

**KWAJALEIN SCHOOL SYSTEM
SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
May 15, 2019**

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Kwajalein School Advisory Committee (SAC) was called to order by Victor Burnley, USAG-KA RTS at 7:02 p.m. in the Coconut Room.

Committee Members Present:

Victor Burnley, RTS
Stacey O'Rourke, MIT/LL
Gus Aljure, DYNCORP
Dawn Gray, RGNext
Christina Dodson, ALUTIIQ
Veronica Moos, TRIBALCO
Eric Corder, RIKATAK PARENT REP
Susan Davis, Lead Admin KHS/GSES
Misti French, KSS Teacher Rep
Graeson Cossey, SGA

Visitors Present:

Mary Beth Taylor
Chelsea Reed
Christi Cardillo
Melissa Hickman
Dan DiBiase
Rebecca DiBiase
Chad Gibbon
Stephen Dodson
Ingrid Mounier

Masina McCollum
Tami Zaragoza
Jane Premo
Colleen England
Jennifer Harmon
Jeremy King
Susan King
Mary McCormick
Jeffery Suiz

1) Opening Remarks

- Victor Burnley opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.
- A marine biology presentation was given by Matt Gerber and 2 of his students: Graeson Cossey and Kayla Hepler. The marine science class collaborated with the engineering class and won first prize in an international video competition about El Nino. A 5-minute video was produced about El Nino and how to prepare for it. First prize involves a day trip aboard the Okeanos Marshall Islands, which will be sailing here toward the end of May to take both classes on the trip.

2) Monthly Reports

SGA Representative: Graeson Cossey
KJHS Student Government Association President

- SGA has formed a committee as well as had the officers review the student handbook. Questions and potential changes have been given to Mrs. Yurovchak.
- We also have the award ceremony as well as the service hour celebration coming up this Saturday which kids are very excited about!
- And as we near the end of the year, we have graduation on the 7th!

Teacher Representative – Misti French

Elementary News

From the Elementary Counselor- Dr Wallach:

This time of year, I add Test Coordinator to my duties at GSES. The teachers did a great job teaching the information, the counselor prepared them with test taking strategies and parents, as always provide loving support (and a good breakfast). Now the students get to show how far they have grown this school year. I am always available to help parent understand the results of the NWEA. Email me with questions or concerns.

I am also happy to announce the Scholarship winners for Space Camp! Alana Leines and Morgan Selzler head to Alabama this summer for a great experience! Congratulations to all who entered the essay contest and we are proud to be sending these 2 young ladies to represent our school!

From Mrs. Premo: Fourth grade is working on our annual States' Fair project. Students perform online research information about a selected state, then prepare a slide show advertising the interesting information they've learned about their state. Slide shows will be presented to our families the end of May or early June.

From Ms. Trina: 6th grade students have begun their group cross curricular interactive projects designing a Mars Settlement which integrates science, math, writing, reading and engineering. The end projects will be done in several weeks and will be on display and explanation.

Mrs. Shelton and Rikatik Student Selection Team: The team has been working very hard and the potential students recently visited our GSES campus.

High School News

From Ms. Masciarelli: AP Calculus students completed their exam yesterday and wish the rest of the AP students, with upcoming tests, the best of luck!

From Mr. Engen: Even though there are no more SAT or ACT tests [here] this year, there is a group of students who want to continue meeting on Sundays to do more math in an effort to improve their standardized test scores . . . next year! So, they will continue meeting for the rest of the year with Mr. Engen. Each week before they meet, these students complete an entire Sat or ACT [math portion], and then meet and go over that practice test. Mr. Engen said, "Who could ask for better students than them?"

Principal GSES/KHS – Susan Davis

Past:

- The Kwajalein School System Accreditation review was completed in the last week of April. The AdvancEd team held a public out briefing of their findings on April 25th. The written report is expected to arrive in early June and will be used along with other data, to help determine the school's goals as we move forward in our continuous efforts to improve. High lights of the visit were the following:

- Impact Level: Intentional alignment of actions to the institution's purpose is evident throughout the institution."PEARLS"
- Impact Level: Commitment to and consistent actions by staff and students related to the development of positive relationships occur throughout the institution.
- Improve Level: Continue to provide a safe and academically rigorous learning community that fosters both personal and social growth for all.
- Initiate: Intentional curriculum alignment to DoDEA- CCRS standards to support your growth and improvement with quality and fidelity.
- Initiate: Commit to and demonstrate the consistent use of data to verify learner progress and modify instructional practices to improve student learning.
- Evaluation and supervision for the improvement of professional practice is a routine and expected practice within the organization.
- Access and use quality resources, materials, digital tools, and infrastructure throughout the institution to support the curriculum, programs, and student and staff needs and interests.
- Home School Policy work: Administrators met with USAG-KA legal counsel in the past couple of weeks to finalize the review and revisions of the Home School Policy. Administrators then met with the Home School Committee to share the draft. The Home School Policy, along with the Special Education Policy, Facility Use Policy, School Calendar Policy, and Graduation Requirement corrections were shared with parents through the Portal. A community open meeting was held just an hour prior to the SAC meeting to share with any community members interested in hearing more about the Home School Policy.
- As a note of interest, the Home School Policy is not a policy that dictates how home school functions. It does not determine curriculum or instruction, it does not require a certain amount of days of schooling. This policy is meant to guide how the school provides the oversight that it is tasked with by the Garrison. The Garrison Commander is responsible to ensure that all school age children on the Garrison are receiving an education and how that is done is spelled out in this policy.
- We have had input from the Home School Community, input from educators at the school, and input from legal counsel. Legal Counsel has done extensive research into various organizations that provide guidelines for home schooling oversight to help determine how the KSS policy would function best. What we came up with is very close to the previous policy with some practices being clarified and changed.
- Voting on policy will take place in June to advise the school and will be shared with the community as soon as the Commander gives his approval or non-approval.
- Calendar Committee: The SAC vote last month indicated that calendar A would be sent to the Commander as the calendar to use for the 2020-2021 school year. The school did another extensive pros and cons list and vote on whether we would agree to go with calendar A, or whether the school would be asking for calendar B. The vote came in today with 52.4 % for calendar A and 47.6 % for calendar B, so the school is aligned with the SAC vote by a very small margin. This was a very close and strongly felt issue.

Present:

- We are submitting policy revisions for the following other policies:
 - Facility Use

- School Calendar
- Special Education
- Corrections to the new Graduation Requirements –omissions of social studies requirements are put back in, deletion of DoDEA policy statements that are not part of our practices at KSS.

To Come:

- There will be a June SAC meeting to vote on the policy proposals.
- May 18th will be the junior senior high school awards assembly in the morning and the Service Day celebration in the afternoon. Students choosing not to participate will attend school as usual and report to the office at 8:00am.
- Year Book distribution will be on May 22nd for all K-12 students.
- The Spring Band and Choir Concert for the junior senior high school will be May 23rd.
- The band plays at the flagpole on the 27th for the Memorial Day celebration. Also on that day, NHS has a service project and there will be a softball championship tournament.
- May 29-31 are senior finals.
- June 1 is the senior picnic and Field Day for the elementary students.
- June 2nd is Baccalaureate in the chapel
- June 7th is Graduation Day.
- June 8th is the elementary Lto J Beach Day celebration
- June 13th is 6th grade promotion ceremony at the beach.
- June 14th is the last day of school and it is a half day.
- Teacher check out is June 15th!
- Summer Break!

3) **Discussion/Action Items:**

A. Special Education Policy

1. Services defined – the updated policy draft was presented to the committee several months ago. SAC intends to vote on the policy changes in June. SAC will send their recommendation to the Commander. He has the final word regarding all policy issues. Susan Davis pointed out that the major change was on page 5 #2 which now states “contractual limitations set by USAG-KA which specify services of any kind cannot exceed 20% of the regular school day”. It previously read 35% of the school day. The Kwajalein School System has no program for severe needs. This puts the school in line with the common practice of mild to moderate services, taking the student from their regular classroom for less than 20% of the school day. The goal is to communicate this to families before they move to Kwajalein so they know the school doesn’t have a program for students with severe needs. Audience member asked about options for a family with a child out of educational scope, asking if the 14th amendment which gives each child the right to have access education has been considered. Susan Davis said she needs to refer this question to Ben Clancy to avoid giving the wrong answer. Kwajalein School is not a public school but it’s not a private

school either. In a private school, a student would not attend if out of scope. Gus Aljure asked if this policy aligned to the DoDEA way. Susan Davis said it is similar to DoDEA with adjustments for Kwajalein. Victor Burnley asked if the change will affect services for current students. Currently, all the students with an IEP fall 20% or less.

B. Home School Policy

1. The Home School Policy is also under review. There was a special meeting for the community on 15 May 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the Elementary School Coconut Room. SAC hopes to vote on the policy that KSS has put forward. The vote may be delayed. A lot of concerns from the homeschool community need to be addressed before SAC can vote. The school needs to hear back from Ben Clancy following the 6:00 meeting.

C. 2019-2020 School Policy

1. School calendar will be provided to SAC no later than January each year. Calendars for advisement by the SAC each year will be two years out. This will provide ample time for school stakeholders to plan professional and personal activities.
2. Use of school facilities outside of school functions - due to how the school is funded, it cannot be open for public rental. The school intends to have the information typed up and near the phones to help the administrative assistants explain how the facilities are to be used.
3. Clarification of graduation requirements – KSS wants to make it easier to parents to see what requirements apply to their children. The requirements were changed last year for graduating classes of 2022 and subsequent years. Changes will be attached to the minutes for review.

D. Important Dates of future SAC meetings

1. 5 June 2019

4) Public Feedback & Council Comments

Gus Aljure asked about open faculty positions. Susan Davis said she and Tarah Yurovchak are actively interviewing for all open positions. Some offers have been made. As soon as there is definite information, it will be shared.

Gus Aljure asked about the school calendar re-vote. Who voted? Susan Davis said the survey was sent out to every educational staff member who will be returning for the 2019/20 school year. Approximately 21 faculty members voted. The additional opportunity to vote was offered because faculty had been split 50/50. The returning faculty was given one more opportunity to come to an agreement. Dawn Gray asked what would have happened in the faculty voted for Calendar B in the revote. In this case, SAC would have sent their proposal to the Commander

for Calendar A. The school would have sent their recommendation for Calendar B. As it stands, both SAC and the faculty had majority votes for Calendar A.

A question was raised regarding the annual Yokwe Yuk Women's Club Basket Auction in the MP Room. This event is not a school related function and alcohol is served. Susan Davis said this event can be held with an exception to policy from the Commander.

The section stating "Credit by examination may be given for demonstrated proficiency in course content ordinarily included in regular school course on the subject" will be removed. The school system does not have a way or the means to offer this right now. It will take a lot of research and funding to get the resources like DoDEA has. Since it cannot be offered right now, the school recommends removing it. Audience member said she failed to understand why a proficiency test would be too difficult. It should be a test just like any other offered in class. Tarah Yurovchak said that if the community wants the school to look at changing this, it will take a lot of research. If a community member wants to research the necessary resources this would require, they could form a committee. She looked through school records and did not see credit by examination ever given. All credits transferred in from another accredited school. Victor Burnley said this is something to discuss later.

Another section that was noted to be removed is the section about evaluating student records from non-accredited education programs. An audience member pointed out the current policy states course credit may be earned through successful performance in a higher-level course that is sequential in nature. The example was a student taking a Geometry course successfully. Shouldn't credit be earned in Algebra 1, the lower level course? Susan Davis reminded the audience member that this is the new policy[that needs correcting]. This is something we can look at for further discussion. It is not something done now. It was the school's mistake and oversight that it was left in the policy handbook this year. Audience member stated that this is sheer policy. There is frequent reference to follow policy. Why wouldn't this be honored when it is clearly stated in the 2018/19 school policy handbook. Tarah Yurovchak pointed out that the wording says, "credit may be earned". It comes down to interpretation, but it should be removed to avoid confusion.

Audience member questioned the current policy of withdrawing from a class. The handbook says courses can be dropped up to 20 days into the current semester. The audience member's son withdrew after 20 days and his transcript now shows withdraw fail. There is nothing stated in the handbook that indicates an automatic withdraw fail after 20 days. Susan Davis commented that the audience member has not gone up with chain with this. Susan encouraged her to make an appointment to discuss this specific concern. Audience member wants SAC to recommend and advise Command of her frustration. If it is in the current policy, isn't it something the school should stick to. Dawn Gray asked why the student withdrew from school. The response was that he wanted to be more challenged. He transferred from Kwajalein School to home school. Tarah Yurovchak said that when you withdraw from school, you withdraw from it entirely. In this case, the family filled out an intent to homeschool and took responsibility of their child's total education. The school has come into the practice of allowing students to audit classes. Some teachers give feedback to students by grading assignments. This does not mean the student will earn credit in these classes. Victor Burnley asked what would be on the transcript if the child

was PCSing from Kwajalein. Tarah explained that to get the credit for a class, the student must be in class within 20 days of the end of semester. All assignments and finals must be completed for the class to get the credit. If a family withdraws from a class and does not need the credit, an exit grade would be provided. The only thing that goes on a transcript is credits. Many families left over Christmas break. The school made sure the students had work complete to get the credit before transferring to a new school after break. A withdraw fail would not appear on the transcript going to the new school. Only the credits earned appear on the transcript. If a credit was not earned, there will be no grade associated with it. Susan Davis confirmed that the withdraw fail is only showing on the report card. The report card is also showing the courtesy grades being given from the classes the student is auditing. This is another reason for clarification on the homeschool policy. Tarah Yurovchak points out that we are talking about 2 different things. The grade sheet is at the institution where a student withdrew after the 20 days. Because he is still taking classes at the same school, it is going to read the withdraw fail. The transcript would be sent to another institution and will only show the credits that were earned from Kwajalein School.

Audience member emphasized that the policy book is something parents go to for reviewing rules and procedures. She would like it to be something that teachers can refer to when they are not sure about something. Susan voiced appreciation for this parent being one of the community members that holds the school accountable. The school is aware that things were overlooked when all the changes were made last year. The school will look at these things and do what they can to the best of their ability.

Gus Aljure suggested that the credit by examination be left in while the school figures out a way to make it possible. Keep it there and strive to achieve it. Eric Corder disagreed. It would cause more confusion to keep it in the policy.

Stacey O'Rourke asked about the new faculty time frame. Are we still in a time frame for new teachers to be hired and be ready to go by the first day of school, with no substitutes or aids in their class? As a parent, I want to know that I am sending my child to a class with a teacher and books, ready to go. Susan Davis said the school was still hiring at this time last year and into early June. It was tough to get the clearances and we needed teachers to be within line of sight at first. We do have a better understanding of how the clearance process works now and the process is a bit more streamlined. The new teachers will no longer need to go through Texas on their way to Kwajalein. The school hopes that everyone will be on board and ready to go. However, there is no way of knowing how long each teacher's clearance will take.

Graeson Cossey asked why the small margin of staff trumped the majority of parents and students for the school calendar. Victor Burnley said the Commander will be given all data, to include the statistics of the students and the parents. He will make the final decision.

Closing Committee Remarks

- Next SAC meeting will be June 5.
- SAC will determine the work plan for the 2019/20 school year.

Future Agenda Planning

- Agendas will note future policy or non-policy issues up for discussion.

5) **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Susan Davis, K-12 Lead Administrator Kwajalein School System

Brad Reed, Chairperson, SAC