

## Steele SAC Meeting - 12/13/22

### **Attendees:**

Maggie Couper  
Elizabeth Harris  
Marika Gillis  
Terry Spotts  
Mona Cousino  
Rob Seel  
Jessica Warren

Amanda Walls  
Ryan Capp  
Jessica Gemm  
Tyler Cornelius  
Susana Moreno

### **1. General discussion/follow-up after the Superintendent's visit**

- a. **International Baccalaureate (IB) Designation/Pathway:** Mr. Gaal offered this as a possibility at our meeting in November. Mr Capp has a meeting with Mr. Gaal and Bryan Relich on January 12 to have discussion about this possibility. Talked through this idea to gather input ahead of this meeting:
  - i. **Why would IB be something for Steele to pursue?** Mr. Capp: In many ways we already have elements of IB happening. Blueprint units are part of that. Starting to link those vertically. IB asks that of schools, and that they will have a foreign language experience. Language was a common ask when we went through the pathway process last year, and something a lot of parents ask about when they tour. IB often comes up in discussion with teachers as an idea for Steele that is a natural fit; Mr. Capp has a background in IB schools too, thought about exploring it in 2017 but the timing wasn't right.
  - ii. **What would IB look like?** Mr. Capp: cyclical rotations of curriculum - e.g. "understanding the world around us." Marika Gillis (SAC member) is the IB coordinator at her K-8 school and shared more details: character component, emphasis on action - how kids can take action and change the world around them. All kids participate, and what stays consistent is the character component, international focus, action orientation - from elementary to middle and then high school.
  - iii. **What's the downside?** Mr. Capp: More expensive (licensing - \$4500 initially, probably \$8-9k/year; plus the training costs to get whole team trained - possibly \$50k+), more work on teachers - developing a lot of their own curriculum. Could be beneficial experience for teachers to develop - integrating subjects, very strong understanding of curriculum. Need to understand how the district would support this financially.
  - iv. **What would it do to the neighborhood character of Steele?** Mr Capp: Don't think it would alter it really - already not in only one column. Parents from lots of walks of life now, and want to keep that. Good feeder potential

to North (already happening much more than in past years), and to Palmer.

- v. **Is there more commitment for parents?** Not really. Very accessible for the kids in primary years.
- vi. **Pull-out, special ed dynamics?** Still some pull-outs where that's needed.
- vii. **Are teachers at Steele interested in IB?** Yes, and we don't fully know what the workload to get going looks like. Marika suggested asking Mr Gaal about IB coordinator role separate from current staff - needs to be a dedicated position to do it well. (She has played that role, getting the school up and running with IB and then coordinating it since the start.)
- viii. **Would something like this attract additional students? Is there evidence that would work?** Mr Capp: Hard to answer that question. And it connects to the amount of space Steele is limited to. Is Mr Gaal going to push a bond that would allow for expansion at Steele?
- ix. **Is the ground fertile for the staff to take this on?** Or is it kind of like two concentric circles with what we're doing already? Mr Capp: Blueprint units are really best practices, integrating subjects, inquiry focus - how are they building their own inquiry practice in their thinking, how does that show up in character development. Kids are given a lot to do, mentors in the building, can fail forward - that's something we don't do currently, but we are primed for that. Teachers already considering concepts, standards, successful lessons from the past; there are other layers we're asking teachers to consider (D11 graduate profiles - some of that is also aligned with IB). Inquiry is probably the biggest difference - more to do there.
- x. **Partnerships/how would we make sure we are successful?** Would put some pressure on North to widen their program, partner with us. Would be ideal to have another elementary school to partner with in implementation. How would that work - teaching together, training sharing potentially. Action projects together, built in audience to see each others' classes.
- xi. **How would IB work for new teachers coming to the school?** Requirement of the program to make sure all the staff are trained at the same level. Can be a little difficult to attract teachers to IB schools, but the loyalty factor is strong once it's set up. Marika - lots of military connections that have helped in her school to get the word out with people moving here. Hasn't made it harder for them to hire.
- xii. **Is there a way to survey the demographic we might be interested in attracting? Marketing/advertising existing data we could access?** For this neighborhood and others that are more diverse. From D11 equity report? What info does the superintendent already have access to about who is in boundary and not coming to Steele, who is coming from outside. Would be good data to have/understand for attracting new families.

- xiii. **Timeline:** Mr Capp: Goal of the January meeting is to find out more information, what it would look like for us, and bring that back to the teachers and community similar to how we did last year. (Timeline for initial application was about 18 months for Marika's school, which is fast.) Seems like we have support of Parth Melpakam (school board) as well for this. Important for something like this to last beyond leadership changes.

**b. Snow days / remote learning shift**

- i. How was his apology handled by staff? Non-snow day morale on teachers? Mr Capp - the anticipation/preparation for an e-learning day was maybe worse than the reality. Mr. Gaal seemed to acknowledge making a bad call; will likely follow other districts next time. Mona Cousino shared that it was hard getting the kids ready the day before with devices, and then many of them did not bring them back the next day.
- ii. How many kids were out? Friday before Thanksgiving there were probably 65 kids out, compared with typical days where 25 kids are out (right now with illness uptick it's about 50).
- iii. Felt Mr Gaal dismissed the staff's expertise. Also would like to see him address equity in a real way - not just PowerPoints.

**c. Other discussion from Mr. Gaal's visit:**

- i. Wanting to understand more about the pot of money that Mr Gaal mentioned that may be possible to get another teacher. Vision long term to have more school-based management of budget, but we aren't clear if he actually said he could get our FTE funding back.
- ii. Liked the vision about D11 being the heart of Colorado Springs. Know he's trying to get a lot done/show a lot of progress with a year contract.
- iii. Seems like if he can solve the problem, he will get it done. Seems to be a doer. What can we ask of him that he can make happen? Preschool idea.
- iv. Would like to see a superintendent be more like a coach - be sincere. Several people expressed concerns that he wasn't listening to the people in the room.

- 2. **Special ed position update** - hired! Starting after break, has worked in this capacity before.
- 3. **Enrollment, parent engagement ideas** - to discuss later on
- 4. **Next SAC meeting:** Tuesday, January 17, 5-6pm