

School Advisory Committee (SAC) December 2021 Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 13, 2021, 3:45PM-4:45PM

In attendance: Lauren Overton (Principal), Jessica McCollum (SAC Member), Jayne Downing (SAC Member, school librarian), Vidya Plainfield (SAC Member), Michelle Papachristou (SAC Member), Jim Dugan (HSA President), Tamekia McFadden (FACE Liaison, School District), Norrisa Alexander (FACE Liaison, School District), Ann Kreidle (Guest and School Partnership Manager), Leila Graham-Willis (Guest), Gail Rosen (Guest), Jay Gantz (Guest).

Open Forum

Parent asked if the district had communicating to schools the intention to implement middle school Algebra after Karyn Lynch, deputy chief of student services, was quoted in the newspaper regarding it. If not, would there be a way for students who wanted it to take it as long as equity and staffing could be addressed.

Parent also asked if homework could be reintroduced in middle school to prepare students for high school. Parent very much also appreciated not having homework during the pandemic to allow their children to socialize after being online all day.

Principal Overton said the math initiative was not communicated to schools or the district's math department. Ms. Overton has researched the issue extensively, tried different models at her former school yet is always happy to have further discussions with parents and experts in the field. Of note, given the standards and district curriculum, students are often not ready by 8th grade for Algebra 1 and the 8th grade eligible content for PSSA is very pre-algebra content. However, the new PAS math curriculum, which is not on the district list, has been going well at PAS and it has some flexibility with a faster pace to get to Algebra 1. Ms. Overton understands that not having Algebra 1 is a barrier to applying to Masterman for high school but wasn't sure if removing that barrier would result in more students gaining admission based on PAS and Meredith experience. There is also a staffing issue. PAS has 2 math teachers; whereas, Greenfield which provides the class, has 3 staff members.

Parent asked if 7th graders could be polled to see who is interested in taking Algebra 1 next year to determine demand.

Ms. Overton stated that teachers are including homework in their lesson plans. She will follow up with middle school teachers.

Another parent at the forum also advocated for Algebra 1 in middle school.

Principal Overton reminded the group that high schools could still place students in Algebra 1 regardless of middle school courses. She will continue to consult with math experts at SDP and PennGSE. Please send articles to her.

No other issues were raised during the Open Forum

Approval of November Minutes

Vidya motioned to approve the November minutes. Jim seconded the motion.

Principal Report - Ms. Overton

Ms. Overton reminded all that the district announced no homework nor grading at all schools during December winter break. Middle schools students may continue to read their novels.

Coffee with the principal will be December 23.

The school had a successful walk through with the assistant superintendent, Lea principal and PAS leadership team members. Saw small group instruction to support differentiated learning, and examples of identity work in literacy so that students could see themselves valued in the curriculum. This reflected training teachers have been doing with 228 Accelerator last year. Will continue to lift up voices. This is a journey together.

Second set of Extra Curricular activities will be in the December 18 PONY. Fall cycle clubs were well received, especially the Women's Right Club run by Ms. Ehrenberg and the many Penn coding clubs.

Ms. Overton and the Assistant Superintendent received a 3 million dollar grant for Network 2 to do equity work with 228 Accelerator Caroline Hill. At each of the fourteen schools, there will be an equity team with a fellow to lead the work.

Ms. Overton also received \$10,000 from the Neubauer Foundation to start 5 affinity groups for PAS parents who identify as African American/Black, AAPI, Latinx, Multiracial and English as a Second Language. Each group will meet three times during the spring over a meal. Childcare will be provided by white parents of the Equity Circle.

School plan submitted to state was well received. We are meeting our goals, except for attendance, which is understandable. Appreciate parents keeping sick children at home. Goal is to keep kids safe. We had 6 cases so far.

Our vaccine rate for Covid19 is over 70%. Need more parents to share their vaccine cards of their children so the nurse does not have to search city database.

Thank you to HSA for the staff celebration. Many teachers came and really enjoyed getting to be with their colleagues especially those they had a chance to meet before.

There will be a half day on December 17 for professional development. Winter recess is December 24-January 1. Travel is not an excused absence.

Check out music review in the PONY. Ms. Lam was not able to have an in person winter concert.

Safety Update for vehicular and pedestrians around the PAS perimeter

-A group of us met with representative of Councilperson Gauthier's office to do a walk through of site. Many schools having similar issues, underfunding in Streets Department for speed bumps and traffic calming measures.

-There was bike accident at 43rd and Spruce that injured a parent and child.

-Requested traffic study of 43rd Street

-Partner with Penn police and Spruce Hill cttee

-Ann will follow up with Penn police regarding better lighting on Locust Street playground

- Mrs. Kearney's students are doing physics projects with data on speed that can be shared.
- We will organize to advocate for all schools in West Philadelphia for speed bumps, traffic calming measures, corner barriers.
 - City Council, BOE, Mayor,
- HSA will help to rally parents.

Future SAC Meeting Dates

January 10, February 14, March 14, April 18 and May 9.

New Business

Vidya will update the SAC flier to encourage more parents to attend.

Adjourn

Vidya motioned to adjourn the meeting. Michelle seconded the motion.