

Plymouth-Canton Community Schools
Student Voice in Action Committee
Monday, November 20, 2023 @ Canton High School Media Center
Agenda

Committee Attendees: Juliet Jakubik, Sudeeksha Jois, Yash Kalani, Maxwell Krinke, Emily Lin, Hudson Lloyd, Rohit Mahesh, Iniya Mudaliyar, Sarah Nelson, Joshua Patterson, Zachary Patterson, Sae Pawar, Jushen Sidhu, Nandini Vakde, Riley Zajas, Haidy Zhang, Evan Zhen, Superintendent Monica Merritt, Dr. Liz Vartanian-Gibbs, Kurt Tyszkiewicz, Secretary Anupam Chugh Sidhu, Vice President Lauren Christenson, and McKenna Pierce

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 p.m. by Secretary Anupam Chugh Sidhu. The committee and everyone in attendance went around and introduced themselves.

Review Minutes from October 16, 2023

Secretary Anupam Chugh Sidhu asked the students to review the minutes. The minutes from October 16, 2023, were reviewed. It was suggested that the committee attendees section be reviewed since there is a duplicate name present. The meeting notes from October 16, 2023, were moved by Haidy Zhang and seconded by Zack Paterson. The October 16, 2023 meeting minutes were approved by everyone in attendance.

Welcome from Co-Chairs

Sae Pawar and Josh Patterson welcomed everyone and wished the committee a nice upcoming break.

Public Comments

John Johnston says he's very impressed with the committee and enjoys seeing the students' dedication and commitment to the Board of Education and all of the subcommittee meetings.

Review of Jamboard Activity (Josh Patterson and Sae Pawar)

Josh Patterson and Sae Pawar reviewed the results of the Jamboard activity from the last meeting. The main topics included:

- More communication from teachers regarding the mental health of students. How can teachers support students' mental health moving forward?
- Can we reduce students' workload? Increasing participation in tutoring, math lab, and chem lab.
- Can we get more college counseling before senior year?
- Many of the lunches aren't accommodating to dietary needs/restrictions. Since lunches are free now, it is still limiting certain students with dietary restrictions.
- Can SVA connect/partner with more clubs and other extracurriculars?

Students broke out into five different groups to discuss various short and long-term goals of each topic. A student representative from each breakout group was asked to present their discussion.

More communication from teachers regarding the mental health of students. How can teachers support students' mental health moving forward? (Hudson Lloyd)

Middle School level: advertising programs? Common themes for mental health based on data and counselor observations. Elementary students might be more difficult to reach as an audience.

Can we reduce students' workload? Increasing participation in tutoring, math lab, and chem lab. (Riley Zajas)

Reduce students' workload: Motivate students to take advantage of the opportunities that already exist. Students are most influenced by peers and social media and are less likely to be influenced by teachers or people at the district level. Having student-run clubs and programs promote these existing opportunities may decrease student workload.

Can we get more college counseling before senior year? (Haidy Zhang)

Start the college application process sooner. Begin chatting about college and application details sooner (Junior year) rather than at the beginning of Senior year. Students should take advantage of the current opportunities such as the career center and visiting with school counselors.

Many of the lunches aren't accommodating to dietary needs/restrictions. Since lunches are free now, it is still limiting certain students with dietary restrictions. (Rohit Mahesh)

The food served should include more Kosher and Halal options and more vegetarian options. Celiac and diabetic students should be provided with more options as well. Solutions could be salad bars and stir fry meals instead of pre-made salads offered to students. Certain food options run out quicker than other options, such as the Bosco sticks at the high school level.

Riley Zajas is looking for clarification on the process for addressing food and dietary restrictions. Kurt Tyszkiewicz is in attendance, and he suggested setting up a discussion with the staff member who oversees dietary and nutrition needs. Secretary Anupam Chugh Sidhu let the students know of another school district where students were able to make changes to the school lunch menus. She offered to set up a virtual meeting with their district to offer support and guidance.

Riley Zajas motions to vote for the students' number one option to focus on moving forward with Student Voice in Action. Alishab Sandhu seconds the motion.

0 students voted to move forward with increasing mental health support

5 students voted to move forward with lessening the student workload

3 students voted to move forward with improved college counseling support

8 students voted to move forward with creating more lunch menu options to accommodate dietary restrictions

The Student Voice in Action Committee will work toward creating a more dietary-inclusive menu for students during lunch.

Update on Board of Education Subcommittee Meetings:

Student Performance and Achievement (Hudson Lloyd and Yash Kalani)

Starkweather Academy and opening the school to 9th graders. Many benefits of Starkweather include fewer credit hours and a lighter workload. Problems include fewer extracurricular activities. Honors Photography is being changed to an Advanced Placement course. Teachers will also be receiving additional coaching to improve overall skills.

Finance and Operations Meeting

Selling a building owned by P-CCS and then planning to build a new stadium near Phase 3.

Policy Advisory Committee (Rohit Mahesh)

Various policies with main topics concerning students and technology were reviewed. Specifically, the wording was reviewed on many policies and found outdated. This information will be sent back to the board for review.

Student Handbook Feedback (Kurt Tyszkiewicz, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services)

Kurt Tyszkiewicz discussed the Student Handbook committee and the next phase of the dress code policy. Students were asked to review the dress code policy and allow them to provide feedback and research other districts' dress codes for students. Students will be given a few months to review the policy and solicit feedback from the Student Voice in Action Committee to create the dress code policy better moving forward. After a few minutes of review, Riley Zajas asked for clarification on the difference between "midriff" and "bare midriff." There could be a miscommunication and a need for language cleanup within the policy. It was suggested that students should dress for the weather, the term "gang" is broad, and potentially a repeal and/or report process within the district. It was suggested that consequences should be stated clearly in the policy. Superintendent Monica Merritt said that there seems to be an inconsistency between the current policy and what is being followed in buildings. Maybe multiple offenses should be initiated to give students a warning, while still following through with the appropriate consequences. It was suggested that the reason behind certain dress code restrictions be explained.

New Member Process (Vice President Lauren Christenson)

It was shared that we have 25 current SVA members, both students and adult members. We have closed the application process for the 23-24 school year and have received 43 student applications. Hudson Lloyd suggested accepting all 43 students. Riley Zajas suggested that we use the previous rubric to decide which applicants will be accepted but in a swift fashion. Vice President Lauren Christenson suggested creating a small group to review applications. It would be ideal to decide by the next meeting so that we can open up the December committee meeting to the new members. Dr. Liz Vartanian-Gibbs suggested that all students who completed an application within the district be accepted into SVA.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m. by Josh Patterson.

Upcoming Meetings

Monday, December 18, 2023
 Monday, January 29, 2024
 Monday, February 26, 2024
 Monday, March 18, 2024
 Monday, April 15, 2024
 Monday, May 20, 2024