



**Huntington Union Free School District
District-Wide Shared Decision-Making Regular Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the District Shared Decision-Making Committee of the Huntington Union Free School District was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. at the Jack Abrams Administrative Office, 50 Tower Street, Huntington Station, N.Y. A motion made by Nancy Allard and seconded by Nicholas Matarazzo to begin the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

ATTENDEES:

Maria Adcock, Nancy Allard, Allison Bean, Jen Biancardo, Mary Brandt, Rochelle Brown, Charilyz Cardona, Allison Conlon, Ruth Escobar, Paula Gasparino, Sarah Hall, John Hlavaty, Denise Lazarus, Rosario Lorenzana, Dawn Marmo, Nicholas Matarazzo, Ricky Papandrea, Diana Rich, Catherine Schaeffer, Kimberly Summers

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion made by Ricky Papandrea and seconded by Rochelle Brown to approve the minutes of the District Shared Decision-Making Committee meeting of 11/12/2024.

REPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS:

Flower Hill Primary School (Allison Conlon)

- International Day and since PARP provided the students with exposure to various countries. In addition,
- The Dual Language students in K-3 will perform to their parents on Wednesday, May 15th.
- Coffee and Conversations – Ms. Siegel will schedule another meeting for the end of May. Great opportunity for families to speak with the principal. Parents were given a survey by Ms. Siegel of their interests. The topic most parents were interested in discussing are academics. Mrs. Siegel invited Mrs. C. LoFaro, Math RTI teacher, to join the upcoming meeting.
- Teachers have been experimenting with CANVA to adjust and create differentiated materials to meet the needs of their students. It was suggested that math activities/reading materials be given to students for the summer.
- Glen Edwards will work on generating a Coat drive for our students to have access to if a need arises.
- Jeanine Caras will work on having a Therapy Dog come to Flower Hill, perhaps 4x a year.
- During "PS I Love You" week the students were given rocks to paint and write positive affirmations on them. They will be displayed at our front entrance in the Spring.
- Outdoor Learning Center – parent, Kate Laffey, will get quotes and see how our PTA could help fund an outdoor learning space (fundraising for the different phases involved.)

Jefferson Primary School (Cathy Schaeffer)

- **Goal:** *By June 2025, Jefferson Primary School will establish and implement a mentoring program aimed at improving social, emotional, and academic outcomes for identified students, with measurable success as indicated by teacher and student feedback and improved attendance rates.*

- **Action Plan:**
 - **Criteria for the Mentoring Program**
We developed clear criteria for identifying students who could benefit from mentoring. This program is designed for students who are "falling through the cracks" and could use additional support, rather than those already receiving mental health services. Based on these criteria, 38 students were recommended for the Mentor Program.
 - **Survey Faculty and Staff for Mentor Volunteers**
The principal introduced the new mentor program during several grade-level and staff meetings and surveyed teachers and staff for volunteers.
 - **Identify Students for the Mentoring Program**
Using the established criteria, students who would benefit from additional support were identified and assigned potential mentors. The principal distributed parent permission slips outlining the program's benefits and requesting consent for student participation.
 - **Develop a Mentoring Team**
The principal invited staff members to join a Mentoring Team planning committee. The team discussed resources, the creation of a Google Classroom, a mentor resource area, and the development of a questionnaire and exit ticket for the end-of-year survey.
 - **Kickoff Event: "Pizza with Their Mentor"**
To introduce the program, build excitement, and establish rapport, the principal organized a "Pizza with Their Mentor" event. The gathering included a "get to know you" questionnaire for selected students, mentors, and the principal. A total of 21 students and 21 mentors attended.
 - **Plan for End-of-Year Assessment**
To evaluate the program's impact on student engagement, attendance, and academic/social outcomes, surveys will be conducted with mentors, teachers, and participating students. This feedback will be used to make targeted improvements for the following year.
- **Events/Activities**
 - During November 18-23, we celebrated American Education Week. We hosted 76 parent/guardian visitors.
 - On November 26, we hosted 17 parents/guardians and alumni volunteers for College and Career Awareness Day.
 - On December 5 and 6, the PTA hosted a Holiday Boutique. Every student, regardless of whether they brought money, was able to leave with a holiday gift for their family.
 - In December, the PTA had a "Giving Tree" to support Jefferson families in need.
 - On December 18, we hosted a Holiday Read Aloud Night - 144 guests attended.
 - On December 19, we hosted our annual Winter Songfest and invited all family members into our classrooms for a celebration.
 - On December 20, we hosted a PBIS Conga Dance Party to celebrate positive behaviors.
 - On January 17, the PTA hosted a BINGO Night.
 - On February 13, we hosted a PBIS School-Wide BINGO game highlighting positive behaviors.
 - On February 14, we hosted class parents in our K & 1 classes for Valentine's Day crafts.

Southdown Primary School (Dawn Marmo / Kim Summers)

Goal#1: Increase family engagement by 20% through the implementation of monthly family-focused events by June 2025.

- **Supportive Items in Place:**
 - Songfest 12/17/24- 200 chairs were set up and for both shows there was standing room only.

- Holiday Boutique in December- this was new for Southdown and there was a lot of parent support in setting up and running the event during school days.
- Parent Engagement Night 1/15/25- Math Night- attendance increased from previous family engagement night and it was a huge success.
- Monthly Newsletters- continue to be posted on ParentSquare and sent home in English and Spanish each month along with school spirit flyers that are dedicated for each month. Pictures are posted on our television screens in the lobby and cafeteria.
- Our Parent Engagement Committee meets monthly to plan fun spirit weeks and has been sharing ideas and resources with other primary buildings.
- Class Parents- 2-4 parents per class come into classrooms to read and work on crafts throughout the year.
- PARP began on 1/21/25- huge success and parents were invited to read to every class throughout the two weeks. Classes attended a PTA sponsored assembly from the Planetarium as a culminating celebration. Parents outdid themselves with beautiful decorations.
- PTA Someone Special Dance 2/13/25- a very well attended event where one parent came for each child in attendance. Again, parents did a wonderful job decorating.
- P.S. I Love You Week 2/10/25- a flyer was sent out to families explaining the focus for each day and how it can be supported at home. Parents made a beautiful balloon arch.
- Surveys were sent out after each Parent Engagement Night with successful reviews.
- Next step- an additional family engagement night is in discussion for the spring.

Goal#2: Develop a "New Student Welcome Program" to ensure 100% of new students feel supported and connected within their first month at Southdown Primary, as measured by a welcome survey by June 2025.

▪ **Supportive Items in Place:**

- Welcome folder is in place and additional items were added including spirit week flyers, lunch menus, and class schedules.
- New students are celebrated and announced during our morning announcements.
- Student ambassadors- new students are paired up with another student from their class to support them through the transition.
- Each new student is also paired with a staff member to build a relationship with an adult in the building and to have someone to "check in and check out" with.
- Welcome kit in place with supplies and materials so new students are ready to learn immediately.
- Next step- to create a short student survey to gather feedback on their transition experience and ensure they feel comfortable and connected.
- Next step- parent ambassadors- Our goal is to connect with the PTA and have class parents help new parents serve as a resource and help them navigate Southdown and activities around Huntington.

Goal#3: Implement the new Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program school-wide to improve positive behavior by 20% in classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and playground areas by June 2025, as measured by PBIS behavior tracking data.

▪ **Supportive Items in Place:**

- PBIS Team met with PBIS trainer Megan in person and virtually. The team created a Dolphin Report to indicate when a student's behavior needs to be improved. This report has pictures and words to help students identify better choices they can make.
- The team meets monthly to continue discussing our behavior PBIS program and work on agenda items that are discussed with the trainer Megan.
- Monthly Splash Award Assembly targets and highlights the positive behaviors we focus on each month.

- Dolphin Dollars and Store menus have been a great success. Positive behavior in classrooms and around the school has increased and students are highly motivated to earn Dolphin Dollars. One grade per week has the opportunity to shop and redeem their dollars.
- Survey to staff went out to elicit feedback to see PBIS rubric is being used in classrooms and how the management of the Dolphin Dollar system is working.
- Information is shared with staff at faculty meetings to ensure consistent understanding and implementation of the PBIS rubric and expectations across all areas.
- The team has created behavior definitions that are easy for students to understand at the primary level.
- Parents were updated at a PTA meeting and the PBIS matrix and Dolphin Dollar system were explained.
- P.S. I Love You week was in February. Self-love and positive affirmations were focused on and connected to our PBIS program.

Washington Primary School (Nicholas Matarazzo / Charlyz Cardone)

- December, 2024
 - Book of the Month - Bitter and Sweet
 - Family Engagement Night - Read with Me Aboard the Polar Express
 - Families came together for an evening of enchantment and read alouds inspired by the book "The Polar Express"
 - Computer Science Spirit Week-December 9-13, 2024
 - students and faculty/staff dressed in a specific theme each day i.e. Make Your Mark: dress in your favorite dot attire; Mismatched Day: use an algorithm to mix up a wacky outfit
 - At-Home Activities for each night encouraged families to engage in coding activities, virtual field trips, etc.
- January, 2025
 - Book of the Month - Halal Hotdogs
 - Recognize Middle Eastern culture, virtual assembly
 - MLK Jr. virtual assembly – Principles of Nonviolence
 - Lunar New Year virtual assembly and bulletin board
- February, 2025
 - Book of the Month - This Is the Rope
 - 100th Day of School Kindness Bootcamp
 - faculty/staff distribute Wolfie stickers when they see acts of kindness
 - PS I Love You Day: February 14, 2025
 - Virtual assembly - what does it mean?
 - building wide "What Makes Your Heart Happy!" activity with purple hearts that were displayed throughout the building
 - Word UP Wednesdays
 - students and faculty/staff wear shirts with words every Wednesday in the month of February
 - Art Family Engagement Night February 5, 2025
 - families worked as a unit to create a collage/image that represented their family's heritage and culture
 - Wear Red for Healthy Hearts February 28, 2024
 - Morning announcements about ways to keep the heart healthy
 - Line dancing 'dance breaks' throughout the day
 - Connection to home/message in the weekly updates
- March, 2025
 - Book of the Month -
 - PARP with PTA
 - PARP kickoff assembly

- PARP Night - 3/13

Jack Abrams STEM Magnet School (Ruth Escobar)

- **Goal:** Increase parent engagement through expanded communications pathways and offer opportunities for students and families to share cultural backgrounds and make connections.

1. Culture Expo & Gallery Walk

- Took place on January 8, 2025, with strong parental participation.
- Gallery Walk showcased student learning through classroom demonstrations.
- Special content areas enhanced the event with:
 - Cultural music and dance performances by students.
 - A display of instruments from around the world using QR codes.
 - A visit from High School World Language Clubs.
 - "Make Your Own Mini-Worry Doll" activity station by the Art Department.
 - Families sharing their cultural heritage.

2. Paint Night

- Held on February 11, 2025.
- Successfully engaged 50 families.

3. Targeted Family Night (Game Night for RTI Students & Families)

- Scheduled for early April.
- Focused on engaging families in games supporting reading and math skill development.

- **Goal:** Increase opportunities for students to feel represented and connected to teachers and the larger school community. Increase student exposure to leadership and exposure to community service opportunities.

4. Agents of Positive Change

- Student leadership group focusing on key topics:
 - Conflict resolution
 - Bullying
 - Upcoming topic: Celebrating diversity
- Goal: Equip students with skills to handle challenges and serve as positive role models.
- Over 80 applications received from students across all grade levels.
- Monthly meetings introduce new skills for students to implement in classrooms.
- Growing interest in the program.

5. 5th & 6th Grade Helper Program

- Provides students with an opportunity to contribute to the school community.
- Teachers who volunteered for the program will be paired with student helpers.

6. Community Unity Day & Color Run

- In the planning stage, scheduled for Saturday, May 31.
- School-wide house meetings will determine which charity each house will support during the event.

Woodhull Intermediate School (Paula Gasparino / Maria Adcock)

- **Goal:** The Woodhull Shared Decision-Making Committee acknowledges the importance of addressing the social and emotional needs of our students. We will implement support strategies, including direct instruction, mentoring programs, and PBIS initiatives. Our aim is to empower students by fostering leadership skills, promoting critical thinking, and actively enhancing student

voice, ultimately helping them develop a sense of belonging and agency in their educational experience at Woodhull.

- PBIS is moving forward. Students are excited to be chosen as Eagles of the Month. They are showing positive attributes of the Woodhull Way both in and out of school. (lovely compliments from volunteers at play rehearsals)
 - Community Circles have been happening on a steady scheduled basis. Positive feedback has been gathered from students and teachers.
 - Woodhull Mentor program carries on garnering more participation this year from teachers.
 - The Principal's Roundtable started on a small scale with the Student Council. It was well received by the kiddos and they freely shared insightful ideas and comments.
 - Learners who LEAD is fully underway as it is now presented to all 3 grade levels.
 - Continue to embrace spirit weeks before breaks i.e.: Holiday and Kindness.
- **Goal:** The Woodhull Shared Decision-Making Team understands that family engagement and involvement in school play a vital role in enhancing student outcomes. We aim to foster a welcoming school environment through targeted outreach initiatives, 2-way communication opportunities and school events designed to boost participation from all members of our diverse school community.
- STEM Night was a Success. Bingo Night and Paint Night are up next.
 - Career Day is set for May 22. Students will be exposed to a variety of careers from dentist to music industry lawyer to priest and everything in between.
 - The Field Day committee has met. This year will be a completely new experience for students, families and staff. Activities will take place inside and outside the school.
 - Learners who LEAD Celebration of Service is gaining momentum. Students are actively researching their intended projects and working towards going out into the community.
 - 4th grade is creating the merchandise for our Color Run
 - 5th grade is going down to the Primaries
 - 6th grade is going out into the larger community i.e.: Helping Hands, Sunken Meadow

Finley Middle School (Mary Brandt)

- **Goal:** Continue to increase measures that promote comprehensive parent/guardian engagement and a welcoming environment in all district schools. Build upon our current culture of appreciation for the diverse nature of our school district community and its students through alignment of curriculum and instruction and recruiting practices.
- Have a parent engagement night encouraging parents and students to work together to complete a task as teams with other families.
 - Incorporate the engagement night activity to align with in school activities currently happening in the school
 - Parent Liaison hosting monthly meetings and two workshops for our ENL families. Goal: Implement and evaluate programs that support the social and emotional well-being of our students and staff to build upon interpersonal connections throughout the district.
 - Assessment:
 - Attendance at evening event
- **Goal:** Implement and evaluate programs that support the social and emotional well-being of our students and staff to build upon interpersonal connections throughout the district.
- Have a parent engagement night on Social Media and Middle School students with both parents and students attending
 - Bring in at least 2 assemblies that are related to social and emotional well-being
 - Continuing our mentoring program
 - Assessment:

- End of the year survey from the students about their experience with the programs at Finley and the assemblies.
- Attendance at evening event.

At Finley....

- New Monitor in Blue Zone to replace a broken one, keeping students informed and updated on happenings in the building was installed over February break.
- PBIS - new rewards are being added to the menu of student rewards. Students that are repeat earners of tickets each month will start to earn PBIS cash to use in a PBIS rewards store. For increments of 5, 10, 15, 20 tickets earned they will earn PBIS cash that they can save up to redeem in the PBIS store.
- Spirit week participation was increased this past spirit week by rewarding students that participated in the daily theme and were in homeroom to receive extra PBIS tickets.
- On a Roll students are being honored for their improvement quarter 1 to quarter 2.
- January wrapped up midterms and iReady testing
- The Book Fair was held December 4 - 6th in the cafeteria and was well received by students.
- Collaboration with the Huntington Public Library and Finley Library to support monthly themes in the building has been successful. For this past month students learned about Black History and kits were available for students to create almanacs/journals in the library just like Benjamin Banneker. Next month for Woman's History month students will learn about Elizabeth Magie, she invented The Landlord's Game, the precursor to Monopoly. Students will be able to create their own board game with a kit.

Huntington High School (Sarah Hall)

- **Goal:** Huntington High School's Shared Decision-Making Team will identify and implement initiatives/programs to promote the academic, social, and emotional growth of students by bridging learning gaps, increasing cultural awareness, career exploration, and self-awareness of individual learning styles so that they may avail themselves of the resources available to them.

SCHOOL INITIATIVES TO MEET HHS ANNUAL GOALS:

- Career Spotlight Event: students meet with individuals from various professions, including plumbers, electricians, welders, automotive, and healthcare fields to explore career options.
- Town & Career Resource Fair: Community-based job exploration, students meet and greet union laborers and representatives from various utility companies and community organizations (childcare provided by HHS librarian Mrs. Bean):
 - Town of Huntington
 - Youth Court
 - Well Life
 - Family Service League
 - Tri CYA
 - Con Edison/Local Unions
- Self-Assessment-Learning Style Inventory: administered to students during advisory circles – start in March; students report on self-help skills (i.e. eating, sleeping, daily screen time, exercise habits, etc.).
- Bluetique/Blue Market: raising funds from donated clothing. Products such as food/hygiene items are available to students at the Blue Market.
- Commemorating Black History Month: The Afro-Caribbean Club school presentation, HHS daily morning announcements honoring contributions of African Americans.
- Celebration of Culture Event: Decorations, banners, posters, dancers, and multi-ethnic foods served. Students/clubs can sign up to have a table for the event.

- Women's History Month: honoring the achievements and contributions that women of all backgrounds have made throughout the history of the United States and the world.

PTA – No Report

SEPTA (Diana Rich)

- Sunset on the Sounds is approaching and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Title Funds (Nancy Allard)

- The Consolidated Grant has been approved. We are in full swing with the initiatives, including parent engagement, home-visits, and instructional coaching. Our technology mentors are providing AI PD to all teachers in the District.
- Our two, Title I buildings will be asked to review the District Title I Policy and School-Parent Compacts before the end of the year.
- Our 25-26 UPK lottery applications are now available. We have had a great response and have already received over 125 applications in just 2 weeks. Lottery applications are due April 7th and the lottery will take place on April 10th, with registration to follow afterwards. Parents are notified of their placements in June.
- There will be a virtual UPK information meeting for parents on March 7th. Details are on the school website.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction (Brenden Cusack)

- Update on PBIS initiatives, planning at each building and district-wide planning to align practices in advance of Fall 2025 rollout
- Discussion of K-6 report card committee work and the initial meeting that was held to lay foundation for next year's work to revamp report cards
- Sharing of the Ex Officio Board of Education student member selection process

Future Meetings: May 22, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Sarah Hall and seconded by Nancy Allard to adjourn the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

Minutes compiled and prepared by Kisha Fowlkes