



STEM School Highlands Ranch SAC Monthly Notes November 18, 2020

Meeting Date: November 18, 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: None

Guests: Aaron Guggenheim, Alexa Nichols, Anonymous Attendee, Beth Gisi, Cameron Ryan, Cara Phillips, Carolyn Lawrence, Cassandra Martin, Cheryl, Daniel Jones, Dr. C-S, Edward Cooper, Evan Voorn, Gabriela Leddy, Grace O'Toole, Gregg Canady, Jack LaCarrubba, Jeanie Brevoort, Jenna Mishoe, Jessica Ham, Jill Donnelly, Joe Smith, Jordyn Russo, Kandace Lyte, Karen Lewis, Karyn Weiffenbach, Katie Hoffman, Kimberly Lander, KZ, Lauren Swihart, Madeline Huzenis, Maria Moreno, Mike Pritchard, Ms. Kovalsky, Neely Clapp, Roy Martinez, Shonda Kaspar, Simi Basu, Yacina Tamendjari

Meeting was called to order at 6:01 by Erin

Recite Mission and Vision Statements

Introductions

Quorum Determined

Minutes from October 12, 2020 approved by majority

Vote for Chair (Erin Gomez) majority approved with 1 abstain and Vice Chair (David Emge) approved by majority

Clarification and debate on why there was voting in November for SAC chair and Vice Chair

Clarification and debate on what has happened and why for the complaint filed.

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Motion to table topics above by Angela Tolar and 2nd and passed with majority vote

Teacher Report:

ES report by Michelle Gasser : Met on Fri. Much concern in ES about not following DCSD and keeping school open. As a staff, concerns about rising Covid numbers, concerns with staffing, especially specials and IA staffing. Some kids come to school with fevers and is a concern. Do not want to increase enrollment. Teachers already overwhelmed. More staff to be hired to streamline the health concerns?

The Elementary team has a list of non-negotiables which include socio-emotional needs, taking feedback from parents, and making those changes. Has been submitted to Dr. Johnson and Ms. Kovalesky.

Nicole talked about guidelines sent to parents about sick kids. This is in the newsletter. They can send out Infinite Campus emails. Suggestion for reverse calls to parents.

Secondary report by Abbi Kaplan. She asked if we could move the agenda item about Covid response up on the agenda. Motion made move to move it up, 2nd and motion passed. Dr. Johnson set guidelines on the topic.

Remote is going well. Teachers are working very hard. Teachers are stressed. Jobs becoming before family etc. Most teachers in district teach 5 classes, not 6. Possible reason for the retention issue. Teachers need MUCH more support than they are getting. Several admin have left.

Talked about reasons why DCSD went 100% virtual. Stress levels are very high. Tried to get some positive feedback and today got one email.

The teachers do not want to continue in person learning while the cases are rising.

New Business:

Teacher concerns with STEM Covid response

Dr. Johnson talked about the background on how we got to this point for remote/hybrid learning.

4 cases in the school with no community outbreak.

Governor is recommending keeping kids in school, especially elementary.

Went over other schools who are open, addressed staffing issues

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Some parents and kids are moving to 100% remote especially this week making some in person classes quite small.

Going through the parent and teacher surveys and getting feedback. Compiling data and feedback.

Seven teachers spoke about their concerns for teaching in person and the risks to themselves and their families.

Director Report:

Reported on by Dr. Karen Johnson.

UIP – tabled again. Timeline moved again per the State. Plan on walking through the process and official submission is now in April for 2021-22

Talked about the high school showcase tomorrow (11.19) which is all virtual.

Collecting Thanksgiving baskets to support families in need and another school (projected 50 baskets)

Personally thanked all the staff members and assured that their voices are heard in a positive manner and come to a positive solution

DAC Report:

David Emge gave a report on DAC.

Met last night (11.16)

Corey Wise interim superintendent

2 teachers positions available in the DAC

Talked about the road to return, contact tracing, kids are clear, symptoms etc

Looking at state numbers, Tri-county numbers, Douglas County numbers and district geography.

Looking at own internal data to make the school closures decision

Do schools have the autonomy to make their own decisions to stay open or close?

Super positive update, Rich Payne, supervisor of security and safety, spoke.

Covid funds – neighborhood schools don't have the same access to funds as charters do.

2 Covid buckets, CARES act and PPP (paycheck protection)

Charters have automatic access to those funds. CARES and PPP

https://www.dcsdk12.org/about/leadership/superintendent/road_to_return_dcsd_2020-2021/dcsd_Covid-19_dashboard/road_to_return_decision_dashboard

PTO Report:

Given by Tamara Emge.

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Hasn't had their meeting yet. Changes in the board...many openings
fall grants coming up tomorrow (11.19)
Currently in the middle of STEM gives fundraiser
Last fundraiser raised \$7651 (fun run) but the net was \$2203 after expenses

BOD Report:

Given by Erin -

To be a student advisory council to be formed

Auditor report..STEM in good shape, transparency there

Adjusted calendar due to Covid coming soon for next year

Stefanie Mendrala, transferring to work with students and teachers nationwide

The nurses put out a Covid home screen on the website

Nicole Bostel gave her update. 3 newsletters going out now..parents, student and staff

New communication person to be hired to help Nicole

Parent comment to urge STEM to NOT join CHSAA, because if they do, students can't go to their home school for sports

Community Report

Given by Joe Calibeo

Not much to report. Introduce self

Young professional, Penn State 2018, Works at Lockheed Martin, halfway through his Masters at John Hopkins, worked with Greg in the past. Aligned with STEMs mission.

Subcommittee Reports:

Committee for Diversity, Inclusion and Equity – Dr. Johnson. Met Monday the 16th. Spent time looking at recruitment of staff and look at questions we ask interview and hiring process. Going to look at specific recruitment sites. Still in the learning stage

Safety and Wellness Committee – Carla and Tamara. HVAC and Covid and home screening. Report from Karen Lewis and how she helps kids return to learn. Tamara impressed with leadership of the committee. HVAC issues being addressed.

Survey Committee -

Financial – David Emge – through the lens of what can be done to strengthen STEM and what can we

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do to fill the gaps. Learning how a charter works is a big task. All this is publicly available. Financial audit came out. STEM is really financially healthy. Used several metrics. General fund increased because of Covid relief 735k in CARES and 1.9M in PPP. 128K spent as of June. There is an expiration of funds. CARES has to be used by 12/31. PPP is a 24 week window.

Covid relief funds have to be spent for Covid ie social distancing and remote learning. For PPP, with SBA (.gov) has info on what PPP can be used for. Possible loan forgiveness. Everything has to have receipts, it's a government run program.

Currently working with board and admin to get info so we can make recommendations for spending.

Driveline – Kelly – needs volunteers

Open Forum:

Karen Weiffenbach – Gratitude to those teachers who already spoke up. 9 year STEM family, never had so many teachers come ask for help. Concern about the college kids who are coming home this week and the siblings who attend STEM. The flexibility we've had is great, teachers should have that same option. More help for Karyn Lewis? Teachers are in crisis. Clearly communicated. Teacher retention will blow up if we don't do something.

Aleza B. - Piggy back on Karyn W said. College kid coming home next week, (hard to hear what else was said.), undying gratitude for the teachers and grateful for SAC.

Clapp – Respect limitations of SAC, if you know anyone who is a parent, spread the word because parents can help the teachers. PTO meeting, tomorrow, go to BOD meeting.

Angela moved to make a recommendation to the BOD look into hiring mental health professionals for the teachers not just for the rest of the year, but for the next 12 months. To ensure teachers and admin are getting access for mental health.

Abbi disagrees, said they are overworked and underpaid and many will not be returning next year.

Dr. Johnson wants to have a summary of what was said and present to the board to have another record of how the teachers are feeling.

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Tabled and moved to end of meeting and make recommendations to the board as quickly as possible.

Coming back to the motions:

What can be done for more flexibility so the teachers can work from home without taking leave. Staff lounge is shut down per Governor order to socially distance– what can be done

Cafeteria still open

Clarification about teacher lounge: “Staff are discouraged from eating/congregating in break rooms/common areas”

Where CAN teachers go to eat since lounge is shut and some are sharing classrooms?

Are there teachers who WANT to stay in-person? Survey went out to teachers. Waiting for results
Should STEM follow DCSD guidelines?

Discussion about wording for recommendation to the Board. Kelly writing it up.

Motion to have recommendations sent to the board, written by Kelly. All approved

The Center is funded through a grant and services are available for those who were there for May 7.

Next SAC Meeting December 16, 2020 will be posted on the All School Calendar

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