7 schools.

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- 15 years ago, for every two homes, there would be a child. This is called a student generation rate (SGR) (how many students are coming from each home).
- Gilroy High School has a little growth, so that tells us that we are getting some students from the Glen Loma homes.

Q: Is there any conversation around lowering class sizes?

A: It is much harder the smaller you get. First, the class sizes are dictated by the contract with the union. Those are negotiated contracts, and we have to abide by those. As far as reducing class sizes that would just add to the impact on the budget. So it's not likely that we are going to have smaller class sizes than we currently have.

Q: How has the numbers affected Special Education?

A: The Special Education population percentage- 14% is going up not down. We are declining as a district but the special education population is going up. It is not going down, that is a challenge from a staffing perspective. The hardest positions to fill are special education teachers and paraprofessionals. College students are just not going into special education at the college level. That is a struggle for all districts. After that, the hard subjects are math and the higher-level sciences, and sometimes we have trouble finding teachers with a BCLAD certification for dual immersion. This year we are almost fully staffed so that is great.

Q: How many students do we lose to other district from private schools, home schools, etc.? Due to masking requirements.

A: The district does not track that data. Dr. Flores said she does not even know how we would track that unless, they make records request. She has talked with one of the private schools and heard that private schools are declining so their numbers are not going up either. She did not get the sense from talking with the principal that GUSD has lost many students to home school or private school either. Gilroy Prep's numbers are very steady, they have not grown. As of last year, the district has a program of our own called Virtual Learning Academy (VLA). During the pandemic, there was close to 300 parents choosing that option at all levels. This year we had to close the elementary portion of VLA because there was not enough students. All except three students chose to come back to in-person. At the middle school, at the height there was 125 students in VLA. That has significantly declined this year. Dr. Flores believes we only have 40 students at the high school level in VLA, and at one point there was close to 150.

Q: Weren't the VLA students considered part of the district?

A: Yes. Dr. Flores said she was not looking at it from the funding level just from an enrollment perspective. She will ask Kermit Schrock, Program Administrator, if this can be tracked.

Closed campuses

- Dr. Flores did speak about this topic at a recent Board meeting.
- A year ago at the elementary level when students returned, the elementary principals and staff, along with district staff, decided to close the elementary campuses due to health and safety concerns. The middle and high schools have been closed for many years.
- At elementary level, the gates used to be open and parents could come on campus.
- Last year, due to the pandemic and other concerns that the principals and staff had, it was decided to close the elementary campuses.
- When students returned this August, the elementary principals decided to continue with this practice.
- There are many reasons – many people wanted to focus this on COVID, and yes, that was a big part. Staff is also worried about school shootings and monitoring who comes on campus.

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- At an upcoming SPAC meeting, Dr. Flores would like to talk about all the measures that have been taken to ensure the safety of students and staff.
 - From the principals standpoint, operationally this is working. There are fewer distractions, and the instructional day starts faster.
 - In the past, parents would walk their child to class and would want to have a mini parent conference with the teacher.
 - This decision was supported by most staff. Dr. Flores knows it is tough for parents of TK students as they would like to bring their child to class.
 - There was one teacher in particular and some parents that felt very strongly that the gates should be opened in the morning. There are many other ways that parents can be involved. Right now, we will not be opening campuses.
 - Kathleen Biermann, Director of Educational Services, Elementary, went to all the sites, and she said it is going very well, with a few exceptions.
 - Next month Dr. Flores will talk about all the things that they have done to make campuses safe.
 - Since the Sandy Hook shooting, GUSD and the Gilroy Police Department have worked in partnership, and created a safety plan. GUSD hired a former police officer; he is involved in all of these activities. Safety comes first. Parents, students, and staff have to be safe.
 - The district is installing state-of-the art cameras. The cameras are amazing what they can pick up.
- Q:** In terms of school safety, the neighborhood kids jump the chain link fence, if a kid can jump the fence, whom do we talk to about getting that changed? (Charles Lux and the field)
- A:** Dr. Flores will have to review this. There will be a Facilities Subcommittee meeting, which meets monthly, and the committee is currently reviewing a list of priorities. They are prioritizing projects and that would be a high one to her.
- Luigi Aprea also has a chain link fence, that Dr. Flores will look into.

SPAC Representative Reports

EI Roble Elementary

- This week, they kicked off the book fair for the fall. He had a chance to give a tour to Trustee Nelson.
- Wednesday night, they will be doing a family reading night. Four teachers and the principal volunteered to read a book in the library. It is way of getting families together and then they can shuffle into book fair.

Christopher High

- Had a good start this year. Started with freshman orientation, which was put on by Link Crew.
- There was a Welcome Back and a Community Resource Fair.
- Football and sports activities have started. The football team is having an amazing season. The first game against North Monterey was 31-0, and the second game against Piedmont was 51-9. The third game against San Mateo was 38-7.
- The advanced choir and drama group had a field trip to see *Cursed Child* in San Francisco.
- The Band is busy practicing for their shows. They will be doing three shows this year. The Garlic City Classic at Gilroy High, Scarlet Regiment at San Benito High, and the North California Super show in Sacramento. The band started off with V-raise they raised \$9,136. They got a separate \$2,000 donation because V-raise takes a big chunk.
- Back to school is on September 13.
- The Gilroy High and Christopher High game is on October 1. They will be selling Garlic Festival food.

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Luigi Aprea

- On the class list posting day "Roster Day", the Parent Club provided snow cones and they gave out 600 of snow cones.
- They had a paper drive, it was so successful, and they received over 1,000 reams of paper.
- The 5th grade parents are selling popsicles afterschool for their events.
- There is a Yogofino Fundraiser on September 22.

Q: Are Assembly presenters okay to be on campus, does the person running the assembly need to be vaccinated?

A: Yes. The person/people need to be vaccinated. They would have to have a contract, and that is a requirement in the contract.

GECA

- The students started school on August 4th.
- On the first Friday they an Ice Cream Social for 9th graders. It was nice to finally get them together.
- The Back to School Night was the week before. It was really well attended.
- The students had a Spirit Week, including a volleyball tournament (students vs. teachers on the last day).
- There have been fundraisers. One coming up is at Chipotle. It is good they are excited to be back.
- Many of the GECA student's, college classes are still virtual.

South Valley

- There is ongoing construction at the school site.
- They are working through the traffic pattern issues.
- The vending machines were removed.
- Back to School Night was rescheduled due to the heat.

Las Animas

- The Home and School Club went to Costco to get bottles of water, and ice chest and made them available to those helping during release/pick up time since it was so hot. Parents have been helping put shades up to get shade for the students.
- They are having a paper drive that has been going well. They have the biggest kinder special day class. The parents came in brought five cases of papers. There has been high participation from the families.
- Teachers are also getting to bring back room parents, for those who would like them.
- The Book Fair is coming up.
- Restaurant nights, such as Chipotle are coming up.

Gilroy High

- They had a good start of the school year.
- ASB students started the monthly Monday Music, where they play music on Mondays during lunch.
- Administrators met with all students during PE classes, and all juniors and seniors to review school policy.
- Students had a Spirit Week, "Anything but a backpack". Students played games such as Jenga.
- They had the Welcome Back rally.
- The football team played against the Live Oak High School football team, and against Monterey High School, and the varsity team won.
- The freshmen class will have a campaign for ASB office; there will be elections on Friday.
- Dawn announced that Levis Stadium allows for a lot of fundraising for organizations. SPAC representatives can contact her for more information at dawnrainee@gmail.com

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Topics of future meetings

- October 17, 2022: Safety - Aurelio Rodriguez, Emergency Preparedness and School Safety Coordinator
- November 7, 2022: Mental Health – Anna Pulido, Student Services Director

Additional Q & A

Q: Did the district fill the Director of Maintenance and Operations position?

A: No, we posted it and had a couple of candidates and one withdrew. It has since been reposted.

Q: When the Home and School Club pay for the buses for fieldtrips, we noticed that the price increased, it used to be \$2 a mile, and now it is \$3.75. Do we know why the jump?

A: This may be due to the increase in fuel prices. Dr. Flores said she would find out if this is temporary or a permanent increase.

Q: Has GUSD hired more bus drivers?

A: There are 12 or 13 drivers and GUSD needs 20. There are shortages in all job classifications in the district including bus drivers.

Q: When students in 6th grade get a report that they owe money for lost books, who creates the bill, and how is it calculated? His son received an invoice, and the cost of the book is a lot. This was also a book that was purchase by the Home and School Club for the school site. If the student was at El Roble, and is now at Brownell, whom does the money go to?

A: Dr. Flores said she would find out the answer to that.

Q: Will all the SPAC meetings be hybrid or just time? In addition, is 8:00 to 8:15 p.m. a pretty normal end time?

A: We went to hybrid last year, and received a lot of positive feedback; there is no reason not to have a hybrid option for parents. 8:00 – 8:15 is normal for the end of the meeting.