

**Pasadena Unified School District  
District Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes**

Monday, January 11, 2021, 5:30 p.m.  
Held virtually via WebEx

In Attendance:

- Jennifer Higginbotham, Blair DAC Rep. and DAC Chair
- Julie Flad, SSC & DAC Rep., PHS & SMMS, DAC Vice Chair
- Bryant Mathews, Field SSC Chair and DAC Secretary
- Kirsten Jackson, Hamilton, DAC Assistant Secretary
- Bernadette Cole, Blair SSC Chair and DAC Parliamentarian
  
- Kim Kenne, Board Member
- Jennifer Hall Lee, Board Member
- Tina Fredericks, Board Member
  
- Brian McDonald, Superintendent
- Elizabeth Blanco, Chief Academic Officer
- David Rennie, PUSD State & Federal Programs
- Suzanne Berberian, Office of Family & Community Engagement
- Angela Baxter, Principal, Willard
- Lawton Gray, III, Principal, Muir
- Gabriela Moya De Kennedy, translator
  
- Nancy Rose Dufford, PEN
- Laura Diaz Allen, PEN Parent Engagement Director
  
- Maria Chavez de Gonzalez, Washington Elementary DAC Rep.
- Susan Hunter, Norma Coombs SSC Chair
- Warren Bleeker, Sierra Madre Elementary DAC Rep.
- Carol Gerber, SSC staff member from Washington STEAM, Sr. Clerk Typist
  
- Jose Castaneda
- Judy McKinley
- Leigh Gluck
- Marc Karish
- Paul Robak
- Ruthann Aull
- Ashley Nava
- Harmony Cano
- Mayra Zamora
- Scott Harden
- Sean Murray
- Jonathan Gardner

1. **Call to order / Introductions** (5:34)

2. **Reading and Approval of Minutes** (5:36)

*Moved by Warren Bleeker, seconded by Carol Gerber, approved unanimously.*

3. **Kicking Off the New Year: What's ahead for 2021** (5:41)

*Presentation by Dr. Brian McDonald, PUSD Superintendent*

1. Budget/Expenses

- Governor allocated \$2 billion in one-time funds for safe reopening of schools, beginning in February
- Different amount of funds per pupil depending on when schools open.
- If schools choose not to reopen and are not in Purple Tier, then they will get proportionally less than if they had opened by Feb. 15.
- One-time funds for extended learning time and academic interventions (\$1.5 billion). Extended school year and summer school.
- Also expecting some of the ESSA funds, as well as some of the Gov. Emergency Relief funds.
- Anywhere from \$15-19 million total from all of those funds—similar to what we received under CARES act.
- As far as Prop. 98 funds, this year and next, it will be the highest per-pupil amount in our state's history. \$18,000 per pupil including the one-time funds, or \$12,648 without all the extra funds. The latter is a \$2,000 increase over 2019-20.
- Also, governor decided to fund a COLA of 2.31% this year and 1.5% next year, for compounded total increase of 3.84%.
- There is also a set aside to address issues of equity. Funds for professional development for teachers around accelerated learning and re-engaging students. Restorative practices and implicit bias training. Also funds to expand teacher residency program.
- While we are thankful for these additional funds, they are not enough by themselves to enable us to reopen our classrooms.
- We need clearer state standards for response to COVID, developed in coordination with labor. Currently, districts are left to negotiate their own individual agreements, and some districts are having a harder time than others.
- We will have to spend funds on COVID testing and vaccinations. This should instead come from public health funds.

2. School reopening

- We do believe we'll be ready to open by mid-February. It all depends on community spread. The 1<sup>st</sup> of March might be more realistic.
- We'll phase our opening, beginning with TK-2 and other student groups. Then 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, and then to the upper grades.
- Educators are in Tier 1B. We will begin to administer vaccines on Jan. 21. We are approved to dispense, and will do so from the parking lot at Hudson. Will have EMTs at the site.
- Also putting together a plan for surveillance testing. One parent, a professor at Occidental College, is helping us to put that plan in place.

### 3. Student wellness

- So many of our kids are struggling with learning in a remote environment.
- Significantly higher number of students receiving Ds and Fs.
- Principals are helping to formulate a plan, to be presented to the board at the next meeting if possible.
- We have to extend grace to our students, while balancing that with addressing students who are taking advantage of the current situation to not do their work.
- We provide quite a bit of mental health services. Our CWAS Dept. partners with outside agencies.
- We are very proud of how resilient our students have been.
- Teachers and staff have also responded with excellence.
- Other districts have held us up as a model of how to respond to a crisis.

### Questions

- When it comes to outreach to students who are not engaging in school, normally principals and staff would be doing home visits. Is that still part of the protocol? A: We still do the visits, but we do them outside now.
- We look forward to seeing the student wellness plan as site councils.
- Can any portion of the one-time funding go toward extra assistance in the classroom when kids return to the classroom? Particularly for the younger children? A: Yes, that's what the funding the governor set aside is designed to do.
- Will any funding go to the site level? A: Yes, most of the funding should go to the site level.
- Can you provide further information on COVID surveillance testing? A: No, not at this time. Ria Apodaca can come and address this group.
- How is the district supporting high schools to honor our seniors & their families? A: We've been holding off on formalizing plans in hopes of having activities where students are together.
- Will there will be an opportunity for giving feedback on principals' plan before it is implemented? A: Yes, we collect feedback in many different ways.
- What would the process of recruitment of teachers of color look like? A: Teacher residency program has been quite effective. We've also recruited teachers of color from among classified employees in our district. We can look at recruiting from certain colleges, advertising in certain media outlets.
- What will the implicit bias training look like? A: A lot is already going on, but it depends a little on the school. Muir: We're having speakers, readings, and honest, frank conversations. Willard: Powerful Choices. District: We're looking at the curriculum selections, hiring practices, ethnic studies course, etc. We want to give a menu of initiatives to different sites that they can choose from.
- Do the teaching residents go through the BTSA program too once hired or is there something different? A: Yes, they will.
- I have a question about the volume of work students are doing, especially in high school. Over Thanksgiving Break, so many students didn't have a break. They feel like they can't stop working. Has anything been discussed about how to try to alleviate some of this? A: It has been hard for our teachers to figure out how to find this balance. We've talked about what grading scales really mean, what mastery is. A lot of teachers have limited the amount of work that students have to complete. Students don't have other outlets right now, so it is harder for them to self-regulate.

- With regards to retaining diverse staff, has there been much thought given to the fact that much of our qualified and trained staff leaves in the 7-10 year range? A: We also lose teachers of color because our declining enrollment requires us to let go some of the teachers most recently hired each year.
- How do we explain the difference between a private school being able to reopen vs. a public district? A: Private schools can be more nimble because they have fewer rules and restrictions. We are a much larger system, and we have to ensure we have everything in place, and we have to follow the right process. We have to secure the TK-2 waiver. Before we can submit it, we have to come to an agreement with the teachers' union. Private schools around here don't have that hurdle to clear. Some public districts have also hired additional teachers to reopen. We have been bringing back small groups of vulnerable students.

#### **4. Board update (6:41)**

*Kim Kenne, PUSD School Board Member*

- Short meeting on Jan. 14 to plan our retreat, which will be Sat., Jan. 23. Both are open meetings. Main goal for retreat is to set some priorities for 2021.
- Also a meeting on Jan. 21, mainly closed session, talking about negotiations.
- Regular meeting on Jan. 28. Presentation from Dr. Barnes on where we are with Measure O.
- Modifications to senior defense and community service. Board tabled on Dec. 10. Board spoke about making senior defense optional. Not sure how well that was communicated to staff, parents, and students. Blanco: People who support the students are aware of the Board conversation. Once the action is voted on, we will send a formal communication to students. McDonald: Actually, we will move forward and communicate this Board consensus to families. Blanco: Senior Defense is optional with accommodations there are students in the process that want to defend. We are also sensitive to not taking another activity away from students.
- Safety Committee meeting and Policy Committee meeting this Wednesday.
- Budget Transparency Task Force and Facilities Task Force (looking at excess and surplus properties). Probably not meeting this month.
- Site councils need to have any easy way to see what is in their budget. Also need a budget monitoring tool for site councils to view once a month.
- State is looking at making Supplemental & Concentration spending and carryover more transparent, so that it must retain its identity from year to year. Waiting for the details in governor's budget.

#### **5. Chairperson's Report (6:55)**

- Reminders to SSCs:
  - Be sure to spend any carry-over funds from prior years and fully allocate your current year funds
  - Review any available student achievement and attendance data
  - Analyze the implementation and effectiveness of your school's current school plan

#### **6. Member Comment/Public Comment (6:58)**

#### **7. Meeting Adjourned (6:58)**

*Moved by Kirsten Jackson, seconded by Bernadette Cole, unanimously approved.*