

Samuelson SAC Meeting Notes 9.28.23

Thursday, September 28th, 5pm – Samuelson Library

AGENDA

Review information from first and last meeting notes from 22-23 (see below) and compare definition, purpose and goals to new DMPS SAC Implementation Guide

Discuss work done and work left to be done from 22-23 year.

Determine Samuelson SAC goals or goal areas going forward.

FIRST & LAST MEETING SUMMARY INFORMATION 22-23

Initial Samuelson SAC Meetings 22-23	DMPS SAC Implementation Guide (new for 23-24)
SAC DEFINITION	
A family-led, collaborative team that works to improve the communication and relationships between schools, families, and the community. Not meant to act as a PTO/PTA, which fundraises and provides supplies to teachers, but the two could collaborate.	A School Advisory Council (SAC) is a family-led collaborative team that works to improve school culture and climate and build relationships between each school, families, and community

Initial Samuelson SAC Meetings 22-23	DMPS SAC Implementation Guide (new for 23-24)
SAC PURPOSE	
Collect and examine school data in order to brainstorm solutions to challenges affecting academic achievement, school climate and culture, family engagement	Review school specific data (surveys, student and family feedback, academic/ISASP, etc.) to determine areas of concern and opportunities for growth
Support and involvement in decision making for school-based policies	Hold family and student driven strategic conversations to develop improvement strategies and solutions
	Identify resources and levers to implement strategies, and;
	Monitor implementation progress
Develop a culture of community	SAC members are empowered to communicate and advocate beyond the school building when strategies are beyond the scope of the SAC and district-level solutions and decisions are required for school improvement.
Provide input on discretionary spending and school-based policies.	

DMPS SAC Implementation Guide SAC Goals:

SAC discussions must be centered around school data that supports the following goals:

- Improve school climate and culture,
- Improve school safety
- Improve staff and student health and well being
- Strengthen family engagement
- Improve academic achievement

Themes and work done last year; areas to revisit:

THEME	PROBLEM AREA(S)	ACTION(S) TAKEN	IMPROVEMENT AREA(S)
Communication	Information being shared in a timely manner/as early as possible.	Encouraged teachers to share classroom information sooner; Tabitha and Savannah share information as soon as they can.	
	Explanation of what events or activities are.	Page added to the website with basic explanations of events; Page added to the website explaining school vocabulary (example: what is SEL); Tabitha and Savannah being cognizant of adding short explanations to Snap! posts when necessary.	
	Following up with information when possible (example: PTO fundraiser update)	Sharing updates when brought to our attention; will make an active effort to remember to do this in the 23-24 year when necessary.	
	Families not knowing all the features of Snap! Connect or how to use it at all.		NO ACTIONS TAKEN – Savannah can work on putting together an IC messenger for Tabitha to send out to all families.
Family Engagement	Families not knowing what events are or what the expectation is.	Added page to the website with examples of family engagement; added page to the website with event explanations; active effort to explain what an event is when posted on Snap! Connect.	
	Families feeling pressure or being overwhelmed with expectations of family engagement.		
	Family engagement not being accessible to all families.	Monthly, low commitment/effort family events added for the 23-24 school year with various themes.	
	Disconnect between what families and school staff see as “good” family engagement; shown through survey of school staff.		TBD: if this were a Venn Diagram, how do we find the middle and what does that look like?
Volunteering vs. Visiting	Not understanding the difference between the two.	Page added to website with explanation of the two and instructions on filling out the volunteer application.	
	Not knowing when it’s appropriate to visit.		

	Not knowing what volunteer opportunities are available or the variety of what they can be.		Staff have gone so long without using volunteers – the opportunities are there but we are not communicating them to interested volunteers well = lack of volunteer interest or engagement.
School Safety	No issues directly identified.		
School Data	No issues directly identified/data was not reviewed.	Idea from last year: sharing out when Samuelson meets its goals. Example: 3 rd grade has met their reading goal, encourage families to celebrate their 3 rd graders at home and foster feelings of pride in schoolwork.	

Based on the above information/work done last year, what goals should Samuelson's SAC have?

Notes from discussion:

- Understanding Snap! Connect and it's features – still not very clear to many what all it can do
 - Need to do a better job at conferences explaining everything/having more available to show people
 - **ACTION:** Savannah can make a small half sheet with a few points and/or screenshots to show people what it looks like and what features it has
 - She can also be available to show people in person what it can do
- Share out school data to increase family understanding and pride in school progress – need to determine what that data should be and when to share it out.
 - **ACTION:** Savannah and admin will determine what might be helpful and bring it to the November meeting. SAC members can request more information or other data from there.
- Idea to share out a communication preference survey for families – many are still preferring to get info from IC messenger or use email. This is okay but we need to continue to shift to one communication platform so its more consistent/less overwhelming to read about everything that is going on at school.
 - Since Snap! Connect imports data from IC, can IC have something in there that links to Snap! Connect so parents understand the two are connected?
 - **ACTION:** Savannah can ask district Infinite Campus staff about this.
 - **ACTION:** Savannah will reach out to Snap! Connect IT to see if they can change to add instant or at least more customizable notifications for teachers on their computers– we all get the daily digest notification email and sometimes that creates a day or two delay in communication. The app is the only way to get instant notifications currently.
 - Until we know if this is possible can continue to encourage teachers to check their Snap accounts daily.
- Revisiting conversation about traffic/speed in the neighborhood – the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association is also looking into how to get a stop light added at the four way stop at Lower Beaver and Bel Aire. Amy shared about how there needs to be many, many different voices of people who do not work at Samuelson to get a traffic study done.
 - **ACTION:** Savannah can give the traffic hotline number to Tabitha and she can recommend to that neighbors who call in about traffic/speed to call the number.
- Need to continue work on how to grow the SAC and make it look more like our school
 - **ACTION:** Savannah is planning to hand out some personal invitations at conferences to draw more people to the November meeting.
- Family event times - should we be pushing some times back to start after 5pm? We haven't really received any explicit feedback from families about family event times.

- **ACTION:** Going forward we can start making sure to record attendance and the time of the event to look for patterns and see what works best for our families. We may even consider changing the time up on purpose to see what effect it has.
- Meet the Teacher Night is probably the most important family event of the year.
 - **ACTION:** Extend the time frame next year and get a headcount to gauge how many families attend and what the issue might be if attendance is low (ex. Nervousness about not having school supplies).
 - The more that attend this event the less stress there is on the first day of school.
- **WORK IN PROGRESS:** Need to communicate to school staff a mindset shift with family engagement. One of the responses on the staff survey last year said they saw family engagement as 100% attendance at all events. This is extremely unrealistic and we need to find a way to better align what teachers expect and what is realistic for our families without shaming families for it not being “good enough.” Will also need to consider how cultural differences might affect family engagement.
- Volunteers – teachers aren’t being vocal about volunteer needs as we’ve gone several years without having them in the building. Need to do a better job connecting volunteers with needs in the building and reminding teachers this is available to them.
 - **ACTION:** Savannah will begin reminding teachers at weekly MTSS meetings to communicate volunteer needs and can share examples with teachers who want a volunteer but might not know what to use them for.

GOAL AREAS FOR 2023-2024:

- Encourage usage of volunteers by school staff to increase volunteer engagement and help parent/guardian volunteers feel more comfortable being in the building.
- Through personal invitations and word-of-mouth, increase the number of parent/guardians on the SAC, ensuring the group is representative of the Samuelson student body demographic. Once accomplished, invite Samuelson community partners and other Samuelson staff to join the group.
- Continue to nurture family engagement and share feedback or education to school staff to ensure realistic expectations.
- Analyze school data, identify areas for improvement, brainstorm solutions and share successes with families.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, November 30th