

School Advisory Committee (SAC) October 2023 Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 9th, 2023
3:45PM-4:45PM

<https://pennalexander.philasd.org/school-advisory-council/>

In attendance: Lauren Overton (Principal), Rochelle Johnson (SAC member, Faculty, PFT building rep), Theresa Knight (SAC member, School Counselor), Vidya Plainfield (SAC Member, parent), Rebecca Geller-Puchalsky (SAC Member for SHCA, parent), Ann Kreidle (PAS Partnership Manager), Liz Wing (SAC Secretary, parent), Susie Pierce (HSA President, parent), Jessica McCollum (parent representative), Jon Kaufman (guest parent)

Welcome to SAC School year 2023-2024!

- Define meeting dates for the year
 - 2nd Monday of the month
 - 11/13, 12/11, 1/8, 2/12, 3/4, 4/15, 5/13
- New parent representative needed (preference for middle school parent, lower grades already represented) for the 2023-2024 school year
 - Send email to Room Parents, Ms. Adorno for newsletter
- Plan to approve 5/2023 and 10/2023 notes next month

Open Forum

- Enrollment update
 - Every grade has a waitlist
 - Current enrollment numbers in a table at the bottom of minutes
- Traffic and Safety Update
 - We got approved for speed bumps around the entire perimeter of the school! To be placed in the spring
 - We have opportunity to do privately funded solutions approved by the city
 - Example: bump-outs created by planters
 - It is the city's responsibility to repaint crosswalks, fix school zone lights
 - We're making a PSA for kids on how to mount & dismount their bikes once they get on the sidewalk to enter school perimeter safely
 - Trouble spots around campus
 - 43rd & Spruce: see Becca's schematic drawing
 - How can we improve family engagement in making traffic (esp pickups/dropoffs in cars) safer?
 - Fliers; emails to families via Room Parents

Principal report

- Goals for the year ahead
 - At least 88.1% of grade 3-8 students will score proficient/advanced on the ELA (English Language Arts) PSSA
 - At least 88.3% of grade 3 students will score proficient/advanced on the ELA PSSA

- At least 82.7% of grade 3-8 students will score proficient/advanced on the Math PSSA
- At least 98% of all students will attend school 90% of days or more
- Students in all grades will have a Fall-Spring Median SGP of 55 according to the Star Reading and Early Literacy assessments
- Attendance: strive for 95% or more days!
 - All absences should be accompanied with a note to your child's teacher within 3 school days
 - Vacations are not excused absences
 - Please do not send your child to school when they are sick
 - [SDP Attendance Policy](#)
- Nurse's Corner
 - Lots of viruses circulating now – COVID cases are on the rise once again
 - If your child is sick, please keep them home
 - We have take-home COVID testing kits in the office, please reach out to coordinate a time to pick one or a few up!
 - We are no longer performing COVID testing in schools
 - If your child tests positive for COVID, please send Nurse Natanya an email ASAP at ngornstein@philasd.org
 - If you have any questions about testing or whether to keep your child home, please let us know! We are happy to answer any questions.
- We are updating the Communications Flowchart. It will be sent in ePony this coming week
- We still want to work on translating the school handbook
 - We have funding for translators who can help with this as well as for Coffee w/Principal and other community events
- School Experience Surveys
 - Thank you to all of the families who filled out the survey. We appreciate you!
 - We had very high response rates – 85% participation
 - Results need to be discussed as a community and here at SAC
 - Lauren is still parsing the survey results
 - Lauren to give Vidya a list of topics and themes from the survey that we can then choose from as a group
 - We will define key topics for SAC for the year based on survey results and other community meetings (Equity Circle, Affinity Dinners)
 - The survey gives us the opportunity to build support structures for our school's very diverse community. How can we achieve this?
 - We had increased scores re: teachers discussing DEI issues in classroom
 - We will continue to work on equity issues with our faculty team throughout the year
 - Parents rate the school higher than kids; kids rate it higher than teachers
 - How can we support teacher retention at PAS? Surveys say morale is low.

- Many activities we did last year came from survey results, such as the Math and Literacy nights last year
 - This year, we will partner with UPenn's [Responsive Math Teaching](#) program to do some events
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
 - Why SEL?
 - Social and emotional learning is a foundation for many of our most pressing priorities: SEL helps young people – and adults – learn and practice skills that set them up for academic success, fulfilling careers, healthy relationships, and responsible civic engagement.
 - The research is clear: Social and emotional learning in schools leads to positive outcomes, including better academic performance, and decreases in stress and anxiety.
 - There's no one-size-fits-all approach: Social and emotional learning brings families, schools, and communities together to make sure every child has caring relationships and what they need to learn, grow, and thrive.
 - SEL at PAS: a safe, brave and joyful space for students to:
 - Explore their own identities and the identities of others
 - Understand and respect differences in others
 - Identify, name, and communicate feelings and emotions
 - Learn and develop a toolkit of self-care strategies
 - Practice giving feedback, resolving conflict, and persisting through problem solving
 - We partner with the Mazzone Center, who will provide Sex Ed to Middle School grades 6-8 (all families will receive a letter about topics and content, as well as the option to opt-out)
 - If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to Ms. Severino at kseverino@philasd.org
 - [SEL at PAS website](#)
 - [SEL at SDP website](#)
 - We cannot offer an opt-out of anything other than Sex Ed. This is supported by the district.
 - We do not currently teach content related to puberty to the lower grades
 - Is there parent interest in having someone teach 5th grade kids about puberty, consent, body care, in the context of health & safety? Something like a "Wellness Committee"?
 - SEL is district-wide, started before the pandemic. The curriculum is developed by the district and PAS partners with CASEL, the lead org that supports SEL training
 - SEL is not based on new research. It is related to the "Whole Child Model" from the 1960s. The ideas behind SEL have been taught for decades at schools with different names

- Coffee with the Principal on 9/28 and concerns about SEL's perceived emphasis on LGBTQIA+ identity
 - Parent concerns are primarily coming from content on the internet, not from events that happen at PAS
 - Discussion between PAS staff and community members extended beyond the meeting, and the conversation is ongoing
- First Affinity Dinner for people of the Global Majority is this week, 10/12. These dinners are part of our theme this year of One School, Many Stories
 - LGBTQIA+ affinity group being launched for LGBTQIA+ parents and parents of LGBTQIA+ kids, first meeting 10/19
- Shima Eid (from Al-Bustan, consults with schools on how to support Arab and Muslim their communities) will be running Arabic affinity group
 - "Chat & Chews" will be forthcoming this year with Arab community

Next SAC Meeting Topic: TBD based on survey analysis

Future dates: 11/13/23; 12/11/23; 1/8/24; 2/12/24; 3/4/24; 4/15/24; 5/13/24

Grade	Current Enrollment (10/10/23)
K	80
1	77
2	72
3	72
4	69
5	60
6	57
7	52
8	44