

## **Highlights: September 26, 2024**

### **Welcome/Announcements/Introductions**

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

### **Summer Learning and Start-of-School Highlights**

Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education and Programs Amberlee Townsend-Snider; Director of Career Technical Education (CTE), K-12 Counseling and College/Career Readiness Brett Wolfe; and Director of Student Learning Assistance Gwyn Dellinger, presented information on the student learning that took place during the summer. Ms. Townsend-Snider reported that over 2,000 elementary, 1,300 middle and 2,500 high school students participated in various summer programs. She provided details on the special education extended school year (ESY) program, which is available to students from preschool through age 22. Students qualify for ESY through their individualized education program (IEP). This year, 539 students participated in ESY, many of which continued receiving their designated instructional services, such as speech and language therapy, adaptive physical education and more.

Ms. Dellinger provided an overview of the summer programs that were offered through the Office of Student Learning Assistance. One of these was Camp Kinder, a nine-day program available at ten sites, designed help children prepare for kindergarten. The K-1 Boost Program, a reading-focused program for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, was also offered at ten sites and included a Spanish-language option for dual immersion students at Thomas Edison Language Institute. Bilingual instructional assistants and high school interns provided primary language support. Camp Invention was offered districtwide and gave students the opportunity to enhance their problem-solving and innovation skills through real-life, project-based learning. Additionally, the Newcomer Summer Program, offered at one site, supported refugee and immigrant students who are new to the country. The program helped newcomers acclimate to the new school system and offered primary language support, English language development, engagement, primary education and mentoring.

Mr. Wolfe provided an overview of the middle and high school summer programs, which included Jump Start Math, credit recovery courses, enrichment opportunities and a summer internship program. The middle school career technical education (CTE) program was an enrichment program that introduced students in grades 6-8 to various high school CTE pathways, such as dental, auto mechanics, computer science, theatre, and medical assistant. The summer internship program was offered to students currently enrolled in a CTE pathway. Due to a limited number of openings, the application process was extremely competitive. The district aims to expand its partnerships and increase participation next year. The jump start math program targeted sixth through ninth grade students needing extra support in math, while the high school credit recovery program helped students get back on track for graduating. In addition, various enrichment opportunities were offered, one of which was a stand-up comedy course. In preparation for the 2025 summer program, staff will be gathering feedback and establishing the budget.

Q: Are the summer programs free?

A: Yes

Q: Are students with mild to moderate special needs allowed to apply for some these programs?

A: Yes, if it is written in the student's individualized education program (IEP).

Q: How many students interested in attending the student intern program were unable to get in due to the limited number of spots?

A: We do not have the exact number today, but it was less than 100. Our team is working with our internship partners and looking for more opportunities.

Superintendent Bassanelli noted that the district's ability to offer a robust summer program was made possible by one-time state funds. However, with these funds no longer available, future summer program offerings may be impacted. She also acknowledged concerns about families not receiving timely information regarding summer programs and committed to investigating potential solutions.

Chief of Staff Trent Allen provided an update on the start of the school year, noting that enrollment has increased by approximately 1,000 students, bringing the total to 39,128, with an average of 20-45 new students enrolling daily. The district hired over 100 new certificated staff and just over 100 new classified employees. Mr. Allen highlighted various welcoming activities and key facility projects, including new school construction and ongoing safety and fencing improvements. San Juan Unified continued to modernize technology across school sites, replacing network systems equipment, cleaning and reimaging 40,000 Chromebooks, and deploying over 150 devices to new staff members during the summer. Lastly, the Transportation Department added six new electric buses to its fleet and transported over 900 students on the first day of school.

SPAC representatives participated in small group discussions and shared out some of their start-of-school highlights.

Q: Who gets transportation services?

A: Students with services written into their IEP, and limited situations that involve students who have been overloaded from their home schools.

## **Student Dress Code**

Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education and Programs Kristan Schnepf, along with Director of Secondary Education Darrin Kitchen, Director of Elementary & K-8 Schools Holly Cybulski, and Coordinator of Equity & Student Achievement Lori Vine provided background information regarding the new dress code. The process included reviewing existing dress code procedures with a focus on equity. In recognizing the importance of student perspective in building inclusive and culturally responsive environments on campuses, the district prioritized this initiative.

In 2019, the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council identified the dress code as a priority area, aiming to establish an equitable and consistent practice across the district. Since then, significant steps have been taken, including student listening sessions at various high schools, the formation of a student committee, and the administration of a comprehensive student dress code survey. In September 2022, following the pandemic, a committee composed of students, community members and union representatives was formed. The Dress Code Committee undertook multiple actions, including developing a survey for staff and community input, thoroughly reviewing survey data to identify trends, themes and concerns, and prioritizing of key focus areas.

In fall 2023, staff researched relevant legislation and neighboring district practices and drafted a proposed dress code. The district then launched an extensive outreach plan, utilizing various communication channels such as the district website, mass notification systems, social media platforms, newsletters, district committees, and in-person and virtual community forums. A draft survey was made available to the public in spring 2023. After reviewing all survey responses, the Dress Code Committee drafted revisions to the policy, which was presented to the Board of Education in June 2024. Through this process, the committee established core values, emphasizing that students have the right to be treated fairly without discrimination, dress comfortably for an active school day, and feel good about their bodies.

The purpose of the dress code is to maintain a safe learning environment where students can choose their clothing with certain exceptions, ensuring that students can participate in all school activities with minimal dress code interruptions. However, the primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian, while the school's role is to support the health and safety of all students. Non-compliance will be addressed privately, with suggestions on how to address the infraction, or the student will be directed to the office if necessary. Next steps include gathering additional feedback, addressing any immediate concerns, and reconvening the Dress Code Committee to make adjustments, if needed. SPAC members were given the opportunity to take a new feedback survey. The survey will be distributed to students, staff and families before November 2024.

## **Proposition 28 Arts and Music in Schools Program**

Interim Deputy Superintendent of Schools and Student Support Amy Slavensky provided information regarding Proposition 28. She noted that the Early Childhood Education (ECE) team is collaborating with partners to determine how to meet the statutory staffing requirement for the preschool program. Prop 28 funds will be allocated for staffing and augmenting ECE grant funds to expand arts education.

At the elementary/TK-8 levels, an additional 40 minutes per week has been added to arts education, bringing the total to 200 minutes per week for arts and physical education. So far, Prop 28 has funded 21.4 new arts education positions. More arts education specialists are now assigned full-time to one site, and new specialist categories have been added, including six theater specialists, three dance specialists and one media arts specialist.

Arts education classes have also expanded at most secondary schools, with smaller class sizes and the addition of new classes such as orchestra, jazz band, choir, digital arts and animation, guitar and dance. Ongoing efforts include recruiting and hiring staff for arts education vacancies at elementary schools, identifying arts education facilities, and securing new material and technology to enhance student programs.

Q: How much money does the district receive through Prop 28?

A: The amount varies from year to year and is based on state funding and enrollment. The unused balance can be carried over to the next year.

Q: Are there any plans to bring back the Art Docent Program?

A: The site-based parent volunteer program is still occurring. Parents should contact their site administrator for more information.

Q: What is the instructional approach connected to arts education?

A: San Juan Unified aligns its arts program around the framework provided by the California Department of Education.

## **Facilities Bond**

Chief of Staff Trent Allen provided information on Measure P, the facilities bond for San Juan Unified. He explained that Measure P is a \$950 million facilities bond that would allow the district to continue modernizing school facilities. If passed, the maximum tax rate would be 6¢ per \$100 of assessed property value. He emphasized that the funds could only be used for school repairs and modernization and requires strict fiscal oversight. If the measure does not pass, the district would have to shift into a maintenance mode. Additional information regarding Measure P can be found [here](#).

Q: What criteria will be used to select schools?

A: The district is working on a new Facilities Master Plan (FMP) that will be used to prioritize schools.

Q: Will the new FMP list the needs of each school site, and will it be available before the election?

A: Planners are still working on the FMP, but Chief Operations Office Frank Camarda might be able to get a summary of potential projects. However, you can find the 2014 FMP [here](#).

Q: I do not see the annual reports on the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee webpage. Are they available?

A: Yes, we will ensure the reports are posted on the [website](#).

Q: What steps can sites take if community members want to implement self-help projects?

A: Self-help requests must be initiated through the site.

Q: How do we ensure that sites, such as Bella Vista, Mira Loma and San Juan, which did not receive new flooring, furniture, fresh paint, etc. during the first round, do not get left out again if the money runs out?

A: There is no guarantee that all sites will be addressed. The Facilities Master Plan will help prioritize facility needs. When the FMP is available, sites should review their respective priorities to ensure their needs are listed.

Q: How are safety issues being addressed at sites that might be laid out differently and/or have large access points?

A: This is part of the safety conversation and will hopefully be addressed through fencing projects.

Q: Why do some sites get free Smart TVs, and other sites have to pay for theirs?

A: The Smart Panels are installed during modernization. But outside of that, sites might have to address it as a self-help project.

## **Social Media Threats**

Mr. Allen reassured the group that in response to recent social media threats, the district takes all threats seriously. Working closely with law enforcement, the district's Safe Schools team deemed the recent social media threats to be non-credible. He urged parents and students to promptly report any threats to their respective sites. Superintendent Bassanelli added that this issue is occurring nationwide and emphasized that student safety remains the district's highest priority.

Q: Why didn't I receive a phone call from my child's site? I only received an email.

A: If your child's site was affected, families should have received an email and phone call using the contact information on record.

Q: Is there anything such as assemblies or grants to teach kids about the impact of social media?

A: Staff can look into this.

Comment: The information we received today is a lot more calming than what was messaged to parents. It helps to know that the district takes all threats seriously and works with law enforcement.

## **Conclusion**

Superintendent Bassanelli thanked everyone for attending the SPAC meeting.

### **Links:**

[2024 Summer Learning Presentation](#)

[Start-of-School Presentation](#)

[Dress Code Presentation](#)

[Arts Education – Proposition 28 Presentation](#)

[Facilities Bond Presentation](#)

[The next SPAC meeting will be held on January 23, 2025]