

DAC Meeting Minutes

PSD Boardroom

Wednesday, August 21, 2024

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Present

Ashley Barrett	Clare Barquero	Stephanie Cotton-Maceta
Erica Daniell	Jess Ellis Hagman	Tena Green
Marcy Lewis	Marybeth Rigali-Oiler	Ian Rutherford
Scott Schoenbauer	Michael Werner	Becky Woodcox
Joe Zappa		

Welcome and Introductions

Dwayne welcomed the committee members.

Approval of Minutes

May 15, 2024, minutes were approved and seconded as amended.

Preview the Meeting Design – Dwayne Schmitz

Dwayne previewed the meeting design.

DAC Responsibilities – Dwayne Schmitz

Reviewed annual responsibilities and that the DAC is an important voice, not a vote.

- The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) aligns with the district’s Strategic Plan and addresses three Priority Performance Challenges: Literacy, Mental Health/Belonging, and Graduating with Options. It aims to disrupt disproportionality while achieving high results for all students. Various stakeholders, including the board of education, the cabinet, the community, and others, influenced the selection of the UIP’s Priority Performance Challenges.
- Written recommendation on spending priorities
- The 1338 Committee is responsible for reviewing how the district evaluates staff based on student outcome data. State mandates require that 30% of an evaluation be based on student outcomes, with the other 70% determined through measures of “Professional Practice”. This committee reviews the process and provides input.
- Family engagement

Preview UIP Presentation – Dwayne Schmitz

Dwayne reviewed the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) presentation that will be presented to the board on Tuesday, August 27th. He showed the committee data highlighting the district's improvements in the three priority areas. PSD has made measurable improvements in all three areas over the past three years.

Review Draft UIP – Dwayne Schmitz

The committee reviewed the action steps on the proposed Literacy and Mental Health/Belonging major improvement strategies and provided feedback. See notes below on the Graduation with Options section which was reviewed outside of scheduled meeting time.

Literacy

The first year of implementation was successful, and as we enter the second year, we're maintaining our focus and continuing our development efforts through professional learning days. This ongoing commitment ensures that our goals remain a priority.

Text, Task, Thinking - Based on feedback from external observers, our K-12 focus is on shifting the intellectual workload from teachers to students. The goal is for students to be more actively engaged in learning by using appropriate texts aligned with tasks, ensuring that students, rather than teachers, are leading the thinking process.

To summarize, our recent efforts at the middle school level have primarily focused on improving the tasks student engage in. The latest edition of the UIP, point #4 in Literacy, addresses the accessibility of materials, which is a significant priority. Establishing the necessary infrastructure to ensure compliance with state law required considerable time and effort from our IT department. Teachers need ongoing professional development and training to fully integrate these changes, and it may take some time before it feels completely natural for everyone. However, this year's focus is on ensuring accessibility, making sure that all students can access information effectively, whether visually or verbally. Addressing and disrupting disproportionality requires us to adopt different approaches than we've used in the past.

Committee Discussion on Literacy:

- There have been concerns that, despite helpful initial onboarding, some teachers are still facing challenges with implementation.
 - To address this, we have a plan for year two to provide continued support and skill refinement. Recently, we organized a professional learning day for all K-5 teachers, not just teachers new to PSD. While vendor-led training was prominent in the first year, we are now focusing on district-led support from staff familiar with the materials. We will monitor the implementation closely over the next few years, emphasizing long-term support and thorough professional learning to ensure the successful integration of new practices in the classrooms.
- How can we control a cohort effect, specifically looking at fifth graders who were kindergartners during COVID? Given the fundamentals of reading, it seems there was a drop-off during the 2020-2024 period. It would be interesting to see if these students were disproportionately impacted by the loss of learning during those critical kindergarten and first-grade years.
 - Dwayne demonstrated to the committee how to access and review the district's data, which is available to the public.
 - [PSD Website](#) > Community > [Research and Evaluation](#) > PSD Data (System Insight). The comment above can be addressed using data in the PSD Achievement/Growth dashboard hyperlink.
- The 9th and 10th grade literacy curriculum are part of the six adoptions in 2023/24 that are now being implemented.

- Training is being extended to all 9-12 language arts teachers due to the curriculum's impact on upper-level courses. PSD is heavily investing in professional development.
- Some teachers have reported frustration with vendor training. To address this, the PSD curriculum department is providing robust support.
- Culturally responsive and sustaining education (CRSE) practices stem from our commitment to ensuring that all students feel represented and welcome in the classroom. CRSE focuses on fostering inclusion and helping students connect with their peers. Some staff report frustration if they perceive CRSE being a focus of curriculum implementations. Integrating CRSE is a newer focus for our district and aligns with our DEI goals. We remain committed to ensuring that students feel supported and included across all areas of learning. More information on CRSE can be found on the [CDE website](#).
- At the K-5 level, literacy training is specific to reading. In middle and high schools, where teachers may specialize in different subjects, literacy training can be more general and applied across various subjects. The approach to training varies by school structure—some have subject specialists, while others have generalists. Training on text complexity and literacy integration spans multiple subjects and grade levels.
- Yes, there is a unified plan for writing skills and critical thinking based on state standards, which outline the expected progression of writing proficiency by grade level. Structured lessons and opportunities for practice in presentation and dialogue are also provided. Although not all students are required to participate in every activity, programs like speech and debate are available across schools to enhance communication and presentation skills.
- The discussion highlights the integration of literacy across various subjects, noting that while middle and high school curricula may not always focus specifically on literacy, the principles of text, task, and thinking are being applied throughout. This includes working with teachers from different disciplines, such as math and PE, to incorporate literacy skills into their instruction. The emphasis is on how students engage with different types of texts and cognitive tasks, whether through reading novels, analyzing non-fiction, or interpreting multimedia content. The approach aims to ensure that literacy is a fundamental aspect of learning across all subjects, supported by systematic instructional practices.

The DAC supports the literacy action steps in the UIP.

Mental Health & Belonging

Committee Discussion on Mental Health & Belonging

- Glad to see restorative practices included
- This year, the focus for 4th and 6th grades is due to data-driven decisions and resource constraints. Training and resources are limited, so the initiative is starting with these grades. If successful, it will be expanded to other grades in the future.
- \$13.9 million from grants has been used to staff schools. The UIP includes funding from various sources over multiple years.

- One DAC member raised a concern that elevating trauma-informed mental health support in the plan might inadvertently suggest that most students have severe issues, which could negatively impact their perception of their own situations.
 - A response to this concern was that the action steps in the UIP aim to improve staff understanding and responsiveness rather than labeling or assuming every student has trauma.
- The plan primarily targets staff development, with only one component directly aimed at student instruction. Feedback suggested adding specific action steps for increasing staff awareness of available resources and improving outreach to families. There was also an emphasis on integrating family involvement into the plan, noting that positive reinforcement at school should be matched by support at home. The goal is to ensure that the plan effectively supports students while acknowledging and utilizing existing resources for families and staff.
- The committee discussed the need to clearly outline the cell phone policy/practices in the action steps. They addressed concerns about students with special needs who may require cell phones, suggesting that the community generally understands these needs, such as for medical reasons. They also acknowledged potential issues with students feeling singled out due to their need for a phone and stressed the importance of maintaining consistency with the policy. They emphasized the benefits of limiting cell phone use, including improved focus and mental health, and advocated for leading in this area rather than lagging behind other districts.
- Suggestion made to include timelines in the action steps to assist schools with planning.

The DAC has approved the action steps in the Mental Health/Belonging section, pending the discussed modifications. Dwayne will review these changes with his team and email the updated modifications to the DAC by Monday afternoon. The DAC members will then email Dwayne with their approval or any further concerns.

Graduating with options

The committee will review the action steps for Graduating with Options and send their feedback to Dwayne via email by Friday, August 23 at 5 p.m.

Truancy has increased nationwide. The approach to addressing absences should be compassionate rather than punitive.

Regarding post-secondary options (3b), services, including CTE programs and college classes in high schools, will be expanded to facilitate greater involvement for students and families.

In terms of equitable grading (3c), the process will be implemented gradually over several years, focusing on building understanding and capacity, starting in middle school. This approach is expected to help address multiple issues including truancy.

Vote in New Member Recommendations – Dwayne Schmitz

The committee will vote on new members at the September meeting.

Remaining Seats:

- Parent of an English Language Learner
- Parent of a middle school student

Closing

The next DAC meeting will be September 18, 2024, JSSC Boardroom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Adjourned

2024-25 Meeting Dates

- August 21, 2024
- September 18, 2024
- October 16, 2024
- November 20, 2024
- January 15, 2025
- February 19, 2025
- April 16, 2025
- May 14, 2025

Parking Lot Items: