



STEM School Highlands Ranch SAC Monthly Notes December 9, 2020

Meeting Date: December 9, 2020

Meeting Location: via ZOOM per Covid-19 Guidelines

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Present:

Erin Gomez , SAC Chair

David Emge, Vice-Chair

Amy Winans, SAC Recorder

David Emge, DAC Rep

Tamara Emge, PTS Adult

Angela Tolar, Parent Rep

Carla Gustafson, Parent Rep

Kelly Reyna, Parent Rep

Abbi Kaplan, Secondary Rep

Michelle Gasser, Elementary Rep

Dr. Karen Johnson, Dir of Curriculum and Accountability

Community Rep: Joe Calibeo

Absent:

Guests: Nicole Smith, Anjali Rao, Kimberly Lander, Rudy Lukez, Grace (no last name given)

Meeting was called to order at 6:02

Recite Mission and Vision Statements

Introductions

Determine Quorum – Quorum met

Roberts Rules of Order - recap

Minutes from November 18, 2020 . Dr. Johnson wanted to review a few pieces:

why we are voting for Chair and Vice Chair, (clarification on that part below.)

the complaint issue on tonights agenda. (see below)

concerns about the teachers and their comments from last meeting.

Was it made aware to the teachers that this would be public?

It was brought up that in the past names have been in the minutes of SAC

Possible alternate wording was discussed and issue was debated.

Heard from Nicole Smith on how the Board handles sensitive info

[P]
[SEP]

Tamara offered to do some research

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Motion to do research and hold on minutes , and someone else offers to ask the teachers if they want their names listed.

Dr Johnson had one more issue with minutes. At the end it indicated SAC would write a letter and Dr. Johnson asked if we should include the letter. There was no letter at the time of the meeting or the notes being sent for review. Maybe attach to these minutes (see Addendum #1)

In the future, we would have to have anyone in public comment we'd have to ask each parent if they want their name in the notes.

Motion seconded and carries

Teacher Report:

Elementary report by Michelle Gasser :

Elementary seems to be going alright. Elementary teachers have been working hard to put together Elementary kits for parents to come pick up. Elementary is doing asynchronous and synchronous teaching. Some feedback is that they are meeting s/emotional needs of students.

Secondary report by Abbi Kaplan.

SAC heard from Anjali Rao being Time Kid of the Year.

Abbi talked about the staff feedback and how the info is to be disseminated.

Director Report:

Reported on by Dr. Karen Johnson.

Board received a ton of feedback after last SAC meeting . November 20 board had a meeting and then STEM went to remote learning.

It's posted to our website under "About Us" and "State of STEM"

Planning for Jan. Our plan is to return in person, but has some logistics. New contact tracing process.

Working on Communication regarding January

Improvements with attendance and working with feedback team.

Next week working with staff working through the pieces.

DCSD modified the grading scale and STEM went with most of it to help students having trouble going between remote and hybrid.

Providing support for student.

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Grades will be posted next Friday around 5pm.

Nicole working on promotional video

The Board is working on renewal update

In January STEM is slated to provide renewal documents regarding the provisions set forth in the charter renewal ie any complaints, the UIP etc.

Update on expansion STEM meets 1x a week with a consultant pursuing a STEM school with Denver with an opening Fall 2022

There is a survey coming about the expansion. Let Dr. Eucker know if you want to help out.

UIP typically due 12/31 but now due in April.

Every other year we have to provide UIP info, but we have no CMAS data. Will have SAT or PSAT data. (including the 7th graders forward)

Abbi has question about where the new school will be since Lincoln said they are doing PTECH. New school will be an Elementary School.

More of an inclusion of the arts but not a STEAM school.

UIP

The goal for all students is to make a years growth. The focus on where we do not make a years worth of growth

Redact (i-ready) scores.

ID priority challenges, ID root cause

Went through the UIP in more detail

Submission needs to be finalized in April and approved

There is a planning form, for example, in 2020-21 Middle Schooler on free and reduced lunch will increase 10% and that is a measurement.

Motion to make a subcommittee to work on the UIP, seconded and carried. Volunteers taken.

DAC Report:

David Emge gave a report on DAC.

Need help with staffing for all areas..busses, nurses etc.

Talked about how contact tracing has changed per Tri-County level CDPHE put out the documents however did not talk with Tri-County health. This week they met with CDPHE so TRI-County can meet those requirements.

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Guest speaker was the principal from Northridge Elementary School. Challenges when there is a positive case re: the path of communication. CARES Act funds spent on disinfecting playground equip 3x a day and classrooms.

Aaron Ragon, Counsellor with DCSD providing resources to those who need it. House calls to kids not going to class, etc

Talked about how teachers are trying to engage kids

Did not talk about parents obligation to tell the school

PTO Report:

Given by Tamara Emge.

Meeting tomorrow. STEM Gives time (fundraiser). Extending to January 24, 2021. Info out to parents. In the past, Eucker sent an email out to parents which is being worked on currently.

Restaurant night 12/15 at Chipolte from 4-8.

BOD Report:

Given by Erin...executive session..no report

Community Report

Given by Joe Calibeo – not much done. Meeting with Greg Cannady in beginning of December to get together with Martian themed projects.

Subcommittee Reports:

Committee for Diversity, Inclusion and Equity – Didn't meet this month, met with Ish and will determine the next step

Safety and Wellness Committee – Carla and Tamara – no meeting therefore no communication.

Michael no longer with the board. Who is new chair??? No new info. Rudy spoke. Not fully sorted out who is in charge of SWC. Will be sorted out January. Purchased another bldg to make us have more space for counseling etc. ?? Paid cash for new bldg so we own it outright.

Survey Committee -

Financial – School finances look impeccable. SAC is to make budgetary recommendations. Missing some info to make best recommendations

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Driveline – no driveline lately (all remote)

Old Business:

Formerly tabled discussion of inquiry by Ish and Erin into clarification of SAC Duties – Erin went over the timeline of what happened.

Timeline attached to notes (See addendum #2)

Nicole Smith spoke to help clarify. But it requires a bit of context. STEM is less speculative than most charter schools. She offered to have a guest speaker to explain further.

Question is how does SAC get the financial info that is appropriate and necessary?

Regarding the complaint to the board...can it just be retracted as it was done in error?

Recommendation to retract as long as SAC can something in writing from Board that says they would include SAC in budget

Motion to retract complaint

We had a process in the past, which wasn't followed this time.

Talked about possible training for volunteers as to how the district works.

Motion made again to retract complaint

Still have unresolved issues because it wasn't a SAC complaint per se

It was suggested there be a communication pathway for SAC.

Motion seconded and carried.

Question of how do we retract. Erin will call McKenzie and we will figure out how to retract.

IF they need a letter Erin will pass a retraction through all of SAC

Time is of the essence. Need to be retracted before the charter renewal in January per Nicole B.

New Business:

Recommendations for STEM spending priorities (Article III Section A.2 SAC Bylaws)

Maybe put this into a finance committee of SAC?

Motion to move this onto a subcommittee, seconded and carried

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OPEN FORUM

No one spoke

Next SAC Meeting January 20, 2021 will be posted on the All School Calendar

Motion for adjournment at by 9:01pm seconded and carried

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Addendum #1 Letter to BoD from SAC

11/19/20

Greetings Dr. Eucker and the STEM Board of Directors:

The STEM School Accountability Committee is reaching out to you today as a result from our meeting last night that focused mainly on the concern from our teachers about the decision to not follow the DCSD lead on moving to full remote learning. During the SAC open forum our teachers that spoke, or shared via chat, had some alarming concerns with continuing in-person learning. The consensus is that teachers are fatigued, scared, and overwhelmed with the decision to not follow DCSD guidance on moving to full eLearning. The SAC prides itself on the open forum we provide to our STEM parents, teachers, and community, and we hope that our recommendations are carefully taken into consideration.

We understand that STEM has several stakeholders, and that the BOD needs to consider all stakeholders when making decisions about the well being of our amazing school. We understand there are three surveys that are in circulation requested by the BOD to gauge the interest of continuing in-person learning or to move to full eLearning.

After hearing the plea of our teachers, SAC officially recommends that STEM follow the guidelines of DCSD and move to full eLearning at the return of Thanksgiving break. The SAC recommendation was not made lightly, as our lengthy meeting can attest. We understand that the students and the parents are also stakeholders that the BOD should take into consideration; however the teachers are the glue that hold it all together. If the well being of our teachers is compromised so is the education that our students receive. STEM prides itself on our continued innovation and the SAC feels that eLearning can be very successful. Our efforts can be better utilized in making the STEM eLearning experience better than any other school, rather than tireless efforts to mitigate a pandemic that we cannot control.

If the teacher survey results differ from what the SAC has witnessed in our meeting, and teachers prefer in-person learning, then we recommend a significant increase in teacher support. Such support is critical for the well being of the teachers who are not comfortable continuing in-person learning. Some of the suggestions that came up in our meeting are as follows:

- Extend the same flexibility to the teachers that the students have regarding remote and in-person learning.
- Teachers that room share are in need of additional space to safely eat their lunch or decompress during off periods. Understanding that space is limited within the building may be the idea of a heated tent on campus with adequate room for teachers to safely social distance.
- Additional mental health support for teachers. To our understanding, the Center of Strength is available to support those who experienced trauma from May 7th. Many of our teachers are survivors of May 7th and have compounded stress with COVID; however all teachers need to be supported, regardless of their status on May 7th.
- Understanding that STEM has access to certain COVID relief funds that are not available during a typical school year, it is our hope that any costs incurred from these recommendations will be forgiven in the event the Board finds it appropriate to utilize these specialty funds.
- Additionally if there are out of pocket expenses for COVID testing for our teachers to return to school we ask that you consider a plan to cover those costs. Warm regards,

Lastly, the SAC recognized that our parent stakeholders have a lot on the line if STEM decides to move to full

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eLearning. Many of our SAC parent members will also be impacted by these options, however we would not be alone in this decision as most schools are moving to eLearning at the return of Thanksgiving break. We also make this recommendation based on the fact that this situation is temporary.

Thank you for reviewing our recommendations. We hope that this finds you well and that you carefully consider all that we have presented.

2020-21 STEM School Accountability Committee

Erin Gomez David Emge

Amy Winans Kelly Reyna

Tamara Emge Angela Tolar

Carla Gustafson

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Addendum #2 Timeline of events leading to complaint

Timeline

August 2020

DCSD provides guidelines for SAC recommendations re: spending COVID Relief funds.

September 2020

SAC forms subcommittees to distribute the various duties. David is Finance lead.

October 2020

David requests clarification on COVID fund allocation

SAC receives email from Rudy Lukez stating that “The role of SAC is limited by Colorado state statute to the UIP.”

SAC discusses the email and roles at the monthly meeting.

SAC requests joint meeting to clarify this issue ASAP.

Request for a special SAC meeting on Safety issues.

Chair and Vice Chair decide to ask SAC outside experts for guidance.

C & VC discuss with Charter School Alliance and DCSD SAC Training personnel.

M Reynolds suggests that M Khan can provide additional clarification regarding SAC roles for charter schools.

November 2020

SAC requests joint meeting to clarify and clear the air.

Ishmeet Kalra resigns as SAC Chair

Erin meets with Penny, Karen and Nicole Bostel to ask for a presentation on budget priorities for the SAC to make recommendations on. Erin is told no, and that no one was stopping the SAC from making budget priority recommendations.

Erin continues the discussion with M Khan regarding clarification of SAC roles in charter schools. M Khan offers to send an email to clarify the roles.

Complaint is received by STEM and SAC.

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