

Meeting: Family Advisory Council

Date: January 7, 2020

Time: 7:00pm

Location: Administration Building, Room 137

Attendees:

<input type="checkbox"/> Audrey Andrews	<input type="checkbox"/> Jana Armstrong	<input type="checkbox"/> Carl Bacon	<input type="checkbox"/> Brook Berg	<input type="checkbox"/> Rory Borsheim
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christine Brown	<input type="checkbox"/> Brooke Cairns	<input type="checkbox"/> Kristine Casto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erica Christensen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nicole Faude
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samantha Forehand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traci France	<input type="checkbox"/> Rob Geske	<input type="checkbox"/> Tom Giffey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Goings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gail Hanson Brenner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Hardebeck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anne Hartman	<input type="checkbox"/> Darren Hollenbeck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Megan Holmen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Holli Jacobson	<input type="checkbox"/> Julia Johnson	<input type="checkbox"/> Barb Kainz	<input type="checkbox"/> Bev Karnitz	<input type="checkbox"/> Dana Lieble
<input type="checkbox"/> Heather Market-Sullivan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lucie McGee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jenna Murphy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Omar Parks	<input type="checkbox"/> James Peng
<input type="checkbox"/> Shannyn Pinkert	<input type="checkbox"/> Patty Pladsen	<input type="checkbox"/> Joshua Pond	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shana Schmidt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Schmitz
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melissa Sterling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Szymanski	<input type="checkbox"/> Michael Tvaruzka	<input type="checkbox"/> Emily Willems	<input type="checkbox"/> Lori Wright

Guests: Abby Johnson, Jim Schmitt

Notes: Meta Miske

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

1. Welcome and News from Schools – Jenna Murphy

- A few high school students were selected to Youth Olympics and are in Switzerland competing.
- Feature story on ECASD teacher Mike Peplinski who is a champion curler.

2. 2020-2021 District Calendar – Kay Marks and Jim Schmitt

- Jim Schmitt said FAC's feedback was very valuable last year in consolidating several three-day weekends into fewer 4-day weekends. This year has several quirks and they've had to do some shifting to make it work. Everyone received a copy of the calendar and a writing utensil.
 - Christmas is on a Thursday/Friday and many people travel on December 23. This year we are not following UWEC's Spring Break in order to match Spring Break with Good Friday.
 - There's an unwritten rule to try to finish the school year the first week in June. This calendar has students end on Thursday and teachers on Friday but holds the week following in case of excessive inclement weather.
 - Staff usually return five days prior to students, with new staff coming in four days before returning staff. This year we are proposing an additional day because we cannot start until September 1 which is a Tuesday. We pulled a PD day from May and moved it to the start of the year. It will help us finish by the end of the first week of June and allows additional coordination at the start of the year.
 - Fall Conferences have been moved two weeks earlier to get an earlier check in. Winter Conferences are around the same time. Both sets of conferences will now fall about 6 weeks into the semester.
- Questions?
 - Q: When you plan spring break do you consider other districts?
 - A: No, we don't typically worry about other districts.
 - Q: What is the impact of our spring break being a week later than UWEC's?

- A: There are worries about student teachers being able to participate and coverage for before and after school care programs. We've found it's worked out fine at other times of year when we don't match UWEC's schedule, so we believe it will not be an issue.
- FAC broke into small groups to talk and prepare feedback.
- FEEDBACK:
 - WIAA concerns – this year NHS graduates on Thursday and MHS on Friday, Friday is WIAA sectionals for track. It's assumed that will impact NHS students next year. It's also assumed track is one of the largest sports and students must choose between graduation and a chance at the State competition.
 - The District will look at conflicts and space availability to determine if a change can be made.
 - MLK Day in the eastern U.S. is not a day of education but a day of service. It would be nice to have the day off to recognize it as a holiday and day of service.
 - Having December 23 and the day before Thanksgiving off is greatly appreciated for travel and prep.
 - Having the extra day off (PD Day) in May was helpful in preventing burnout for families.
 - Jim said the first two weeks of May are AP testing so we cannot take time off nor do we want students off the Friday before AP testing begins. Memorial Day is very close to the end of the school year this year which complicated the calendar as well.
 - Spring Break would include music trips. This year's proposed trip at Memorial is to Hawaii which is a long and expensive trip and could fall in a Holiday week (Easter).
 - The schools reviewing what's appropriate for trips, as well as departure and return days.
 - This calendar would provide a week before summer school which is nice for staff.
 - Can you elaborate why conferences were moved earlier and do teachers have enough time to get to know students?
 - The original design was to have reporting to families every 6 weeks. High school conferences were adjusted to ensure high school teachers don't have conflicts with coaching.
- Non-Calendar Questions:
 - Last year there was discussion about how there wasn't a legal mechanism for the State to forgive excessive snow days. Has there been any additional discussion among the DPI or State legislature?
 - There has been no action from the Legislature that we are aware of.
 - Often there are multiple music and athletic events on the same night. Sometimes families must choose which school to go to and which child to support. Can the music and athletic department collaborate on a schedule so families don't have to pick which child to go see?
 - There was an effort to make that happen and Administration received a great deal of pushback and controversy. They will continue to press the issue to have collaboration on scheduling across levels and hope to see improvement for next year.

3. District Budget – Abby Johnson

- Abby Johnson introduced herself and shared basic information about the District's budget and per pupil spending. ECASD spends less per pupil than the State average and to bring ECASD up to the state average in per pupil spending would cost \$2.75M.
- Breakdown of how a dollar is spent in the District:
 - 77% Salary and Fringe
 - 17% contracted services (bussing, subs)
 - 4% supplies
 - 1% capital
 - 1% insurance, debt, and other
- Abby reviewed the adopted budget for both revenue and expenses, as well as a comparison to last year's budget. She discussed how it impacts us as taxpayers in terms of the tax levy. Our tax levy for the last 5 years has decreased (\$9.40/\$1,000 of equalized value prior to the referendum in 2016, now down to \$8.28/\$1,000 of equalized value.)
 - If state aid goes down, property tax goes up, if state aid goes up, property tax goes down. The 3rd Friday Count in September is very important in determining our revenue limit (based on 3-year rolling average), and the summer school membership count also drives our revenue limit.

- Last year one thing that helped ECASD go under budget included the use of highly qualified substitutes instead of permanent hires that were unfilled prior to the start of the school year.
 - Dr. Hardebeck said the hiring pool gets very shallow in August, especially for hard-to-fill positions. We have a great pool of highly qualified subs including many ECASD retirees that we can hire as a contracted service without impacting retirement benefits; having enough daily subs is another issue.
- **QUESTIONS**
 - Q: It was said that Abby presented it as being excited to come in under budget, but does that mean teachers don't want to work here and we can't get highly qualified teachers?
 - A: Dr. Hardebeck said more teachers are retiring than entering the field. We are competitive in wages and benefits with other districts in the area, but it is difficult to compete with starting salaries for other professions. As public education again becomes a priority with more investment from the state, the problem is likely to see some improvement.
 - Q: Concern expressed about subs not being paid a competitive wage a shortage of subs.
 - A: Dr. Hardebeck said there might be misinformation about wages.
 - **FOLLOW UP:** Dr. Hardebeck reached out to Chippewa Falls and Menomonie school districts to compare sub wages. Please note that Eau Claire pays the long-term sub rate based on whether the sub has a Bachelors or Masters degree.
 - **Eau Claire:** Daily \$110.40, Long Term BA: \$201.58/day, Long Term MA: \$232.88/day
 - **Chippewa Falls:** Daily: \$100.00, Long Term: \$211.64/day
 - **Menomonie:** Daily: \$120.00, Long Term \$211.86/day
 - Q: Subs have expressed not being able to continue subbing because they cannot meet requirements.
 - A: Dr. Hardebeck and Meta Miske explained that the State and the District set the requirements for subs. All subs must be licensed. There is a lot of help available for anyone who wants to get or maintain their license, but some choose to let a license lapse.
 - Discussion ensued about the challenges of the teaching career, teachers not being appreciated, teaching not being an appealing field in terms of compensation, workload, etc. Act 10 caused a great hurt for many teachers and hurt peoples view of the profession.
 - Jenna Murphy was on the State Parent Advisory group for a few years when Tony Evers was the State Superintendent. One of his biggest goals was to increase the respect of teachers and the public's view of teachers. She thinks teachers feel respected in their buildings but maybe not by the community in general.
 - Holli Jacobson said when we focus so much on students and closing gaps, we sometimes forget the teachers. Dr. Hardebeck said research tells us is that the most important factor in a student's growth is the teacher in the classroom.
 - Mark Goings shared that over the years he's seen surveys about the public's perceptions of schools. Usually they support their own school but the farther away the school, the less positive the perception.

4. Superintendent's Update

- School Board elections are coming up. Today was the deadline to file candidacy papers. There are three open seats and only two candidates, so there will be a write-in campaign for the third seat.
- The School Board has been talking about a possible referendum. They've reviewed three timelines. Demographic Trends and Facility Planning Committee is meeting to look at needs and put forward recommendations on the referendum process. We believe in February the School Board will develop a timeline.
- The School Board has posted the Superintendent job and is accepting applications. They have gone through implicit bias training and last night had training on behavioral interviewing.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 4, 2020, 7:00pm, Administration Building