

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting – Oct. 26, 2023

CAC Members: David Heinke, Andrew LaManque, Benaifer Dastoor, Ganesh Balgi, Daniel McCune, Lori Cunningham, Wes Morse, C.S. Prakash, Melinda Hamilton, Zongbo Chen, Kevin Du, Shirley Frantz

FEA Representatives: Carley Stavis, FEA President

Students: Saisuijan Kotakonda, Jennifer Chua

FUHSD Administrators: Superintendent Clark, Associate Superintendent Trudy Gross, Coordinator of Data and Assessment Denae Nurnberg, Director of Human Resources Paula Robinson, Director of Administrative Services Jason Crutchfield, Cupertino High School Principal Kami Tomberlain, Fremont High School Principal Bryan Emmert, Homestead High School Principal Greg Giglio, Lynbrook High School Assistant Principal Dave Erwin, Coordinator of Communications Rachel Zlotziver

Welcome

Superintendent Clark opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. He shared that at tonight's meeting staff is going to do a deeper dive into how we maintain comprehensive high schools and what that looks like as district enrollment continues to decline, particularly as related to World Language. Superintendent Clark also shared that there has been a lot of public interest on this topic and some criticism, and we are preparing to share this information with the Board of Trustees at the Nov. 7 Board meeting. What is happening with World Language now could affect other departments in the future. What is tough about World Language is that while it is considered one department, it is really four smaller departments within one larger department. The district has and will continue to need to address the same issues of decline in other departments, but World Language is feeling the effects strongly right now.

Review of CAC Feedback from September Meeting (Slides 4 through 6)

- 84% of CAC members that responded strongly agreed the last meeting met their expectations and provided a better understanding on the enrollment issues in the District
- 63% of CAC members that responded strongly agreed with the recommendation to extend the LSSAP and MSSAP programs for two more years
- 63% of CAC members that responded strongly agreed with the decision to shift the focus of the CAC to the issues created by the long-term enrollment decline of all schools

Declining Enrollment and World Language (Slides 8 through 23)

Denae Nurnberg, Coordinator of Data and Assessment, provided information about the effects of declining enrollment on World Language programming. She shared that while we currently offer 20 levels of language across all five school sites (Level 1 through 5 of Chinese, French, Japanese and Spanish). She shared that we have struggled to maintain 20 levels of language even when most of our sites were enrolled with over 2,000 students. The central problem is that as we get smaller, not only will our classes become smaller, but the number of singletons will also continue to increase and create additional challenges in our scheduling process which will further limit access to student course requests.

- Question: Has the district ever thought about combining classes remotely across the district?
 - Dr. Nurnberg: We have vetted this option and looked at what instructional quality would be if we offered remote classes. There are some significant challenges around creating class community, hybrid not being a strong option academically, etc. Our World Language teachers had concerns this would not allow for strong instructional quality.
- Question: Would students have the option to attend a different school site for one period a day?
 - Dr. Nurnberg: Yes, we are considering this as an option, although the logistics haven't been worked out at this time.

Dr. Nurnberg explained how singletons reduce course access for students. At Homestead High School, 35% of World language courses are singletons. At Monta Vista High School, 55% of World Language courses are singletons. As FUHSD continues to get smaller, we will have more singleton courses.

In small table groups, CAC members discussed why singletons prevent students from having as much access to courses in the course schedule.

Dr. Nurnberg shared some information about how the landscape has changed since the pandemic, including how more online course options popped up, including A-G eligible courses. She shared that FUHSD students don't have to get staff permission to take a class outside our District, only if they want it to be on the FUHSD transcript. Between 2019 and 2023, the percentage of students who are taking World Language courses in FUHSD have dropped from 64% to 60%. She also shared that this drop in World Language course takes is moving faster than the overall student decline at most of the schools. Many students are still fulfilling the A-G language requirement, but may not be doing it within our schools.

Dr. Nurnberg acknowledged that there is some feeling in the community that only World Language is feeling the effects of declining enrollment. However, World Language has declined by 18% in number of sections and Science has declined by 15%. This drop is happening across our course schedules, but because of the nature of World Language, because it is sequential

and divided into four sub-departments, it is felt more acutely. We have had to be very deliberate and precise in our communication and planning around this. In World Language, there has to be a more coordinated effort in planning because of the sequential nature of courses.

- Question: Can we talk about lowering the class size ratio?
 - Dr. Nurnberg: We are not talking about a class size of 24 to 28 students, we are talking about classes with only 6 or 8 students.

Dr. Nurnberg shared that in April 2023 we shared with our community that we were looking to reduce each of our school sites offerings to three language offerings per site in order to help maintain robust course level offerings for the remaining three languages. She shared data on how the decisions were made on which language to phase out at each school site. A long-range step-down phase out plan was shared with the community. She shared the guiding principles behind the proposed changes (*Slide 20*). The lowest enrolled language at each school site was selected to eventually be phased out. Other World Languages have been phased out in the District's history (German, Russian, Latin).

Dr. Nurnberg shared the two proposals that are currently being considered (*Slide 21*). LHS and HHS have healthier numbers and sign ups at this time and could potentially continue to support four languages for the moment. It was emphasized that making conservative and prudent financial decisions continue to be an important factor in decision making in our district, and it is not financially prudent to pay one teacher to teach 80 students and to pay another teacher to teach 160 students.

- Comment: The pro of Scenario 1 is that it is more equal, with everyone sharing in the pain of cuts equally, however, supporters of Scenario 2 might ask why would you reduce a language offering that is still potentially healthy in numbers.

Dr. Nurnberg shared reasons why we might offer different languages between sites (*Slide 22*).

The table groups provided input on the two scenarios:

- The first table group shared that their hearts say scenario B, but scenario A is the only choice that would keep parity.
- The second table did not reach a consensus, but said that scenario A was better from a PR standpoint, but that scenario B doesn't negatively impact the students who are still keeping a language program healthy.
- There was a suggestion to make a policy and apply it evenly to all schools on how the decision is made to cut a language offering, as well as for bringing a language back in the future if the demand returns.
- The third group preferred Scenario B. They noted that if the population continues to decline, cuts may come in other areas, electives, etc. We will have to continue monitoring trends.

- The fourth group felt that scenario B speaks to the current supply and demand, but with Scenario A everyone shares the pain of the cuts equally.

Dr. Nurnberg reminded the group of upcoming meeting dates and asked them to fill out a QR code survey with feedback on the two scenarios.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.