



PUTNAM AVE. UPPER SCHOOL

School Council Meeting, May 15, 2024

Meeting Time: 5:30 - 7:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

School Council members: Betsy Vizcaino, Jodi Ekelchik, Jennifer Elisa Betancourt, Nekeya Dancy.

Admin. & Staff: Dr. Phanenca Babio-James, Annabelle Tarek, Kunjal Shah, Danielle Rivers, Marianne Bees, Liam Doherty, Michelle Calioro.

School community members in attendance: 4

AGENDA:

5:30-5:45 - Welcome, Introduction and Reflection

5:45 - 6:10 - Approval of prior Minutes, Team and PAFA Updates

6:10 - 6:50 - Q&A and Discussion

6:50 - 7:00 - Updates and Reminders

Link to the Presentation shared during the meeting:

[May 15 School Council Presentation](#)

MEETING SUMMARY, QUESTIONS & NEXT STEPS

Topics discussed are referenced in the presentation attached above.

1. Welcome and Reflection:

Dr Babio-James welcomed all attendees. And folks reflected on how they could practice accountability towards the school council, and it's mission of student enrichment & caregiver engagement.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The School Council was asked to approve the meeting minutes from the April 24 School Council meeting ([link](#)). It was noted that the minutes were shared with the Council, and have been shared on School Council Website and additionally shared by email with the PAUS Community (on May 14). It was noted that the minutes and Slide deck need to be added to the [PAUS School Council website](#), and this was flagged. Since there were no further updates, the minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Team Updates:

- **Summary by grade level is provided in the Slide Deck.** It was noted that during the 8th grade Social Justice Presentations that the recommended organizations are fully funded, and additional donations to organizations are welcome by sending cash to Advisory classrooms till the end of May. Other

updates included the Spanish Market, Bicycling, Rollerblading in P.E., mock posters in theatre, small bird/creature making in art and more!

- **Family Engagement:** Activities over the past few weeks included a Magazine Beach clean up, and a Financial Literacy Workshop. The Spring Concert is on May 22 at 6pm at school, and a Youth Mental Health Workshop is planned for caregivers on May 29, via Zoom, 5:30-7:30pm. The Teacher Appreciation luncheon went great, three more tables were added to accommodate all of the yummy food!
- **School Updates:** Flagway Tournament will be held at CRLS Field House from 1:30-4:30 on Saturday, May 18. Find other updates on the summary page of the Slide Deck. Listening conferences are coming up May 31 - June 17. June 11 is a Welcome/Transition to 6th grade event for current 5th graders, and the School would welcome representation by PAFA and the School Council (Council + PAFA to consider option to have a one page handout/summary)
- **PAFAPutnam Ave Family Association: Save the Date for the School Dance Parent/Caregiver get together on Friday June 7.** A school parent/caregiver event is planned at CCC (Cambridge Community Center) around the corner from PAUS, for the same date/time as the School Dance. Details forthcoming.

4. Q&A based on questions raised from School Council:

The School Council submitted questions to PAUS Leadership in March 2024, and tonight's discussion focused on follow-up to these questions.

A) Calendar and Timelines:

- **A question was raised about adding the Council dates to the Council website early in the school year.** This was noted, and consideration will be given to revise the [Council website](#) with these dates.
- **A question was asked about School Council elections, and where we are with the process and the one seat that is available?** It was noted that this will be communicated shortly across the school. The timeline for implementation will happen in the near term, especially for 6th grade representation.
Update: Council Members are elected and agree to serve for 2 years and current council members are committed to serve the full term, hence elections do not need to be held.
- **A question was raised about how to engage middle school students on the Council, and the importance of having their voice represented.** How can we engage more student voices, and be a model for the District and the opportunities for learning around governance, especially in the 2024-2025 school year? *Update: According to the School Council Handbook, Council Membership requirement is for two Student Representatives (at the secondary level).* An idea was discussed that Student Govt. updates will be added regularly to share student voices, activities and initiatives in the upcoming school year. Ms Rivers (Student Govt. Teacher) shared more about the framework around Student Government, and how we might be able to tap into these structures and

engage student leaders more.

B) School Improvement Plan:

- It was noted that the SIP spans across 3 years, and they are working to reference online (in process).
- It was noted that Dr. Babio-James will be reviewing the SIP budget in the Autumn, and will present it to the School Council in advance of the school budget season begins.
- It was also noted that if the budget is not used by the end of the year, the funds are returned to the District. The goal is to use funds by the end of the school year.

C) Family Engagement:

- It was noted that typically, the school has at least 15 events planned during the year.
- A question was raised about how we can expand communication to parents/caregivers, in different manners? Ideas to explore equitable ways to send reminders for events to come were discussed and will be built upon for the upcoming school year.
- **It was noted that the pilot caregiver-mentorship program offered by PAFA is a great way to engage with parents/caregivers.** And that it should expand past 6th grade/new families to be offered to all grade levels.
- A request was made to share analytics around communication via ParentSquare and PAUS Email? **It was shared based on parent square analytics that well over 90% of the school community receives communication regularly.** More discussions were held to understand and leverage the data to enhance communication practices.
- While there was general consensus shared about the benefits of having the PAFA-hosted speakers the question was raised about next steps to ensure sustainability of this model?
- **An additional question was asked to consider hosting a technology workshop? School has recognized this gap and** will implement it during the incoming 6th grade families' Transition/Welcome Event in June, and another workshop for all families on how to navigate school technology workshop early in the new school year.
- **A question was asked to consider alternative School Council Meeting times,** zoom vs. in-person, for meetings next year, and discussion followed. The June School Council meeting will focus on meeting structures for the new school year.
- **How can we build a sense of belonging, feel a sense of attachment to the school?** It was discussed that we need to think strategically around meeting timing, and locations. Further discussion and brainstorming to continue.

D) Behavior Management:

- **The slide deck provides an update describing “aggressive behavior” vs. developmentally appropriate behavior, and the use of practices,** such as Restorative Circles and Peer Mediation. Discussion continued about how this is addressed during the school day, and how this is addressed within the classroom.
- **A question was asked if anything is being done in health class, i.e., offer students tools to solve disagreements in a different way?** Discussion followed around social and emotional learning (SEL), and that this suggestion would be taken to the Health teacher by School leadership.
- **A question was asked if the School has shared student climate data survey results with students?** How can we engage the students to improve our school climate, and offer them an opportunity to help improve our school? It was proposed that the school consider sharing student school climate data with students and via focus group next year.

5. Expanded School Day, SY24-25:

An update was provided on the new School year in 2024 - 2025 and expanded school day, as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8:45 AM - 3:15 PM

Wednesday: 8:45 AM - 2:55 PM

There will no be early release days. There are 4 days during the school year that this will differ (half days), and will be reflected on the calendar. Further information will be shared in advance of the New School year (by August), also refer to the Slide deck.

CPS District Calendar for SY 24-25 available [here](#)

6. Next School Council meeting:

June 12, 2024, 5:30-7pm

For the next meeting, we will be reflecting on the current year, plan for new school year and briefly cover topics that were not covered this evening due to lack of time. These include Technology Management and Teacher/Staff Attendance.

7. Meeting ended at 7:05pm

GENERAL REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- Putnam Ave. Website about the School Council: [link here](#) (meeting agenda and notes posted here)