

**KWAJALEIN SCHOOL SYSTEM
SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 15, 2020**

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Kwajalein School Advisory Committee (SAC) was called to order by Michael Makovec, USAG-KA at 7:00 p.m. in the Coconut Room.

Committee Members Present:

Michael Makovec, USAG-KA
Veronica Moos, TRIBALCO
Christina Dodson, ALUTHQ
Stacey O'Rourke, MIT/LL
Chad Gibbon, RGNNext
Eric Corder, Rikatak Representative
Deirdre Wyatt-Pope, DYNCORP
Jill Grabowski, PTO
Susan Davis, Lead Admin KHS/GSES
Jeffery Suis for Julia Sektnan
Misti French, Teacher Representative
Susan Davis, Lead Admin KHS/GSES
Mackenzie Gowans, President, SGA

Visitors Present:

Tarah Yurovchak
Cindy Engen
Don Engen
Melissa Dethlefsen
Morgan Dethlefsen
Mary Beth Taylor
Lauren Wallach
Chelsea Reed
Brad Reed
Mindi Gerber
Mallory Masciarelli
Jane Sholar
Julie Makovec

1) Opening Remarks

Michael Makovec opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Elementary Counselor presented NWEA trend data for Kindergarten – 12th Grade

2) Monthly Reports

SGA Report – Mackenzie Gowans, President

Since the last SAC meeting the SGA has met once, which was on December 13th, 2019.

At this meeting the SGA discussed the pledge of allegiance. Grades 7, 8, and 12 said no to implementing the pledge of allegiance. Grade 9 said they would like to implement the Pledge, but they would like to do it during announcements and want announcements moved to first period. Grades 10 and 11 said they want to implement the Pledge under the following conditions: participation is optional and Marshallese students will be represented under their own version. All-in-all, half of the school said no to including the Pledge of Allegiance, and the other half said yes to including the Pledge of Allegiance under certain conditions.

We received mostly positive feedback from Turkey bowl.

Upcoming Fundraisers:

- Seventh Grade Fundraiser: Bake Sale at Tree lighting/scuba meetings
- Eighth Grade Fundraiser: Lollipop sales
- Freshmen: Valentines Grams (February)
- Sophomores: Tie Dye (Memorial Day)
- Juniors: DONE
- Seniors: DONE

Upcoming Dances:

- Fall Ball: DONE
- Winter Ball: February 2nd
- Prom/Romp: April 26th

Our next SGA meeting is scheduled for January 17th.

Teacher Representative- Misti French

Teacher Report

(One week of instruction since last SAC Teacher Report)

Don Engen- Started the SAT/ACT Prep sessions up again last Sunday, and the Math Clinic [Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-4] today.

Stephen Robinson- 5th and 6th grade classes continue to collaborate on Material and Physical Science curriculum as we prepare to begin MIT/LL research project.

Misti French- 5th grade is focusing on the theme, "What Makes Us Americans" with intensive studies into the American Revolution, the formation of the American Republic and what are inalienable rights. We are also starting our in depth analysis of the civil and human rights principles as we study Dr. Martin Luther King in integrated Reading/Writing and expository texts.

Jane Christy Art- 3rd grade is preparing to start glazing their clay pieces, which is new to them...they are beyond excited!

Wallach-Character Counts classes have been reviewing Test Taking Strategies to prepare for the winter NWEA Reading and Math tests. The students have discussed strategies they need to start weeks before the test, as well as the night before the test and the morning of the test. They brainstormed and researched strategies to help them do their best during the test. Number one strategy "Do Your Best."

Wallach/French- GSES Student Council will hold 2nd semester officer elections tomorrow. The council has an ambitious agenda set for the semester with a renewed emphasis on reducing island wide trash and single use containers. The elementary council will also be selling/taking orders for Valentine Candy Grams in coming weeks.

Robinson/French- KSS Chess Club has had its first couple of meetings and has been enthusiastically received. With the 2nd semester beginning soon, focus will be on learning new chess strategies and preparation for the first KSS chess tournament in the next month. Coordination is ongoing and in the assistance in the formation of 5 school chess clubs on Ebeye. Chess boards for these 5 clubs were purchased by GSES Student Council for donation.

Kwajalein School System Lead Administrator – Susan Davis

Past:

- Short report this month as we have just been back in school for 1 ½ weeks since returning from Winter break.
- The Spartans and Student lead teams swept the Volleyball Championships in all three leagues. The games were exciting, and our new Spartan mascot helped pump up the crowd!
- The Junior Class held their fundraiser last weekend. The Carnival was a big success and kids enjoyed themselves playing the games and snacking on carnival food.

Present:

- NWEA Testing at the Elementary School will begin next week for the winter testing of Reading and Math. Scores will be shared with students and families after they are complete. Scores will be used to measure progress and to pinpoint areas to focus instruction.
- There is currently a glitch with the website hosting school portraits. Information will be sent back out to parents on how to log in and order photos. We are hoping for the website to be viewable by Monday.
- We are continuing to work on the 3000 series in the Kwajalein School System Policy Manual to update. The first portion will be shared out this month on the Portal for community feedback. The remainder will be shared on the Portal by the end of February. The goal is to have the 3000 series completely updated, reviewed and a draft finalized for a SAC vote of advisement by the April meeting.

To Come:

- Water Polo and Basketball season has begun. Come on out and cheer on the Spartans!
- The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is scheduled for Thursday, March 5th at 8:30am in CRC Room 1. All Juniors take the ASVAB to help them explore aptitudes they have for various careers. Any Seniors that would like to take the test may also do so. Talk to Masina McCollum to let her know if your student is interested.
- The Military Career Fair will be planned around that time frame.

- The Rikatak Parent Meeting will be held in the MP room on Friday, January 31st from 5:30-6:30pm. We will be talking about strategies to help your child be successful at school, introducing you to USAG-KA and school staff, and answering questions you may have about any school related topics.
- Winter Ball will be held on Sunday, February 2nd from 7:30 to 11:30pm in the MP Room.

KSS Enrollment Update:

As of Wednesday, January 15, 2020:

High School: 112

Elementary: 112

Total K-12: 224

Three more elementary students are expected in February. The attendance level remains rather stable due to families also moving off Kwajalein.

KSS Staffing Update:

- The Academic Support Specialist position vacated by Mary McCormick has not been filled. We continue to seek resumes and will also be looking for a teacher to fill this position at the UNI Job fair the end of this month.
- We have a new teacher assistant that will arrive in February and will be working with our elementary students. Another teacher aide will be riding the ferry with our Rikatak students and helping to monitor our lunch time at the high school in addition to classroom duties. When they complete their background checks, we will share their names and introduce them to the community.
- I have given DI notice that I will be resigning at the end of this school year. I want this to be a positive transition and am willing to remain a little longer if needed to help make the transition successful. I continue to be committed to the students, teachers, and community and look forward to a very productive second semester. The 14 years I have spent in the Kwajalein School System as a teacher and as an administrator have been very special and I am grateful for the privilege to serve these children and this community. People interested should apply through the DI WRSS Careers website to be considered.

Additional Information:

- All students except one now have had the flu shot. Thank-you families for making sure your children received the flu vaccinations. In addition, custodial crews did a great job of cleaning all surfaces in the classrooms over the break and we are looking forward to a healthy completion of the school year.
- Rikatak students are still able to go to the Kwajalein Hospital for the Chicken Pox vaccine. The RMI government is paying for the vaccines. Children not vaccinated will be required to stay out of school for a period of 21 days if an outbreak of 2 or more cases of chicken pox occurs.

3) Discussion/Action Items:

A. School Calendar SY 21-22 Committee Vote

- 7 Committee members present, 2 committee members were absent.
 - Voting results:
 - NO: 4 members were not in favor of the 2021/22 calendar draft. Members not in favor include Veronica Moos (Tribalco), Stacey O'Rourke (MIT), Chad Gibbon (RGNext), Eric Corder (Rikatak Representative)
 - YES: 3 members were in favor of the calendar draft. Members in favor are Deirdre Wyatt-Pope (Dyncorp), Jill Grabowski (Parent Teacher Organization), Christina Dodson (ALUTIIQ)
 - The following 2 members were absent and did not vote: Victor Burnley (RTS) and Tami Zaragoza (Army Corp of Engineers)
- SAC will recommend that command does not approve the calendar draft for the 2021/22 school year. The commander will make the final decision.

B. Committee Work Plan Development

- School Policy Review – 3000 Series: the committee continues to review the 3000 series. The policy includes disciplinary actions. The focus is to make sure the policy is worded in a way that when situations arise, a clear action can be taken.

C. Public Feedback & Council Comments

Michael Makovec opened the floor to the audience.

- Audience member asked if the 2 absent members will have an absentee vote for the calendar. If they were to vote YES, the votes would change to SAC recommending the new calendar draft to command. Michael Makovec said he will go up his chain for advisement on how to proceed.
- Stacey O'Rourke requested a few minutes of the boards time. She wanted to explain why her vote was a NO. One reason is regarding Rikatak students and adding additional exams 3 days before winter break. They return to Ebeye after having a full day of classes, mandatory clubs, meetings, activities and sports. They are then required to attend dance practices which run 9 times out of 10 very late and into the early morning hours. They still must find time to get their homework done. This isn't something that the stakeholders or SAC can change as this is part of their cultural background. The other reason she shared was that out of the 163 DoDEA schools, there are 6 high schools in the United States and only 2 that follow the calendar being voted on tonight. She handed her research to Susan Davis.
- Veronica Moos said that most of her constituents aren't opposed to the calendar draft. They just felt rushed. Little thought was made about what else is happening on this island in the month of December. Sports are happening so those calendars will have to change. This

could be a contractual issue with the contractor. Other things would also need to change. They just felt rushed which Veronica said was her point last month.' She felt her constituents would vote yes if the administration and contractor had done their due diligence to make sure this would truly benefit the students instead of subjecting them to potential stress.

- Stacey O'Rourke referred to an email received from Mrs. Davis in July 2018 stating that the school had new PWS requirements that year to try to align Kwajalein School to the DoDEA standards. Looking back over the year and a half, two years and the only thing I see we have addressed is teacher / pupil ratio, graduation requirements, and we worked on the homeschool policy last year.
- Susan Davis first referred to the DoDEA research from Stacey O'Rourke. There are 6 DoDEA schools listed with a start date of July 29th. She then reminded the SAC members that the Special Education Policy was rewritten last year to align with DoDEA standards. The biggest alignment has been the switch from common core standards to the college and career readiness standards. New curriculum was ordered, and the change has been thorough.
- A teacher in the audience said the school has done a complete overhaul in the Social Studies department in order to align with DoDEA standards, curriculum and textbooks DoDEA recommends. The teacher told Veronica Moos that it was personally hard to hear that her constituents would say yes. Veronica explained that her constituents all but one said no, but they would consider it if they knew for a fact that everything was aligned. Veronica hadn't heard that the school took the time to look at the sports calendar or the other issues that would potentially occur if the calendar changed. Now graduation is the end of May. Did the school look at other conflicts for the end of May? The teacher stated that the school did take this into consideration. There have been many meetings with countless hours of discussions among the staff. Veronica explained that the staff having those discussions and taking the time to explain that information for us to review are two different things. If you want us to advise on something, you have to share that information. As an education entity, you should be very good at giving an informed vote.
- Susan Davis took full responsibility. Last year had an enormous amount of discussion about the pros, cons, considerations, consequences. She felt it had been fully discussed. In the end, she didn't feel good about the process. There is no way to provide even pros and cons for both calendars. Someone will think the information is biased which is what happened last year. As soon as one side shared a point, the other side would get up in arms. It was a back and forth. It wasn't necessary to put the community through that again. The information had already been shared and it boiled down to a personal preference for most people. We are from all over the nation where some schools start earlier while others start later. Susan chose to share the survey without any bias because it had already been greatly hashed through. Don't think the teachers haven't done their work and shared it. The calendar committee came and talked to the SAC committee about why they did the calendar the way they did.
- Veronica Moos said the calendar was supposed to be for the benefit of the students. Her constituents are voting to benefit the students. On this island, cultural changes take a long time. Perhaps it should start with the incoming freshman class. You can have a road map to show what will change each other. Veronica suggested giving a package to students to

make sure they don't forget things over the 3 weeks of Christmas break. It is not about personal opinions.

- Susan Davis replied that everyone has an opinion. SAC members have shared their personal opinions. She wants what is best for the students. She put out a survey, let people make their own decisions about what is best for their child. The survey results had an enormous majority in favor of the calendar change.
- Stacey O'Rourke felt the vote was not accurate since votes could be cast from all devices with a different IP number. There was nothing stopping any one from voting 5 times. Susan Davis said she set up the survey to be taken only once. When she tried to take it again, she was told that she had already taken the survey. If there was a way around to hack the system, it doesn't paint a very nice picture of our community.
- Parent in the audience asked if it would be fair to say that if someone was ambitious enough to take the survey multiple times in an effort to swing the vote their direction that there could also be as many who are as passionate as you to take the survey 5 times to swing the vote the other direction?
- Eric Corder asked why this vote came up again when we just voted on the calendar last year. Susan said the school calendar comes up every year. This is the first year it turned out to be going in this direction. No one would need to ask the question if the majority had voted on the survey to keep it the same.
- Chad Gibbon was impressed by the 178 survey votes. From his group of constituents, he only heard from 16. He is suspicious about where all 178 votes came from and doesn't agree with who was invited to vote. He asked if his kindergartener got a vote. Susan Davis said it was sent to high school students only. Chad says the calendar impacts his kindergartener so why wouldn't she have a vote. He did not share these results with his constituents. Instead he focused on the earlier start date and shifting the early release days to Thursdays. There was not as much emotion for the early release days. The votes were more in favor of Thursday than the current early release day of Wednesday. There was a lot more emotion with the earlier start date. There were 11 against and 5 in favor of the August 11th starting date.
- Dierdre Wyatt only heard back from 6 of her constituents. 5 were in favor of the new calendar draft and 1 was against.
- Eric Corder said he voted the same as he did last year because it affects the Rikatak students. If you don't know how busy the Rikatak students are in December, he invites anyone to shadow them through their day. Their performance practices begin in November because their first performance is at church on the first Sunday in December and then throughout the month. When Eric went to school, the last week or 2 before break were easier. Then the first 2 weeks back after break were review for the finals. This is just easier on the Rikatak students.
- Jill Grabowski explained that her vote was based on feedback from parents and teachers. On a Facebook post, PTO received 16 votes for yes, in favor of the calendar draft and 5 no, not in favor. By email, PTO received 18 yes votes and 4 no votes with 6 unsure votes.
- Christina Dodson said her constituents were in favor of the change.
- Audience member suggested that a reminder go out about the SAC meetings so that more parents can attend.
- Another audience member asked about the NWEA testing dates. Lauren Wallach said the elementary students will be starting on Wednesday, January 22nd. Tarah Yurovchak said

that only small groups of students will be taking the winter NWEA at the high school. The spring testing is currently scheduled for the last week of April.

4) **Closing Committee Remarks**

- Next SAC meetings will be February 19, 2020 and March 18, 2020.

Future Agenda Planning

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

5) **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.



Susan Davis, K-12 Lead Administrator Kwajalein School System



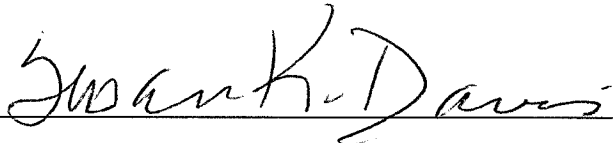
Michael Makovec, Chairperson, SAC

**KWAJALEIN SCHOOL SYSTEM
SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 15, 2020**

AMENDMENT

The votes have been received from RTS/SDMC and USACE for the SY21-22 Calendar proposal. RTS/SDMC representative, Mr. Burnley, voted to approve, and USACE representative, Ms. Foust, also voted to approve.

The School Advisory Committee, by a 5-4 vote to approve, will advise the Commander, USAG-KA that the proposed calendar for School Year 21-22 should be adopted.



Susan Davis, K-12 Lead Administrator Kwajalein School System



Michael Makovec, Chairperson, SAC