

Parent Advisory Committee

Virtual Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2020

Members in Attendance:

Janet Aguilar -- Adams
Haley Rivera-Gonzalez -- Alpha
Tom Chagoya, Alpha Principal
Michelle Villacis -- Berenda
Carry Gassett, Desmond Principal
Melody Mouton -- Dixieland
Leanna Prim -- Eastin-Arcola
Hilda Castrellon -- Furman Principal
Kim Gomes -- Howard
Jeff Dailey -- Howard Principal
Diana Flores - MSHS
Minerva Mendoza -- Madison
Mercedes Ochoa -- Madison Principal
Mandy Garcia -- Millview
Erik Lowry, Millview Principal
Ines Salazar Hinostrozo -- Monroe
Doug Alton -- Pershing
Sarah Machado -- Lincoln
Elizabeth Yost -- Lincoln
Ana Carrillo -- Sierra Vista Principal

Non-voting Members in Attendance:

Joetta Fleak, Board Trustee
Lucy Salazar, Board Trustee
Babatunde Ilori, Executive Director

Others in attendance:

Sheryl Sisil, Assistant Superintendent
Alyson Rocco, MTEC Principal
Leticia Cervantes -- Washington Attendance Sec
Cynthia Moreno -- Parkwood Admin Asst
Estrella Cortez, Administrative Assistant
Angelica Garcia, District Translator

1. Call to Order

- a. Melody Mouton called the PAC meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call – Introduction

- a. Minerva Mendoza took roll call. 15 voting PAC members were present at the time of roll call and a quorum was established.

3. Adoption of Agenda

- a. Diana Flores made the first motion to adopt the agenda, Haley Rivera-Gonzalez made the second motion. Motion passed.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Haley Rivera-Gonzales made a motion to approve the October 4, 2020, minutes. Diana Flores made the second motion. Motion passed.

5. Opportunity for public input

- a. No public comment.

6. Hybrid Learning Presentation and Feedback

- a. Doug (Pershing elementary)- To clarify, even in the best-case scenario only K-6 would go to school if we file for a waiver and the waiver is approved?

- i. Sheryl- As of right now, we are in purple and until it moves to red there is no middle school and high school, they cannot open. At-risk student groups and small groups of 14 students can come to any and all of our schools. When the county moves us to red and we can reopen middle and high school then all students will have an opportunity to have an in-person instruction. In elementary, the waiver would allow us to bring back all of our students sooner because we can do that in purple. The high-performing students in middle school and high school will be allowed to come back when the county puts us into the red category and we are able to stay there that is when schools can open. The small cohorts that are coming in schools are still closed. We are allowed to bring those schools in and the state said your most at-risk student populations are allowed to come on campus during school hours in small groups.
- ii. Doug- Provided we stay in the purple then my statement would be correct?
Sheryl- Your statement would be correct.
- iii. Doug- So is there a plan if we move to red? Will they go full-time in person or part-time?
- iv. Sheryl- That is what we are working on right now. So, you brought on the current schedule which is two days on campus and three days not. There are other options. In elementary school, many around us are offering AM/PM cohorts. Now there are pluses and minuses to that. The plus is that teachers and kids would be in person every day. The negative is that we are in a community where our parents often are working and we are not going to be able to provide after school program support. Kids will be expected to be on campus in the morning and then they will have to be picked up and taken back home. We would then sanitize for the next group of kids to come in and they get their instruction in the afternoon then they go home. In that model, kids get more time in person with teachers but it becomes a little bit trickier oftentimes for families to navigate the pickup and drop off especially if they have multiple kids. Within the schools, we would put kids on the same track if you will.
- v. Doug- Do you happen to know if the vaccines become available would we move into the red more quickly, do you know any information at all?
 - 1. Sheryl- I would only be giving my own personal take on it so I am not comfortable sharing. I do know a vaccine and the ability to test definitely increases our chances of getting kids and teachers back on campus in a model that looks more like we are all familiar with. I feel safe to say that but I do not know enough about a vaccine and when that would be available to be able to make a prediction on that.
- b. Diana Flores- With hybrid mode, would teachers be teaching the same lesson twice? It would be one for Monday and one for Tuesday. Now would this slow their learning and grade readiness?
 - i. Sheryl- I would wager to say that all of this is slowing down our students' ability to continue to attain grade-level mastery but what you are saying is that because they would only be getting in person two days a week conceptually if we stay with the AM/PM model. It would mean that students would be left to independent learning more than they would be learning with their teacher and I think we can all see where there will be some concerns about that. From an educational services perspective, we would advocate in elementary school and I hope it's okay to share with you because I would share with you as my role. If my kids were going to be in elementary school, what I would advocate for as a parent but

from an educational standpoint, I believe that if our community can support in elementary an AM/PM model that would be what Ed services would advocate for because in that model we would already have our kids with our teachers in face-to-face instruction for say two and a half hours four and maybe even five days of the weeks and all of this is negotiable with the union. We have the obligation to collaborate with them and have been really good partners so I do not want you to hear that as a negative at all. They have to come on board and work closely with us. I can tell you and I do not know how many others can provide feedback but I have a first-grade daughter right now who is going to school for two and a half hours a day every day. She is in an AM cohort and I hear a lot of skepticism that is not even going to be real school, they are not getting recess, they don't get to interact, get lunch and that is true they don't have recess in the playground like they used to before. I can tell you that for my six year old it has changed everything about her and I feel like I have an obligation to tell you about my personal story because some people can say two hours and a half is not enough time, Sheryl, and is not worth my time but from my perspective with my own child and watching her teacher two and a half hours is helping and my daughter wakes up every morning excited to go to school and just to talk to her friends even if is just ten of them. There are still some of those social and emotional needs being met even though it is a much shorter period of time.

- ii. Doug- What makes your child so special? My child has not been offered such a program?
 - iii. Sheryl- Because my child goes to Golden Valley Unified not Madera Unified. So, Golden Valley Unified district has their waiver approved and this is the third week of instruction and in-person instruction. This has been good for me because I have been able to observe it and actually have some real-life experience to share. AM/PM was not a model that I was even leaning toward because I kept thinking what am I going to do in two and a half hours. I just want you to know that as a parent who has a child in that model right now it is working. Obviously, there are parents that have to be available to pick up the kids. Kids cannot be left on campus and there are no afterschool programs and that part is very structured.
- c. Sarah Machado- I think that the majority of people who know me well know that I think kids should be back in the classroom. I think that the district's hands are tied because of state rules and I think that teachers are being protected by their unions. I think that they need to get in there and teach. I know you can only do so much and are doing whatever it takes. I am a mom and an aunt who has a nephew with special needs, he is autistic. He is flourishing because my sister is on him like white on rice but in the everyday interactions with other people, he is suffering and that is an understatement. He needs interaction. Yes, he does Zoom but he loves the TV, he loves computers already and what he needs is one-on-one interaction. If I can beg, it is for the teachers and I get there is fear and everyone is entitled to their opinion but being a teacher is essential and if being a McDonald's employee is essential then being a teacher is essential too and they need to understand that and step up.
- d. Alyson Rocoo- Just to advocate for teachers many of them want kids in classrooms. They want the kids physically there so I know that sometimes all that parents see or hear is the negative press that is on social media or being shared because that tends to be passed along but there are tons of teachers in our district that can't wait for kids to come back and the sight of a child lights up their days so just know we do have teachers who

- really are spending a lot of hours and that they are providing the best curriculum online and can't wait to have kids in person and the second we give them the green light with state, local and county guidance they are ready and excited for it.
- e. Sarah- I agree with it. I know that there are strong teachers who are wanting to come back. I just believe we have a few squeaky wheels that are preventing us along with state guidelines; you can only do so much.
 - f. Doug- What is the current fail rate under the existing system?
 - i. Sheryl- Are you asking about today how many kids are failing classes in distance learning?
 - ii. Dough Alton- Affirmative.
 - iii. Sheryl- Too many. We are addressing it. Our principals know and each can tell you that we have analyzed the data and we know that there is an issue. My department is bringing forward to the board some information to look at a grading policy but, Mr. Alton, this is not the ideal way to learn and the district knows that. No one will stand in front of any of you that this is best for kids. The failure rate is a huge concern and I know that many of you don't know me but I can tell you that this is a conversation at the forefront of what we are doing. As district leaders and site leaders, we can continue to provide guidance and set parameters but the Education Code says teachers are in control of their gradebooks
 - iv. Doug- I heard numbers upwards of 50% and I am not blaming the teachers because I think teachers are working harder than before.
 - v. Babatunde- More than 50% with more than two D's and F's. Pre-COVID this was 35% so this is a significant increase.
 - g. Beth- My little boy is 4 years old, he is in a special daycare program at Sierra Vista. He is in the most restrictive environment and I am wondering how do we classify him as the most at-risk students? Why are those in the most restricted environment not back in school? In his class, he is only there for a couple of hours. His preexisting class was already lined up, how are these little guys not classified as most at risk?
 - i. Sheryl- Started a cohort of special needs and the director of special services Becky M., I believe identified the first group to come back and if that goes well then obviously our special education students are a priority for bringing those kids back on campus. So, we have a group of foster and homeless groups of students right now, students being served at Millview that we are bringing in, and then there is a group of special education at Nishimoto that are being served right now. The part that is challenging for all parents to hear is that This is not school that they are coming back to because the school is not open. Our teachers that would normally be teaching these students are providing their instruction in distance learning. When these at-risk groups are being allowed to come back to campus, it's not a guarantee it looks like school for those kids and it is an important comparison to see. Schools are still closed and when we are bringing those small groups on they are not going to a classroom with teachers; they are going to a centralized location with two adults who can support them. One of your questions was how are the students that we are bringing back chosen, right?
 - ii. Beth- Kids that are in the most restrictive environment, right? His class was only there for a few hours a day and I am having a hard time reconciling that children are the primary vector of this condition and when I call special services to talk to Becky or Flora I do not get phone calls back so I am trying to figure out how to best advocate for him. When you are three and Zoom doesn't work, when you are four and Zoom doesn't work, and when you are a nonverbal autistic and Zoom doesn't work, so as a special ed parent, this is a challenge.

- iii. Sheryl- So again, the way at-risk was set up, it was not set up where it would be in a classroom with a teacher. I am not going to disagree with you that your child would not fall in at most at-risk group. The groups that were identified and brought back are being brought back based on their number of D's and F's. Unfortunately, we have a number of kids who are receiving D's and F's in every single class as of the first-quarter mark, and because again they are not getting additional teaching time, they are coming in and they are going like for the program in Millview, they are going into the cafeteria and there is two adults in there who's job is to make sure they log on and have internet access. What you are advocating for is your children in your program that your son is in, their needs would not be meet from what I just explained to you. To bring those groups back there needs to be different planning in place and I wish I can give you all details of what is happening at our one cohort that is going to be starting at Nishimoto. It is starting next week because of what you shared with me I will get some information and get back to you.
- iv. Beth- That would be awesome because like I said I spoke to lovely ladies and they said to leave messages but I never got an email or call back so I am not even sure how to advocate for the child. My next question is in the community the parents who are listening to the hold up of an application for a waiver are related to a challenge from the union, is that correct?
- h. Beth- Union is opposed to the opening?
- i. Sheryl- That is actually not 100%, what is correct is that the union will have to agree to conditions that will be asked for when applying for waivers. So at this point, our superintendent has to get permission from the Board of Trustees to complete the waiver which I believe he has started working on that. Once the waiver is completed then take it to the union leadership and then I believe there is a membership vote, ratified and approved then we can submit it. At this point, I can fairly say we haven't completed the waiver yet. I am not for making something that is not and in this case, it is not fair to say the union has been a roadblock because we have not asked them or provided them with a waiver yet.
- j. Beth- When we independent parents speak to different trustees the answer is that it is MUTA that has prevented even the application of waiver. So, from your perspective what is the holdup of the application for the waiver?
- k. Rocco- Isn't it because we have not been in the healthy zone for two consecutive weeks when we can then apply for a waiver? Doesn't that have to happen first?
- l. Sheryl- The Waiver you applied for when not in the Red. If you get in red for two consecutive weeks you can reopen without a waiver. If you are red you can open schools and when in purple there is a waiver. At this point, what has been holding back the Superintendent from moving forward with the waiver and like I said I believe we are going to be applying very soon. It is the intent for us to complete the waiver soon but Madera County as a whole has multiple districts and to Mr. Alton's point, yes, every other district in Madera County that has applied for a waiver has been granted. What I can tell you that coming from the Health Department which the superintendent meets with the health department on a weekly basis 81% of COVID positive cases are coming within the city limits of Madera which is most of where Madera Unified is. So, I believe it will be approved but our plan will be scrutinized probably a little more heavily than Raymond Knowles. It has been stated and we talked about it internally and 81% of cases, and I am not trying to get into statistical bound because this then becomes a whole lot of other conversations, I know that 81% of whatever the cases are is not even a relevant number that is not my call to make I am sharing with you what has been

- shared with us. What we know is that the Health Department has concerns about the Madera School district that are different from Reymond-Knowles or even Golden Valley and Chowchilla because 81% of their positive cases are coming within city limits of Madera which is where we serve the majority of our families.
- m. Beth- For the waiver have you looked at other smaller counties that are probably more economically, and based on populations, harshly affected by COVID-19 like the small private schools like Emanuel looked at their opening plan to plan your opening waiver?
 - n. Sheryl- Our reopening plan has been regarded by the CA Department of Education as one of the best in the State of CA. I actually sit on an advisory committee for how to reopen schools.
 - o. Beth- That is wonderful, so how and who do we push for this waiver? Madera county is so small that we get ten people who test positive and we will still be on purple.
 - p. Babatunde- Can I share something real quick Sheryl? I think you are in the right spot, in the Parent Advisory Committee, because that is exactly what we want feedback because that's exactly what one of the things we do just like in the last meeting we theme the feedback and we have two Trustees here on this group as well. Sheryl's point that she made, it is true, 81% of the cases that are positive are within Madera city limits so that is a factor of scrutiny but with regards to that, I think that this feedback will help us move forward with reviewing the feedback from you as PAC members especially if more pack members are wanting to move forward in that direction that would be something that we take into account. It is tough because distance learning has been extremely challenging and the waiver does allow our kinder to 6 grade to come to school physically which is more optimal learning for our kids. This is great feedback and you are in the right spot sharing this feedback.
 - q. Anna Carrillo- Are you William Joyce's mom? I had no idea that you were trying to reach special ed but I am the school principal and you go directly to me and I will call you in the morning and I will speak to you and we can go over any concerns. As a mother of three autistic children, I sympathize with you and that program is one of the best.
 - r. Beth- No concern with the program.
 - s. Anna Carrillo- I know we have great teachers but any other questions I can reach out to you in the morning.
 - t. Sheryl- I am 99% sure we will be getting the waiver process very soon.
 - u. Michelle Villacis- With the waiver not necessarily waiting to move red, not have to apply there is a chance to apply right now because of purple.
 - v. Sheryl- The color is not relevant; it actually is what allows schools to be open in Madera County when we are not in red because they apply for a waiver and it was granted.
 - w. Michelle- I was confused. I thought we were waiting to go to red to open but that is not necessarily correct. There is a chance we may be able to open when in purple with a waiver if approved.
 - x. Sheryl- You are correct in saying for red allows us to open and when our county is in red we reopen and there is no waiver. Schools open and teachers come back to work, there is no waiver. Once you open in the red and Madera county moves into purple you can stay open.
 - y. Doug- Aren't we still waiting on negotiations with the union even if we are approved?
 - z. Sheryl- No, if you are red.
 - aa. Jeffrey Daily (Howard)- How will it work for Howard being a K-8 school? If we get the waiver approved, would 7 & 8th graders be allowed to come to campus?
 - bb. Sheryl- You are still considered an elementary school code. You are self-contained and can come back.

- cc. Cynthia Moreno- What about continuations that have lower populations than regular high schools? Those kids are already at risk. Because they are already at risk they are not doing well with distance learning, what about them? What chances do they have? What opportunities do they have?
- dd. Sheryl- They can be brought back in those at-risk cohorts but we are not going to be allowed to say that those schools are allowed to open until the county is in red or yellow or orange.
- ee. Cynthia Moreno- My concern is for those kids. Elementary kids, this is the time for their learning but they have many years still ahead and play catch up but for high school kids that are 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade time has run out.
- ff. Sheryl- I wish I had an answer Cynthia that would make everything sound better but it is out of our control. We will not be able to open any middle/high school age setting until our county is in a color of red even less restrictive. What can happen and will happen is bringing those students in small groups to be at least on campus and hopefully get additional support there.
- gg. Leanna- Sheryl, you shared your daughter has been back three weeks to Golden Valley, any outbreaks?
- i. Sheryl- No, to give you perspective the elementary school my daughter goes to has right under 200 kids. They staggered so the first week was just TK, K, and 1st then the second week added 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and this week they added 5th and 6th. There are approximately 320 kids in that school normally and 70 opted not to come back so 250 and 125 kids in each session. To my knowledge no major concern. I had one myself but it was my kid but it was fine. Nothing that we have been made aware of at this point. Parents are not allowed on campus, parents are not allowed out of cars. There are three drop-off locations and pick them up, temperatures are taken in the car, kids wear masks, there is no recess they go straight to class and you are there to pick up. They are limiting adult access to campus and it has been very positive.
 - ii. Leanna- Should we call the board members?
 - iii. Sheryl- I do not know about calling but it is standard to send an email to let your board member know that you would like to see happen.
 - iv. Leanna- It really is discouraging that junior and high cannot go back yet. I have a junior and a sophomore and you just see their ears leaving, you know what I mean.
 - v. Sheryl- I have a middle school sophomore just like you and it is difficult. I am a mom and I am doing this job and the balance is difficult. I too want my kids back.
 - vi. Leanna- I said all along I will sign a waiver. Kids just are missing out.
 - vii. Sheryl- Thank you very much for staying here tonight and sharing your perspective with us. Those of you who know me know I am who I am, unapologetic me sometimes is not the best me. I will be honest as I can with each and everyone one of you and 100% am happy you have taken the time to be here. Feel free to communicate through Melody or Babatunde and his office because if you did not get to say what is on your mind tonight. We do want to hear your thoughts. We get better every time we hear more perspective. Thank you to all parents and administrators for being here tonight.
 - viii. Melody- Thank you, this is a very delicate subject. We are all in the same boat just in different tunnel depending on where you stand as a parent, employee or administrator.
 - ix. Ines Salazar- Of the three options for learning will one be chosen?

1. Sheryl- One model in person available for elementary, middle and high school whenever school opens. Parents will have the option of in-person learning or independent learning and hopefully distance learning and that's depending on the board.

7. PAC Member Updates

- a. Thomas Chagoya (Alpha)- Shared that they have been working on motivating the families, kids and teachers to be online, be their best and be active. They would like to continue this throughout the year.
- b. Kimberley Gomez (Howard)- There was a Halloween parade and handed candy to the kids.
- c. Jeffrey Dailey (Howard)- Enjoyed seeing the families and this activity has been the highlight of the year. Appreciations to all the families who put the kids in customs.
- d. Carry Gassett (Desmond)- Have been working on positive rewards. Are having Livestream drawings for prizes such as sweaters and goody bags. They are trying to acknowledge students in different ways during this time.
- e. Ana Carillo (Sierra Vista)- Getting ready for an awards assembly. Kids will be able to pick up certificates and prizes for perfect attendance, Ram of the week, Language Arts Math and most improved. Students have a closer connection to staff because they can write directly to them.
- f. Hida Catrellon (Furman High School)- Next week will be bringing a small cohort of students who need support. Students targeted are those in Special Ed., and those needing support in Math and English. The students will have paraprofessionals and Special Ed teachers to support them. This is good because it is giving staff an idea on how things may look in the future.
- g. Alyson Rocco (Madera Technical Exploration Center)- Have done a showcase to show the work that students have done during the first quarter. Will share more of the work on social media and they have displayed work on the hallways as well overall trying to find ways of celebrating their work. We'll be doing the first distribution of the year and teachers are eager to see students.
- h. Eric Lawry (Millview)- Celebrated Red Ribbon last week by having a reverse car caravan and handed out prizes. They had over 200 cars participating! Also, have a learning hub of 14 students on campus and next week they are expecting another 14. Excited to have kids on campus!

8. Announcements

- a. Next PAC meeting - December 16, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.
- b. Discuss Future Agenda Items
 - i. Cynthia Moreno- Would like to address at our next meeting for students who are not homeless or ELD but are not on Zoom and about students who are A & B students but now have C's in one other subject and they have not looked at being at risk.

9. Adjournment

- a. The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.