

School Advisory Committee (SAC) November 2023 Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 13th, 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)

Principal Report

- This year's One School, Many Stories framework continues
 - Families have been involved in presentations to students about Diwali, Rosh Hashanah, Hispanic Heritage Month
 - Equity Circle potluck and Affinity Dinner were well-attended and had positive feedback
 - These has been a request for a Middle School-specific hang space during events (often kids getting childcare are in the lower school)
 - 3rd grade team did a unit on immigration
 - Many families came to classes to share their stories about immigration
- The Israel-Palestine war and our community
 - The war has impacted our community directly; PAS families and staff have lost loved ones.
 - Teachers in the community are interested in doing a teaching about the Israel-Palestine conflict
 - This teaching is likely to be teacher-facing (not student-facing)
 - Marsha Richardson (who is also hosting a discussion on social media for families 11/14) spoke with teachers about how to handle conflict between kids
 - We will take our time and talk about how to best manage these big issues for everyone's safety
- Report card conferences are coming up Monday, 11/27
 - We are offering virtual & in-person
 - Parents can sign up for either block
 - We will offer night conferences during the 2nd report card conference window in late February
- Still focused on attendance!
 - 8th grade high school application deadline has passed – no more school visits that may impact attendance
 - Remember, travel is not an excused absence from school
 - Afternoon pickups: last pickup is at 2:45pm, no later; this is a school policy.
- The middle school recently hosted a panel for soon-to-be school leaders from Penn
 - School leaders interviewed 8th graders on what makes a culture of inclusion – got their input on what makes school a good experience at PAS. 8th graders provided a lot of unprompted positive feedback!

Open Forum

- Review and vote on key topics for the year based on the School Experience Survey (feedback is from from students, parents, and teachers)
 - We only have aggregated data from the survey

- School climate was rated lowest by all groups; however, the definition of “climate” varies between groups
 - There’s still a large number of kids who report that they feel they don’t belong. How do we create more belonging?
 - Teachers report that they don’t have enough support staff, prep time
 - We have added 3 more climate staff since these survey results
 - Grateful for our long-term substitute teacher Ms. Gibson
 - Support needed for ELLs (English Language Learners), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
 - We can do the teacher letter-writing campaign again to boost morale (February/March?)
- School safety/bullying given low score by students
 - Social work has been working directly with specific classes and kids about this as a result
 - There will be a conversation with middle schoolers about bullying and social media
- Instructional environment highly rated by students and parents
- Engagement: how can we get more engagement from families?
 - Can we ask volunteers to directly engage with parents at dropoff/pickup? Handing out fliers?
 - Regular playdates to build community
 - What other simple things can we do to build community?
 - Communication help needed by parents
 - Communications Flowchart to be updated
 - We need more bilingual counselors
 - This position needs better financial support from PhilaSD to retain talent

Traffic & Safety Update

- On 10/17 Nate Hommel (UCD) agreed to meet with Adam Smith (Complete Streets) and the two of them will work on submitting the application for a Pedestrian Plaza.
 - We are waiting to hear back
 - The answer will determine how much money we think we need
 -

SAC still seeking a middle school parent representative for the remainder of the year

- Message to be sent via room parents in addition to ePony, FB etc.

Topic next SAC meeting

- Unifying platform for homework and teacher communication
 - Class Dojo vs Remind vs Google Classroom; all paper vs all online
 - Liz to work with Rochelle on creating form survey for teachers
 - Form survey for parents?

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (May & October 2023)

- Minutes approved

Reminder Next SAC Meetings: 12/11, 1/8, 2/12, 3/4, 4/15, 5/13

Grade	Current Waitlist (11/13/23)
K	5
1	13
2	22
3	30
4	26
5	32
6	14
7	16
8	13

Waitlist numbers are posted monthly in the SAC notes. For questions about enrollment, contact the PAS office at 215-400-7760. Please see the school's statement on enrollment here: <https://pennalexander.philasd.org/enrollment/>