

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Minutes of the Board of Trustees' Special Meeting of October 24, 2024

Baden High School - Gymnasium
825 Southwood Drive, South San Francisco, California

SSFUSD Equity Definition

Equity, in SSFUSD, is defined as giving students what they need, when they need it to fulfill their potential.

OPEN SESSION - 6:00 p.m.

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

Board Members:	Ms. Amanda Anthony - Excused Dr. Chialin Hsieh - Present Ms. Daina Lujan - Present Mrs. Patricia Murray - Present Mrs. Mina Richardson - Present Ms. Jamie Wong Student Board Member - Excused
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Cabinet Members:	Dr. Shawnterra Moore, Superintendent - Present Mr. J. Marwan Hannon, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources and Student Services - Present Mr. Keith Irish, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services and Categorical Programs - Present Mr. Ted O, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services - Present
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C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by President Daina Lujan

D. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

We acknowledge that the South San Francisco Unified School District is located on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula.

We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the Ancestors, Elders, and relatives of the Ramaytush Community and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

E. COMMUNITY FORUM

a. Introduction by Superintendent Shawnterra Moore

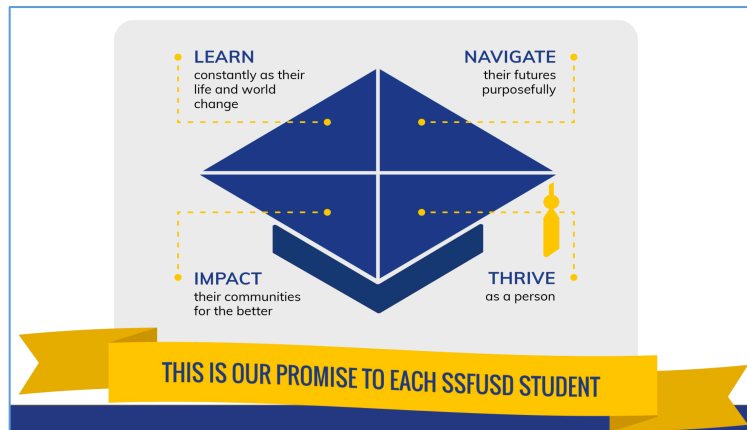
Dr. Moore began the 2024 Community Forum by welcoming President Lujan, the Board of Trustees, Cabinet members, and community attendees. She highlighted the agenda, emphasizing the focus on safety in schools, mental health support, and the importance of community input.

She explained the purpose of the community forum was to address rising concerns about school safety, noting an increase in violence and feelings of isolation among students, worsened by the pandemic and divisive election rhetoric. Recent incidents in the district have understandably left many feeling anxious.

Dr. Moore reassured the community that their safety concerns are taken seriously and outlined the goals of the evening: to discuss the safety measures being implemented, share next steps for enhancing these protocols, and foster an open dialogue where community members can express their experiences and suggestions. She emphasized the importance of collaboration, inviting attendees to share their thoughts, as their voices are vital in creating a safer environment for everyone.



Dr. Moore shared the importance of connecting the work being done to the vision outlined in the Portrait of a Graduate and the CARE core values. She reiterated that this framework reflects the commitment to preparing students for continuous learning, helping them navigate life's challenges, and enabling them to thrive as individuals who can positively impact their communities. She highlighted that ensuring safety is a fundamental component in achieving this vision for the students.



Dr. Moore outlined the CARE core values, emphasizing that community strength relies on everyone's role in ensuring safety. Authentic relationships foster trust and communication, creating environments where students feel seen and cared for. Resilience helps the community learn from challenges and improve safety measures. With equity as a guiding principle, the goal is to ensure all students have access to safe and supportive environments. Together, these values underpin the efforts to maintain safe, thriving, and inclusive schools.

Our CARE Core Values guide our efforts to keep our school communities safe, inclusive & thriving		
C	Community is our strength	<i>Ensuring safety is a collective effort where everyone plays a role</i>
A	Authentic relationships matter	<i>Trust & communication are critical to creating safe environments</i>
R	Resilience propels us forward	<i>We commit to learning from safety challenges & continuously improving how we address issues</i>
E	Equity is our north star	<i>We strive to ensure all students have access to safe, supportive learning environments</i>

b. School Safety and Mental Health

Dr. Moore invited Ryan Sebers, the Director of Student Services, to discuss safety measures and mental health supports in the South San Francisco Unified School District.

Director Sebers began by greeting everyone and emphasizing the broad nature of safety, which encompasses both physical security and emotional well-being. He noted that safety involves helping students feel secure, make good decisions, and connect with trusted adults, along with having clear processes for support.

Safety Measures

Director Sebers introduced "[The Big Five](#)" protocol, which is the district's emergency response plan. This plan follows a county-wide approach that prepares for different situations, from earthquakes to potential threats. The district practices emergency drills to make sure everyone knows how to respond.

Safety Measures: San Mateo County's "The Big Five"

San Mateo County's "The Big Five" is a set of **standardized emergency response protocols** used by all county schools, including SSFUSD, to ensure the safety of students and staff

Developed in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency services, "The Big Five" provides **clear actions for different types of emergencies**:



He also mentioned the Emergency Management Handbook and the annual Comprehensive Safe School Plans. These plans are reviewed by school councils, the district office, and the San Mateo County Coalition of Safe Schools, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and that safety processes are well understood and practiced.

Safety Measures: District & Site Emergency Response Plans

"The Big Five" response protocol is at the core of SSFUSD's **Emergency Management Handbook**

This district handbook is included in each school's **Comprehensive Safe School Plan**, which school leaders update annually to comply with national, state, and county standards & review with their staff



SSFUSD's Student Services department & San Mateo County's Safe & Supportive Schools team **review each plan to verify content & make recommendations for improvement**

Director Sebers shared that their success relies on strong community partnerships, particularly with the South San Francisco Police Department, acknowledging Chief Scott Campbell and School Liaison Officer Michael Valdes. He also highlighted the South San Francisco Fire Department,

Captain Ken Anderson's valuable support. Additionally, he noted that the district also collaborates with the Daly City Police Department, San Bruno Police, and BART Police, expressing gratitude for their partnerships.

Safety Measures: Strong Partnerships with Local Law Enforcement



Scott Campbell
SSFPD Chief



Ken Anderson
SSFPD Emergency
Services Manager



Michael Valdes
SSFPD School
Liaison Officer

Safety & Mental Health Partnerships

Director Sebers highlighted the importance of working with community partners to support students and create a positive school environment. He mentioned the long-term partnership with the YMCA's Youth Services Bureau, which offers mental health support, safe school advocates, and counseling for elementary students. The district also collaborates with StarVista to provide family resources and uses Daybreak Health for online counseling for middle and high school students. Additionally, the San Mateo County Office of Education helps with emergency plans and prevention strategies.

Safety & Mental Health Partnerships

- **Youth Services Bureau (YSB) of the YMCA**
 - School Safety Advocates Program at SSFUSD Middle & High Schools
 - Elementary Counseling program at all SSFUSD Elementary sites
- **San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA) / StarVista**
 - Family Resource Center & on-site clinician
 - Family, clinical, community services & suicide prevention hotline
- **Daybreak Health**
 - Universal mental health screener for all Middle / High School students
 - Comprehensive online counseling for youth aged 5 to 19 to address anxiety, motivation, academics, concentration, depression & more
- **San Mateo County Office of Education Safe & Supportive Schools**
 - Resources to support school safety & wellness

Mental Health Supports

Director Sebers emphasized that, in addition to community partners, there are valuable professionals working in schools every day. There is a full

team of school counselors, including academic, social-emotional, and college and career counselors. Wellness counselors support various intervention programs and restorative practices. The team also includes school psychologists and embedded mental health professionals, as well as behavior therapists. These resources ensure that they meet the needs of all students, both in general education and special education programs, creating a strong support system.

Mental Health Supports: School-based Support Staff

- **School Counselors:** Academic, social-emotional & college / career counseling support
- **Wellness Counselors:** Social-emotional & short-term intervention counseling for students who need additional support
- **School Psychologists, Mental Health & Behavioral Therapists:** Support for students who need services through their Individualized Education Plan (IEP)



Director Sebers mentioned a couple of key individuals who help guide and coordinate their programs: Dr. Elin Cervantes, a counselor on special assignment, and Matthew Steinborn, a psychologist on special assignment. He noted that they also have great leaders within the counseling community at each site and expressed gratitude for having them on staff.

Mental Health Supports: District Support Staff



Elin Cervantes
Counselor on Special
Assignment (COSA)



Matthew Steinborn
Psychologist on Special
Assignment (POSA)

Director Sebers shared the district is developing wellness centers to provide spaces for students, staff, and families to access resources and services. These centers will serve as places for clear information sharing. Currently, plans are underway for Parkway Heights MS, Baden HS, EI

Camino HS, and South San Francisco HS, each at different development stages, with the goal of getting them running soon. They are also planning wellness centers for Westborough MS and a district-level family resource center. He believes these initiatives will help make wellness centers a common feature throughout the schools, enhancing support for students' mental health.

Mental Health Supports: Wellness Centers

Wellness Centers are spaces where students & staff can access resources that support their mental & emotional well-being

- **Current:**

- Parkway Heights MS
- Baden HS
- El Camino HS
- South San Francisco HS

- **In development:**

- Westborough MS
- District Family Resource Center



Next Steps

Director Sebers emphasized the importance of ongoing improvements. He highlighted the expansion of restorative practices, with a dedicated coordinator working to implement these methods at each school and develop site-based teams. This transition is progressing well, thanks to our experienced staff.

He also mentioned the increase in educational interventions, such as substance education and conflict resolution tools, which enhance restorative practices like circles and chats. Director Sebers introduced Luca Tirapelle, the new MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) coordinator, who will play a key role in strengthening critical support areas. He emphasized the need to integrate wellness centers with the family resource center, ensuring smooth communication and collaboration across counseling programs.

As a district, we are taking the following next steps



Expanding restorative practices to help students repair harm, improve self-regulation & make thoughtful decisions when conflicts arise



Increasing education-based supports for substance education & providing more tools for conflict resolution to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate challenges



Augmenting our student support team by hiring additional staff to ensure a well-rounded, multi-tiered system of care that addresses the diverse needs of all students



Developing school-based Wellness Centers & a Family Resource Center to create safe, supportive spaces where students & other community members can easily access wellness / mental health resources

Mental Health Resources

Director Sebers shared some strategies to address potential issues, emphasizing that student mental health is key to preventing problems. By helping students feel safe and supported, we enable them to make positive decisions. Trusting adults on campus is essential, as it encourages students to seek help and focus on their education. To support this, he introduced an app-based program "[STOPit](#)," which the district is exploring. This program would allow students, parents, and staff to report concerns anonymously. This system would facilitate communication and enable timely investigations to address issues before they escalate. Additionally, Director Sebers mentioned other programs under consideration, such as "[Sandy Hook Promise](#)," as well as crisis response tools like [Centegix](#), [Bluepoint](#), and [Raptor](#). These tools aim to enhance our safety measures by improving communication and integrating with existing systems, including security cameras. He stressed the importance of strong relationships with parents. Building trust and maintaining open lines of communication is vital, and he encouraged parents to engage with school staff to address any concerns collaboratively.

We are also evaluating additional safety & mental health resources

- **STOPit Anonymous Reporting Program:**
San Mateo County districts are piloting this tool, which allows students, staff & families to confidentially report concerns about safety, bullying, or other issues to help keep our schools safe
- **Supplemental crisis & response systems:**
 - Centegix
 - Blue Point Alert Solutions
 - Raptor Technologies



Open Forum: Community Discussion

Assistant Superintendent Keith Irish welcomed everyone and introduced discussion prompts for the community and Board to respond to. He invited input on what safety means to attendees, whether they are parents, students, educators, or community members. He also asked about any safety concerns that might impact their sense of safety in schools or the community.

Community Discussion Questions (1/2)

- **What does safety mean to you?**
We'd love to hear what safety means to you as a parent, student, educator, or community member
- **What safety concerns do you or your children have?**
How have these concerns impacted your sense of safety?

Mr. Irish also emphasized the importance of understanding what information about safety and mental health supports is still needed and how best to communicate this with everyone involved. Lastly, he encouraged suggestions on how the district and community partners can better support student safety and well-being.

Community Discussion Questions (2/2)

- **What information do you still need?**
What safety or mental health resources do you want to learn more about? What is the best way to share them?
- **How can the district and our community partners better support student safety & well-being?**
*What additional resources would be helpful? What ideas do you have for improving safety in our schools?
How can we work together more effectively?*

Mr. Irish then opened the floor to community members and board members for questions or comments.

John Baker expressed his gratitude to Mr. Irish and introduced himself as a parent of an Alta Loma Middle School student. He emphasized that safety for students should be a given, allowing them to focus on learning

without fear of violence or bullying. He shared his personal connection to the issue, noting that his child's friend group includes many LGBTQ+ students, and he has a recent El Camino High graduate who was in special education. Despite the district's efforts against bullying, he acknowledged that these groups still face significant challenges. He urged the district to strengthen mental health policies to provide special protections for traditionally bullied groups, including newcomer students. He advocated for acknowledgment and acceptance of differences to improve students' mental health, especially since the pandemic has exacerbated these issues. He highlighted the need for immediate measures to protect students from bullying, referencing a school board candidate's alarming anti-LGBTQ rhetoric in their campaign. Mr. Baker called on the board to not only enforce existing policies but to explicitly protect diverse student identities, stressing that preventing mental trauma is far more effective than trying to address it later.

Mary Musallam introduced herself as a third-grade teacher at Monte Verde elementary and a parent of three graduates from the district. She echoed Mr. Baker's sentiments, emphasizing that students shouldn't have to worry about their safety or whether they would see their parents again after school. She pointed out the ongoing issues with campus security, mentioning that even with a fence, she regularly finds and disposes of beer bottles on the school grounds. Ms. Musallam advocated for closing and securing all school campuses, believing that this would enhance the sense of safety for staff, parents, and students. Lastly, she expressed that if the district truly wants to encourage community involvement, meetings should start later than 6:00 PM. She shared her experience as a working parent, explaining the challenges of juggling picking up kids, cooking dinner, and making it to meetings on time. She suggested that adjusting the meeting times could help increase community participation.

Trustee Richardson expressed interest in supporting struggling students and highlighted the importance of attendance. She mentioned the growing popularity of wellness programs and centers, noting how principals and librarians are quick to provide support for students in need. She asked Director Sebers if there are plans to establish wellness centers at all schools. Director Sebers responded that they aim for every school to have a wellness center, currently working through the process of identifying suitable spaces. He emphasized that once they have operational centers, they can monitor their usage and develop best practices to ensure efficiency. He acknowledged that the main challenge is finding appropriate facilities without disrupting instruction. Trustee Richardson found this encouraging, affirming the value of providing spaces for students to regroup.

Trustee Murray began by agreeing with Mr. Baker and Ms. Musallam about the need for students to feel safe at school. She acknowledged the challenges of the outside world but stressed the district's duty to tackle bullying. She asked how students learn about where to get help. Mr. Irish explained that information is shared through posters, QR codes, and school announcements, and they're looking into using social media for better reach. He also highlighted mental health weeks aimed at ensuring students don't fall through the cracks. Trustee Murray asked whether all students are getting this information. Mr. Irish responded that the district is considering apps like STOPit for anonymous reporting, ensuring students know where to turn for help. She then asked about teachers identifying students in need. Mr. Irish mentioned there is increased awareness of mental health needs post-pandemic and highlighted peer counseling programs to support students.

Trustee Murray inquired who parents should contact if they have concerns about their child. Director Sebers indicated that parents should reach out to school administration or counselors. Mr. Irish added that partnerships with organizations like Daybreak provide telehealth sessions and mental health webinars for parents. Lastly, Trustee Murray asked where parents could find safety information, especially "The Big Five" protocols. Director Sebers confirmed it's on the district's website in multiple languages, and they're working to make it more accessible to alleviate parental concerns during emergencies.

Mr. Irish then introduced a demonstration by the tech department on how to navigate the [District's website to find the Big Five information](#). He explained that it's located under Departments, in Student Services, and by clicking on Emergency Procedures. The information is available in both English and Spanish. He acknowledged that while there is a lot of information, they are looking into ways to make it more prominent on the site. He wanted to ensure the community knows where to find this important information, especially since it had been mentioned. Trustee Murray thanked him for the update.

Trustee Hsieh expressed gratitude and asked a question regarding how to ensure that mental health services are sensitive and responsive to the diverse cultural and demographic backgrounds of the student body. Director Sebers responded by highlighting the strengths in their approach, noting the importance of referrals and the relationships built between teachers, counselors, school administrators, and parents. They are working on connecting students with as many services as possible, rather than just picking a few they think will work. By collaborating in this way, they aim to be culturally sensitive and also consider each individual's background and history. When linking someone to mental health

resources, it's important to understand their unique experiences for the best outcome.

President Lujan thanked everyone for the presentation noting the important points shared by Mr. Baker and Ms. Musallam. She really appreciated Trustee Murray's comments about safety and expressed a wish that safety wasn't something they ever had to think about. She emphasized the importance of debriefing after a crisis to ensure they responded appropriately and to help students process their feelings. She also mentioned concerns about bullying, especially the impact of online conversations that happen outside of school but still affect what goes on during the school day. She found the introduction of STOPit, the anonymous reporting tool, exciting because it allows staff to respond quickly when issues arise. She praised Daybreak mental health support, recognizing the difficulties families face in finding quality mental health care, even with insurance. As a parent of a middle schooler, she reflected on the transition from elementary school, highlighting how important community connections are. She noted that it's often other parents who provide critical information about what's going on with the kids. While middle school students need their space and independence, she worried about families new to the school who may not have those connections yet. She suggested they think about ways to bring parents together while still respecting students' need for freedom. She mentioned that the PTSA is one option but noted that participation could be improved.

Trustee Murray emphasized that when parents get involved in the PTA during elementary school, the connections they make are invaluable. She noted that there are usually many more parents attending PTA meetings and school events at that level compared to older grades. She shared that some of her closest friends today are people she met when her daughter was in kindergarten. Trustee Murray shared that the PTA is not just about selling items or showing up at school. It's really about building connections and having that support network. She encouraged everyone to join the PTA and attend meetings, even in high school, to foster those important relationships.

President Lujan thanked everyone for the presentation and noted that Mr. Baker had turned in a comment card. She asked if he had any additional comments, and Mr. Baker replied that he did not; he had shared everything when he shared comments during the open forum.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

ADJOURNMENT – 6:49 p.m.