

**KWAJALEIN SCHOOL SYSTEM  
SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
December 11, 2019**

**Call to Order**

The regular monthly meeting of the Kwajalein School Advisory Committee (SAC) was called to order by Michael Makovec, USAG-KA at 7:04 p.m. in the Coconut Room.

**Committee Members Present:**

Michael Makovec, USAG-KA  
Veronica Moos, TRIBALCO  
Christina Dodson, ALUTIIQ  
Stacey O'Rourke, MIT/LL  
Chad Gibbons, RGNNext  
Tami Zaragoza, Army COE  
Deirdre Wyatt-Pope, DYNCORP  
Jill Grabowski, PTO  
Misti French, Teacher Representative  
Susan Davis, Lead Admin KHS/GSES  
Mackenzie Gowans, President, SGA

**Visitors Present:**

Tarah Yurovchak  
Christi Cardillo  
Dawn Gray

**1) Opening Remarks**

Michael Makovec opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

**2) Monthly Reports**

**SGA Report – Mackenzie Gowans, President**

Since the last SAC meeting, the high school had Turkey Bowl. The Seniors took first place, Juniors took second, and Freshman took third.

SGA has not met since the last SAC meeting. We will have our first class meeting since Turkey Bowl today, December 11th, so SGA will be meeting this Friday at lunch.

Our next SGA meeting is scheduled for December 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Teacher Representative- Misti French**

**Kwajalein High School:**

**Don Engen**

- Nine Sunday afternoon PSAT/SAT/ACT Prep sessions have been offered this year. 23 different students in grades 10-12 have participated.

- Attendance has averaged a little over 10 students per week. Some of these students even came to the session the day after they took the ACT/SAT . . . these are great math students who only want to get better!
- Additionally, 24 different 7th and 8th grade students have attended the Math Clinic, which is held each Tuesday and Thursday from 3:10 - 4:00

### **Kendra Robinson**

- 10th grade is very excited to be writing and illustrating children's books that will follow A Hero's Journey structure. We plan to really bring the project to life by reading the books to elementary students.

### **Carrie Maxwell**

- Financial Algebra has been studying about credit cards, how to calculate the finance charges and talking about using credit responsibly.
- Geometry just finished up proofs. Everyone is happy about that.

### **Jane Christy**

- All Art students continue to explore the theme "IF" and have finished all of their clay pieces thus far, except for some decorative elements. The kids absolutely love seeing their glazed pieces come out of the kiln, as it's a big surprise:(you never know what you may get). In January we will pick up with painting, glazing, sculpting, and some printmaking assignments.

### **Kyle Miller**

- At each upcoming concert, priority seating will be given to the first 40 guests that bring gently used baby items: bottles, clothing, etc. Items will go to Jimjera for their next baby bag drop.
  - Jr/Sr High Band Concert Thursday: Dec 12
  - GSES Band concert Friday, Dec 13
  - GSES Music Program, Tuesday, Dec 17
  - At each concert, priority seating will be given to the first 40 guests that bring gently used baby items: bottles, clothing, etc. Items will go to Jimjera for their next baby bag drop.

### **George Seitz Elementary School:**

#### **Stephen Robinson**

- 6th grade We're working on a smooth transition from one teacher to another. Students finished Mrs. Trina's Christmas Story projects and presented them to the rest of the school on her last day.

#### **Misti French - 5th grade**

- Our class has had a month immersed in all things science and math.

- We continue to co-teach 5th and 6th grade science together as one differentiated classroom as we build on material science knowledge that will prepare us for an upcoming collaborative research project with MIT/Lincoln Laboratories. We had a fascinating field trip to MIT/LL two weeks ago where the students had an in depth 3-D printing design and application experience to serve as background knowledge for that same exciting upcoming original research project.
- We have spent time integrating reading/science and math lessons as we have explored mass, gravitational principals and the Milky Way as we prepare for our upcoming visit with NASA astronaut. The kids are excited and have questions prepared.
- 5th grade students have also been exploring media and tech as the students are experimenting with green screen technology and editing. Our top secret projects will hopefully be ready to present to families next Wednesday.

### **Misti French/Lauren Wallach**

Elementary Student Council has had a busy month working on projects in all 3 of their program focuses.

- Service- The students met the Monday before Thanksgiving and conducted a shore clean up between the Ocean View and the adult pool. Twenty-four 4th-6th grade council members collected 91 pounds of plastic mainly consisting of tiny microplastics.
- Social- The student celebrated the hard work of the first semester by having a pool party all self-funded by Student Council fundraising.
- Fundraising- Students sold over 6 gallons of made from scratch apple cider at the Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday.

### **Misti French/Stephen Robinson- KSS Chess Club**

- We are excited to announce the formation of the KSS Chess Club and had our first meeting for 4th-6th graders last week with almost 30 students excited to learn and progress their chess skills.
- Students and co-sponsors continue to collaborate with 4 different schools on Ebeye in the formation of a new chess club initiative. Students will soon be delivering a club starter box of chess sets bought and donated by GSES Student Council and look forward to the possibility of future collaborative tournaments with our Ebeye student neighbors.

### **Kwajalein School System Lead Administrator – Susan Davis**

#### **Past:**

- The College and Career Fair at the CRC gym for the junior- senior high school students had a good turn-out. The community generously volunteered their time and knowledge with students about college and careers after high school. The school is grateful to all who came out to talk with students.
- The school would also like to thank all of the parents and community members who came to Turkey Bowl and got up out of their seats and danced to YMCA. It was fun to see adults enjoying themselves, too.
- Many students participated in the Tree Lighting Ceremony last weekend with song, dance, the parade, and fundraisers. The band added extra fun to Santa's parade.

- NHS Pancake Breakfast was a big success and served approximately 150 people. It was a really nice event for the community! Great job, NHS!
- In collaboration with community members from the health and legal arenas of USAG-KA, the high school students held two Drug and Alcohol Awareness Assemblies: one for the junior high students and one for the high school students. Students moved through 4 stations to hear information about the use of drugs and alcohol. Thank you to the community members who came and presented to our students.
- We had 13 students take the SAT on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December.
- During the Elementary Student Council shore clean up students picked up 91 lbs of trash between the adult pool and the Ocean View Club. We are proud of our elementary student council's efforts to help promote a healthy and safe environment.

### **Present:**

- Safety items:
  - Both campuses have talked with Chief Johnson and viewed some videos to discuss how an active shooter drill is carried out. The different options are being explored for the two different campuses. The school staff will continue the conversation at their January staff meetings in order to develop workable plans for each campus. Parents will be notified, just like they were for the evacuation drill, before any drills of this type are practiced. We have a safe community out here and do not anticipate to ever put this into actual use, but we know that each community that has had an active shooter probably felt the same way and that it saves lives to practice and prepare. We also know that when students leave Kwajalein, we want them to be prepared with the knowledge to make wise choices and follow directions whether practicing a similar drill in a new school or in an actual situation of an intruder on campus. Be assured that when we do have a drill, we will talk age appropriately with students.
  - Third graders are participating in swim lessons at this time. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will begin in February.
  - We will be having our annual Fire Inspection on Saturday afternoon.
  - Teachers were briefed on a Teacher Exchange Program with teachers on Ebeye today by Stephanie McCutcheon who spearheaded this last year. We will be piloting this program with elementary school teachers and opening our doors to RMI teachers from Ebeye to visit our classrooms and then continue with some professional development at the CDC with Nikki Cote, the CYS trainer and school liaison. We hope to start this at the beginning of second semester. We will also be visiting the Ebeye schools in January and again in May to learn more about the schools on Ebeye to better share our practices with their teachers. We look forward to it being a wonderful cross-cultural experience for both faculties.

### **To Come:**

- We are starting to plan for some refurbishing of the high school science labs and home ec rooms. We hope to have new floors and furniture in the rooms at some point in the early 2020-2021 school year.

- We are also looking at updating furniture in other areas of the campus and procuring a couple of shade canopies for the elementary school playground on the field side.
- Finals schedules were sent out today on the portal for first and second semester. Be on the lookout for those dates.
- December 12<sup>th</sup> is the HS Band Concert in the MP room from 6:30-7:30pm.
- December 13<sup>th</sup> is the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Band Concert in the MP room from 5:00-6:00pm.
- December 17<sup>th</sup> is the K-4 Music Concert in the MP room from 5:00-6:00pm.
- We are beginning to plan for our Military Career Fair to be held in February. Please let our high school counselor, Masina McCollum know if you are interested in sharing your military work experiences with students. We would love to have all branches of the service represented, to include reservists, retired, honorably discharged, or active duty personnel. You can contact Ms. McCollum at 5-2015 or 5-2011.
- This Saturday is the Volleyball High School League Championship game at 5:30pm in the CRC gym. Come on out and cheer on the Spartans!
- A league and B league Volleyball Championship games are 6:30 and 7:30pm and it is yet to be determined if we have high school students playing in those games.

### **KSS Enrollment Update:**

As of Wednesday, December 10, 2019:

High School: 114

Elementary: 106

Total K-12: 220

Six new families have been approved to enroll their children in school during January and February. This will add 12 more elementary students and 2 more junior high students to the school rosters.

### **KSS Staffing Update:**

- We are checking references on a Reading Specialist candidate and will hopefully have a replacement for Mary McCormick if that works out. The candidate is off island, so there would be a month or two of waiting for clearances before they arrive. In the meantime, we are working on a plan to continue monitoring our students that were receiving reading instruction from Mrs. McCormick.
- Stephen Robinson is now our 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher full time in the classroom. Trina Ellison departed this past weekend. The students should enjoy a seamless change, as Mr. Robinson has been in the classroom with them for the last month.
- We have a new teacher assistant that will arrive in February and will be working with our elementary students and another teacher aide that will be riding the ferry with our Rikatak students and helping to monitor our lunch time at the high school. When they complete their background checks, we will share their names and introduce them to the community.

### **Additional Information:**

- We have a calendar committee currently working on the 2021-2022 school calendar. When it is ready, we will share it with the parents and SAC members via the portal in a draft form in early January. The committee or representatives will be present at the January planning meeting to answer any questions the SAC may have and the SAC will be asked to advise the school with a vote of approval or no approval.
- Flu immunizations are available until 31 December.

### **3) Discussion/Action Items:**

#### **A. Committee Work Plan Development**

- School Policy Review – 3000 Series: the committee is reviewing the 3000 series. SAC is looking for better wording to make the policies easier to understand.
- School Calendar Review: the calendar committee has been working on the 2021-2022 school calendar. The calendar will be presented to SAC later this school year.

### **4) Public Feedback & Council Comments**

Mike Makovec opened the floor to the audience.

- Julia Sektnan noted that the Rikatak students are able to get the varicella vaccination at the hospital. Although it is available at no charge to the Rikatak families, the RMI government paid for the vaccine.
- Stacey O'Rourke worries that the 174 calendar votes through Survey Monkey were skewed. Anybody could have logged onto their home computer, work computer, iPhone, tablet and voted through each. They could have sent the link to families back home and had them vote as well. Susan Davis said she selected that the survey could be taken only 1 time. She didn't check to see if that meant per person or per device.
- Michael Makovec heard of a person who was able to flush their cache and retake the same survey.
- Susan Davis said that if this is an issue, then this tells her that our community cannot take surveys. Chad Gibbon responded that part of their job with SAC is to represent. Christi Cardillo feels that the survey is more democratic. If everyone has 1 vote, then everyone has an equal say in the outcome.
- Veronica Moos feels that parents of the students who will be senior in 2021/2022 should have more say because it affects them more. They will lose 3 weeks of summer and 3 weeks of time to prepare.
- Audience member concurred. There are advantages to both drafts. It is a very difficult decision to make. She knows it will be fine either way but wants what is best for our community in our little environment. Someone will have to be the group that adjusts to this change. The calendar does impact the high school more than it impacts the elementary school families.
- Deidre Wyatt felt the survey had no context. People who had time voted. There was no transparency. There was no context to calendar A vs. B.
- Susan Davis said she wants to please everyone but there is absolutely no way. She wants to do what is best for the kids and the majority. Last year, she presented pros and cons to both calendars, and listened to everyone. In the end, it did not feel good. She wanted to do it better this year. People couldn't even agree on the lists of pros and cons last year.

There are new families this year and maybe she should have presented the notes from last year. She wanted to do it better. She sent a survey to all school stakeholders – faculty members, high school students, parents and SAC members at the same time.

- Veronica Moos said she wanted calendar B at the start of last year's discussion. Then she started listening to other views and started paying attention to how busy December becomes and felt that it would be too much for the students to take finals in this last week before break. We would need to change the environment on the island to support the high school taking exams. If it's the elementary families wanting the change, then change it when their kids get to high school. She is not opposed to the calendar change. She is just opposed to it changing the year her child will be a senior. These kids are not prepared. It would be a huge change on this island. School would start August 1<sup>st</sup>. We wouldn't even have a day into August. Or the winter break won't begin until December 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Susan Davis said they have established a start date and an end date. The calendar committee is filling in the school year itself. The school year should start August 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>. Wait until you see the calendar.
- Julia Sektnan said that the requirement is student contact days.
- Audience member asked if the teachers and administrators are all in agreement on the calendar options. Susan Davis said that the faculty was split last year 50/50.
- Chad Gibbons said a large ratio of his RGNNext constituents are opposed to a change. Cutting off half the summer is a reason for his family to not stay here. Where he comes from, August is when weddings and family reunions happen. Most of his constituents are against the earlier start and he personally agrees.
- Susan Davis said that there are parts of the country that don't start school until after Labor Day, Other areas start in early August and are out in May. These areas have weddings and family reunions in May and June. Families from those areas are affected by the current calendar.
- Susan Davis asked for more information on the person who was able to vote multiple times. Was it just an experiment or were they trying to run up votes?
- Michael Makovec said they just tried it to see if they could vote more than once. Susan Davis said she checked to see if it was possible to vote more than once but could not because it said she had already voted. She would to think that our community is not that devious.
- Veronica Moos asked if prearranged absences will be permitted when a student misses a final. Is the school prepared to offer make up exams?
- Tarah Yurovchak said that they already do this every summer for students who leave early.
- Audience member asked if Don Engen is getting compensated for the SAT math prep class he offers every weekend.
- Susan Davis said she hears the question and appreciates all his hard work with the students.

### **Closing Committee Remarks**

- Next SAC meetings will be January 15 and February 19.

### **Future Agenda Planning**

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

5) **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.



Susan Davis, K-12 Lead Administrator Kwajalein School System



Michael Makovec, Chairperson, SAC