

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee

Highlights: September 29, 2022

Welcome/Announcements/Introductions

Superintendent Kent Kern welcomed participants to the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee (SPAC) meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Mr. Kern acknowledged the board members in attendance and gave a shout out to Melissa Bassanelli who will be the new Superintendent of Schools starting January 1, 2023.

Website Feedback

Becca DeMos, Communication Specialist II, and Sarah Gallivan, Communication Specialist, explained that they are in the process of re-examining the functionality of the district and school websites. The Communication Office has developed a survey that will be sent to families and staff members within the next several weeks. SPAC members were asked to provide verbal and written feedback regarding what they like about the district and school websites, what information they search for, the actions they hope to take, their biggest challenges when using the district and school websites, and improvements that could be made. The survey results will be used to inform changes to the websites. SPAC members were encouraged to help promote participation in the survey at their respective school site. School site staff can contact Becca DeMos if they have any website-related questions.

District Enrollment

Superintendent Kern shared information regarding the district's enrollment. He explained that the district has seen a steady decline in enrollment over the last ten years, but has noticed a smaller decline during the pandemic. This year, however, the district's enrollment is 400 over projections, which is likely due to the influx of refugees on the west end of the district. He noted that although declining enrollment is being felt throughout the state, the numbers have begun to plateau in San Juan Unified. Mr. Kern touched on the teacher and staffing shortages that are being reported throughout our region, and the steps the district is taking to hire and retain qualified employees, such as offering competitive salaries and providing incentives for some hard to fill positions. He noted that developing positive relationships with our bargaining groups ultimately benefits students and employees.

Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2022-2023

Kristan Schnepf, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education and Programs; Tracie Locke, Lead Counselor K-8; and Brett Wolfe, Director of CTE, K-12 Counseling and College Career Readiness, shared information regarding graduation requirements, including changes that take effect this year, safety nets, credit recovery, dual enrollment, and career technical education (CTE) opportunities. Ms. Schnepf explained that revisions to the requirements were approved by the Board of Education in 2016. However, with the disruption of the pandemic, the implementation of distance learning, and the new graduation requirements, many students in this year's senior class are still feeling the impact.

In past efforts to address the impact of the pandemic, state legislators passed AB 104, which focused on student retention, grading and graduation policies, and extended the use of the 130-credit state minimum graduation rule to students not on track to graduate in four years, but only for the class of

2022. It also awarded juniors and seniors who were set to graduate in 2021 and 2022 the opportunity to take a 5th year of high school in order to meet the state minimum credit requirement. However, the district is still seeing the effects on some of this year's seniors, especially those who are struggling to meet the new graduation requirements. Staff provided information regarding the district's former graduation requirements, the state minimum 130 credit requirement, and the current graduation requirements. In addition, staff noted that there are safety nets in place for Foster Youth, McKinney Vento, formal juvenile court school pupils, migrant youth, youth and newcomer programs and some special education students.

The new graduation requirements were put in place to ensure that all students are prepared to enter a UC/CSU upon graduation, are college and career ready, and have the option to take high level courses. However, due the learning disruptions during the pandemic, the district is having to look at what can be done to ensure this year's students get their diploma. In thinking about how to support our current seniors, the district surveyed students, staff and counselors about possible options for the graduating class of 2023. Included in the survey were the following options: reduce math to 20 credits with IM 1, only require core courses and eliminate the elective requirement; offer the 130 state minimum credit requirement with four years of English; combine options 1 and 2; and make no changes. The results will be shared with families as part of the district's effort to gain additional input. The collective feedback will be used to make recommendations to the board on October 25, 2022.

Staff shared a few of the actions that have taken place over the last year and the various resources that are available to help credit deficit or struggling students.

- A-G Completion Grant: This grant has allowed the district to offer additional summer school classes, including APEX, an online credit recovery program. Last summer, students were allowed to take as many classes as they could through APEX. The district also built credit recovery APEX classes into each high school's schedule. Students can take the classes during and outside their regular school day.
- Dual Enrollment: The district has increased its dual enrollment classes which provide students an opportunity to earn extra credits that count towards college credit. Dual enrollment is a course that is taken at the high school, but is taught by a college professor and students earn college credit for taking the course. Students have access to, and work with, college professors. They also have access to the high school content teacher.

SPAC representatives were asked to review the survey data and discuss their observations, wonderings and suggestions.

Q: Are there resources for parents so that they are aware of what is available?

A: Sites are mostly communicating with parents of juniors and seniors. If students are failing, parents will be notified.

Q: Are dual enrollment classes only available on campus?

A: No, students have the opportunity to take classes at American River College and other community colleges.

Q: How is dual enrollment helping students get into college?

A: One example is foreign language. The district requires two years of foreign language, but a dual enrollment class meets the two-year requirement.

Q: When is dual enrollment offered?

A: Students can enroll in their sophomore year.

Student Dress Code

Ms. Schnepf introduced Lori Vine, Program Coordinator of Equity & Student Achievement; Darrin Kitchen, Director of Secondary Education; and Holly Cybulski, Director of Elementary & K8 Schools, who shared some background information regarding the student dress code. They explained that as part of the district's 8-Point Commitment to Educational Justice, staff have been reviewing existing policies and procedures through a more equitable lens. This is especially true as we highlight the importance of student perspective to build more inclusive and culturally responsive environments on our campuses. Examples of this were identified in the fall of 2021, when students at Rio Americano, Bella Vista, El Camino, and Will Rogers independently identified the need to take a more equitable look at the district's student dress code and how it is currently being enforced at our schools. The Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) also adopted updating the dress code policy as their initiative for the 2021-22 school year. Since then they have:

- Conducted listening sessions at several of the schools
- Created a student committee
- Collected feedback from 4,500 students who completed the student survey in early 2022

Ms. Vine shared the results of the student dress code survey, noting that over 63% of the students surveyed said the dress code policy was unfair in some way. Since then, the district has begun the process of addressing the policy by building a committee of students, staff, community partners and families to help gather input from the community. The next steps include drafting a new policy that is consistent throughout the district, and providing guidance on its rollout, implementation, and enforcement.

SPAC members were asked to discuss the various school dress code policies, what stands out to them about the survey results, what they would like the committee to keep in mind as they work to revamp the policy, and once policy is drafted, what they need in order to be more informed and what they feel would be valuable to learn throughout this process. The group also provided suggestions for effective ways to gather input from families. Ms. Vine shared that she will return in January 2023, for a follow-up discussion.

Q: What did these kids propose for political wear, etc.?

A: They agree that students should not be allowed to wear offensive or racist clothing. Students would like a more neutral policy that does not call out gender, etc.

General Q&A

Q: Who should people contact if they have feedback regarding the website content.

A: Please email the district's webmaster, Becca DeMos, at becca.demos@sanjuan.edu,

Q: Are students aware that if they complete the district's A-G requirements they will meet the UC/CSU credit requirement?

A: Every 8th grader should be leaving middle school with their high school plan. High school counselors are a good resource for students. During high school, counselors schedule periodic meetings with students to review their progress and ensure they are on track to graduate. In addition, parents can access Naviance to view their student's plan and progress. Staff also holds college and career nights for interested families.

Conclusion

Superintendent Kern thanked everyone for attending the SPAC meeting.

[The next SPAC meetings will be held on January 19, 2023]