

Memorandum of Understanding
Between the
San Juan Unified School District
And
San Juan Teachers Association

Building a Foundation for the Successful Implementation of Meraki High School

Mission

Our mission is to ignite our students' creative genius by providing challenging and relevant project-based educational opportunities that may empower every student to find their unique purpose and identity.

Vision

At Meraki, students discover their own strengths, set goals to meet competencies, recognize the value of others, connect and engage with the community and prepare themselves personally, academically and professionally for their future.

Shared Beliefs

- Every person is unique and has equal worth.
- Everyone can and will learn.
- People learn in different ways and at varied paces.
- Education is the shared responsibility of students, families, teachers, staff, and community.
- Quality education expands opportunities throughout a person's life.
- Challenging people to meet high expectations leads to exceptional learning and remarkable results.
- Nurturing relationships and healthy environments are necessary for individuals to thrive.
- Diversity is a valuable asset that strengthens and enriches our community.
- Personal development and community well-being depend on individual responsibility.
- Everyone benefits when people willingly contribute to the well-being of others.
- Honesty and integrity are essential to build trusting and productive partnerships.
- Access to a quality public education is essential to our democracy.

Expectations of Collective Responsibility

Meraki will provide an education that is hands-on and relevant to Meraki's graduation requirement, student interests, and leading to college and career readiness. The Meraki program, rooted in our students' innate creative genius and innovation, focuses on preparing Meraki students to flourish on any path they choose. As a result, Meraki advisors are expected to:

- meet with your assigned advisory at the designated calendar times
- work to create a supportive, informative and well-organized advisory
- work with each student to create personal **project** plans, **which could include** student's interests and passions
- communicate regularly with your advisory students' families
- hold individual student and/or parent meetings as needed

- take on additional responsibilities as needed: Meraki advisors frequently share multiple, additional leadership responsibilities that are both similar to and distinct from traditional secondary school settings. Advisors may track evolving responsibilities and communicate them during the Meraki recruitment process so interested practitioners are fully aware of the program expectations

In addition, Meraki staff members should:

- be masters in their craft, beginners in their heart and mind
- have a sense of humor and compassion for self and others
- believe that creativity and critical thinking are inextricably linked
- be self-aware and strive to know the stories of others
- be flexible thinkers and doers
- be discerningly optimistic
- have a generosity of spirit
- be collaborative to the extreme
- demonstrate the “maker”, or innovator, spirit
- possess excellent communication skills
- be willing and able to learn from peers, students, other sources
- be curious
- offer a variety of experiences beyond the typical classroom
- work with students to discover, define and pursue their project(s) of passion
- have a team mentality to make the school/community connection successful
- network in the community to help students gain opportunities
- advocate for students to help them gain other opportunities
- coach each student to help him or her develop as a learner

The aforementioned characteristics of the advisors are offered to provide a clearer representation of the spirit and qualities of an advisor at Meraki. This list is non- evaluative. The evaluation process will be the district’s System of Professional Growth (SPG).

Expectations regarding advisor work year calendar (Article 8)

The San Juan Unified School District and the San Juan Teachers Association hereby agree that Meraki advisors (delineated as “Teachers” in the SJTA Collective Bargaining Agreement) working beyond their 185-day work year calendar will be paid their daily rate. The Meraki Leadership Team shall determine how many, if any, additional work days may be required prior to the start of the contracted school year. A maximum of 195 days may be required based upon school and/or program needs. The parties agree that this will be determined in part by the amount of discretionary funds allocated to Meraki .

Expectations regarding advisor workday (Article 8)

The workday for advisors shall be similar to a regular on-site teacher workday, inclusive of a 30-minute daily duty free lunch (approximately 7 hours). Each advisor may leave at the end of the day, except when attending job-related conferences and/or meetings. Alternative work hours, workweek schedules, and ‘flex’ time are allowable with the mutual consent of the site administrator and leadership team. On days when advisors begin early or stay later due to the teaching schedule, advisors may adjust their starting and ending time accordingly.

Expectations of advisory caseload and class size (Article 7)

The maximum caseload per advisor shall be limited to 25 students, except where an advisor consents, in writing, to a deviation. Advisors are expected to support all students at the school with their learning needs while being responsible for 25 personalized learning plans.

Governance Structure/Schoolwide Leadership Team (Article 24)

The governance goal of Meraki is to create a sustainable, shared governance system that enables staff to execute at high levels. The provisions of Article 24 will be altered to reflect Meraki staff belief in shared governance and accountability. Therefore, all members of the Meraki staff shall serve on the Leadership Team.

Certificated Evaluation (Article 3)

All certificated staff shall utilize the SPG process outlined in the current collective bargaining agreement. All other provisions of Article 3 will remain in force.

Selection, Transfer, and Return Rights (Article 4)

When selecting a new certificated advisor, the member, who in the judgment of the Leadership Team best meets the needs of Meraki shall be given the assignment. In reaching this judgment, the Leadership Team shall consider, among other things, the credential, major/minor fields of study, experience and seniority. The weight to be given any of those not listed, shall be determined by the Leadership Team. This decision shall not be arbitrary or capricious.

Given the specialized needs of Meraki, Article 4.03 (Involuntary Transfer) shall not be utilized for filling vacancy at Meraki during the life of this MOU.

Stipends (Article 11)

In exchange for their agreement to serve on the Meraki Leadership Team, as well as the expectation that each practitioner will support department development similar to a department chair, and in recognition that each practitioner when agreeing to work at Meraki is committing to coordinating such activities as will sustain the success and spirit of the program, each bargaining unit member of the staff will receive the following:


- Leadership Team stipend reflected on D9
- Department Chair (HS/MS/K8 middle years (5 or more practitioners) stipend reflected on D9
- Activities Director (High School) stipend reflected on D9

This intent of this compensation is to represent a body of work unique to and expected of Meraki advisors in order to sustain the success and spirit of the program, and is not necessarily tied to any single responsibility, nor is it tied to the current or future enrollment at the school.

No other stipends listed on Exhibit D7 or D9 shall be applicable to the Meraki practitioners.

All provisions of the collective bargaining agreement not specified in this Memorandum of Understanding, including the grievance process, remain in force.

This MOU will be effective as of July 1, 2022, and payment for the 2022-23 school year shall be made no later than October 31, 2023. For the purposes of revisiting the school and addressing needed modifications of the above, this MOU, in its entirety, will sunset on July 1, 2027.

 4-17-25

Daniel Thigpen Date
Executive Director
Labor Relations and Government Affairs
San Juan Unified School District

 4/17/2025

Dr. Edward F. Burgess IX Date
Associate Executive Director
San Juan Teachers Association