

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)

Key Communications

May 13, 2021

Each school has two representatives on this committee.
Samantha Dang and Elizabeth Walther are co-chairs.

- We are here to learn, have discussions and give input to the superintendent. Please take information back to each of your schools to share.
- Please work with your principal to arrange for a parent substitute to attend PACS if you are unable to attend.

Opening Question

- Co-chairs Samantha Dang and Elizabeth Walther welcomed the group and asked members to participate in an icebreaker activity.

Superintendent's updates, Q&A

- We recently received a grant to support developing our early learning center at the new District Office we are designing on Barkley Boulevard. This is great news to help meet a demand for child care in our community and nice recognition of our grant writers and their important work.
- The state legislature finished its session and finalized the state budget, and we are still waiting to hear what state funding for PreK-12 looks like for next year. Many school districts lost revenue during the pandemic due to loss of enrollment and transportation funds. The good news is that the state economy is rebounding, and the federal government has offered stimulus funds to help maintain staff and prevent cuts.
- Our district, staff and a member of our board received national attention last week after a web post went viral about the book, I Am Jazz about a transgender girl. We [posted a message](#) that was used in response to media and others.
- Other updates:
 - o Bellingham, Squaticum, Sehome and Options high schools' graduation events are happening at Civic Field on June 12.
 - o 12-year-olds and up are now eligible to receive vaccines. The state is not requiring vaccinations for staff or students, but rules may change.
 - o While no one can predict what Sept. 1 looks like, we hope school next year looks similar to a pre-pandemic schedule with school happening in-person five days per week. We will continue to refine our remote options for students.

Mental Health Awareness Month

May is mental health awareness month and staff shared a variety of supports and kinds of outreach offered in our schools for students regarding mental health.

Presenters included the district's new mental health coordinator Chris Cochran, prevention and intervention specialist at Sehome High School Meghan Lever and student Izzy Jones, who told the group about peer-centered outreach.

While access to mental health therapists is a challenge, this [resource](#) may be helpful. You can filter by insurance, age and focus if you are looking to access help.

Feedback: Silver Linings

PACS members were invited to participate in breakout room conversations about silver linings. Staff are going to process the feedback we receive as we plan for next year. Here were the questions:

- What are some silver linings or positive outcomes for your child or family this year?
- What surprised you about how things went this year for your child or your family?
- Anything else you would like staff and leaders to know?

Here are a few of the comments and reflections shared.

- Some students did well online. How do we continue to offer Zoom school to those who thrive in a remote environment?
- There was a rich focus on staff connecting with parents. How can we keep that strong connection and stay proactive?
- Appreciation for the food services team and how they helped feed our community during a challenging time.
- Desire to have students back in school full-time.
- Challenges and surprises about balancing screen time. Kids sometimes use school as an excuse to get more time on devices.
- Celebrating small class sizes.
- Recognizing how staff were so flexible and understanding.
- Appreciation for things slowing down and being able to really reassess priorities for kids and families.

Announcements

The new Parkview Elementary School is looking awesome and is set to open Aug. 2021.

PACS members expressed appreciation to our co-chairs, Samantha Dang and Elizabeth Walther and longtime PACS member Grace Munson whose child is graduating this year.

This is the last meeting of the school year. PACS will meet again in the 2021-22 school year.