

18 NOVEMBER 2020 / 7:30-8:45 PM / ZOOM

Meeting led by: Brandy Rucker-Chair, Sheina Curtis - Co-Chair

Attendees

Brandy Rucker, Sheina Curtis, Bob Curtis, Cassandra Seebaum, Cheryl Koskela, Honora Russell, Rosemary Georgeson, Leslie Wood, Rebecca Haralabatos, Lauren Ohlsen, Jillian Horton, Jen Fialk

Meeting

7:35-Welcome and Intros (who are you, your child/ren and how would you describe your day today in terms of another profession?)

7:40 -Parent Council Yesterday, Today and the Future (Sheina)

Brief history of Parent Council (PC): Historically, PC was very involved in governance and was active in many aspects of the school. In recent history, PC became more focused on all-school fundraising and community-building events. Over the years, the charter reflected a diminished role in governance and increased focus on fundraisers.

Over the last couple of years, parents have formed groups and these groups need a 'home' within the structure of SunRidge. Also, parents have expressed concern over the lack of parent voice in the school's governance.

We reviewed the Parent Council's roles and responsibilities as written in the 2012 and 2017 Charters. We propose that this year should be focused on reimagining and reorganizing PC to focus on gathering and communicating parent voices, creating a home for parent-led groups as well as retaining a focus on fundraising for class field trip funds.

PC is inviting parents to be part of this reorganizational process, as well as identify their own areas of interest and identify how they may become more active in creating a parent community that supports all families.

To begin the gathering of parent voices, we are proposing to hold regular Parent Voices Forums (the first is on 12/2/2020) and to create a Survey to better understand families' experience during Distance Learning. Parent Council will also create a survey that helps identify areas of interest for parents who want to be more involved in the school.

PARENT COUNCIL 2.0 COULD INCLUDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Field Trip Fundraising: PC is the organizer of the all-school festival fundraisers (Falling Leaves, Spring Fling, Hello Summer) plus Dine and Donates, etc. Proceeds are shared per capita across the grades for their 8th grade field trip funds. Parents in this area are able to organize, delegate and

have event planning skills or are good at supporting others. In the past school year, one parent planned the Dine and Donates for the year.

Freedom, Equity and Anti-Racism Team (FEAT): This group has been meeting for years. Honora introduced why she started the group and some of their goals and concerns. Accomplishments of FEAT include culling books from library that portray stereotypes of people groups; setting up a small resource library for parents in the office; regular meetings with notices in the school newsletter; supporting teachers in expanding perspectives and voices and diverse representation in historically Euro-centric curriculum; upcoming book club.

Gather and Communicate Parent Concerns: In 2012, one of the Parent Council's roles was to: "Act as a communication channel between parents and the administration; parents and faculty; and parents and the Charter Council." PC has scheduled a **Parent Voices Forum** for 12/2/20 at 7:30 for parents and caregivers in the community to share their distance learning experiences and concerns, as well as simply network and connect with others. Concerns will be brought to the following week's Charter Council meeting so that there is an avenue of communication between parents and the school. We do not yet know the process for receiving feedback from Charter Council and the administration.

PC is also interested in creating a **parent survey** with questions that are important to our community. We would like to know if these questions would be incorporated into a school survey (if one is already being prepared) or if we should send the survey out on our own.

Parent Education: In 2012, the PC's roles included: "Be a forum for learning about the school's educational program" and "Discussing matters of interest or concern to parents." PC may be able to include a future home for the Parent Ed program, with parents offering ideas for topics of high interest and relevance to current learning situations and needs. One parent has been organizing parent education events with Kalen in years past without an avenue for collecting topic ideas from a wide variety of parents, and sees a possibility for including the Parent Ed program in PC.

Support in Conflict Resolution Meetings: In the Parent Handbook, it says that during a conciliation process, involved parties may choose to request someone other than the Director to assist with conciliation. This could be an area of interest to parents who are skilled in conflict resolution and/or parents who are passionate about supporting others in difficult conversations.

Community Building: How do we build community between students? Within the parents/caregivers community? In the past, we've had festivals and special school events and the Family Dance and even just chats in the halls and parking lots. A special adult-only gala was planned for May of 2020 and canceled due to Covid-19. The Parent Voices Forums could have a special networking time for people to chat in breakout rooms according to grade or interests or support needs, etc.

Community Care: When a family or families experience hardship or tragedy, can there be a group who organizes care?

7:55 -What brought you to this meeting? Which areas of PC are of interest to you? Is there a need at our school that you're interested in meeting? (Brandy)

Parent Responses: Areas of interest and/or school needs include:

- SunRidge needs a home for important parent discussions, and there needs to be a path for those topics to reach teachers, administration and Charter Council. Currently, there is little feedback solicited of parents by the school. How do we share parent voice and concerns with other stakeholders in our school community? Will parent voice be valued?
- SunRidge needs to seek to better understand the needs of parents and children in Distance Learning; are the needs of the most vulnerable students being met? What issues are parents and students having?
- Frustration with the THUSD survey because it wasn't grade-specific or child-specific and the questions were flawed. Technology questions should be very specific. Do parents know how to access tech help from Steve?
- Will each class create a consistent rule about Zoom videos being on or off?
- Concern about the curriculum; wanting to see more diversity represented
- Wanting teachers to feel supported and comfortable and safe in their jobs
- Wanting families to feel known, heard and supported
- Parent Ed classes - wanting more classes and support for parents in topics parents request
- Equity in education - all students are supported in learning
- Community building for parents; many feel disconnected from their class of parents and a lack of communication between parents
- Community building for students; how to help families coordinate for learning pods, playdates? What about families who are new this year and don't know other families?
- Several parents stated they attended to learn more about the school
- Continuing to ensure that school fundraisers support equitable field trips
- Wanting parents to have power to influence decisions at SunRidge
- Prioritizing an anti-racist curriculum
- How can substitutes be trained to hold classes during Distance Learning
- Questions: In the charter, is there an avenue for Parent Council to have any power rather than recommendations or requests? Traditionally, charter schools have a model where PC, CC and Faculty communicate to Administration. Will the Coordinator Meetings begin again? How does the charter statement get rewritten and when?

8:15 - Should Parent Council put out a survey to parents? What questions do you think should be asked of our parent community?

Would a survey 2-3 times/year be helpful? Then give feedback from the survey in newsletters and Parent Council meetings or Forums and to Charter Council and to Kalen in a meeting?

Regular feedback is important. THUSD survey wasn't child specific or grade specific, but distance learning experience is very specific to child and grade.

Brainstorming of Survey Questions: Does your child have support from an adult during live zooms when needed? Does your child regularly do lessons at a time that is different than the class schedule (for example, with a parent in the evenings)? Does your child have access to a computer that has adequate audio and video capabilities? Does your internet bandwidth support the zoom load of your household? Does your family need technology support? Are your child's lessons all available through Google Classroom? How is the breakout room experience for your child? Are you comfortable with the amount of screen time for your child? How are teachers gathering feedback about lessons? How are teachers giving feedback to your child? How do you as a parent give feedback to teachers? How are our families doing? How do we know? How do you communicate with other parents in your class? Recognize that parents who were previously connected to other families can text friends with Distance Learning questions in real time. What about new families? Or families of students who aren't very connected to classmates? Would it help for each class to have a parent method of communication?

8:30 Action Items

1. Plan Parent Voices Forum (Sheina, Bob, Brandy)
2. Create Parent Council Google Form for parents who want more involvement at the school - what are their skills, interests, time availability for January PC meeting and January Forum (Sheina)
3. Email parents in attendance at tonight's Parent Council meeting (Sheina)
4. Parent Survey - find out if it will be included with an existing survey or will stand alone (?)
5. Attend 12/7 Charter Council meeting to share feedback from the Forum (Sheina or Bob)
6. Determine and communicate next PC meeting and next Forum date (Sheina)