

MEETING MINUTES

KWES ADVISORY COUNCIL

**DATE:**

10/14/2025

TIME:

5:30 PM

FACILITATOR:

Deanna Libby

IN ATTENDANCE

Deanna Libby	Maya Claros
Candace Boles	Karen Manzano
Taryn Geier	
Ashli Sims	
Stephanie Rigglin	
Vaughn Mitchell	

PREVIOUS MEETING AND PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL

- The previous meeting had no attendees due to community events and confusion with the PTO meeting being virtual.
- The purpose of the parent advisory council is to gather input from community stakeholders.
- The council aims to fulfill community expectations and represent families in site-based decision-making.

Council Member Positions

- The chairperson position is open.
- Ms. Manzano is the secretary, Ms. Claros is the SACI representative, and Ms. Bullock is the PTO representative (absent).
- Ms. Mancil attends as the parent liaison.

- SACI stands for Student Advisory Council on Instruction.
- The first meeting involved feedback on the new strategic plan (ending in 2025) with key commitments: learning and achievement, positive climate and culture, family engagement, and organizational coherence.
- The main part of the meeting was the annual training on the role of SACI, which is to provide suggestions and community feedback to the superintendent.
- SACI representatives don't create policy.
- Just relay topics presented back to home school.

Key Instructional Updates

- Reading: Implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act (VALS assessment).
- Math: New standards of learning focused on data analysis and a new math system, Momentum Assessment, for first grade through Algebra one.
- Community Survey: A survey is coming out for grades 6-12, possibly related to math.

Specialty Programs

- A new vendor has been selected for specialty programs to streamline the application process.
- The lottery system for specialty programs had issues with the previous vendor's software.

Instruction

- Moving away from inquiry-based learning and multiple-choice assessments.
- Aiming to provide more options for students to demonstrate mastery of content, such as PowerPoints or podcasts.
- There is discussion on AI and they are working on trying to develop that.

Literacy

- Content area literacy: Every teacher is responsible for integrating a literacy portion or lesson.
 - Even P.E. teachers must tie in some reading with their lessons.
- Literacy sits at the crux of all learning.
- There's a nationwide trend where a vast majority of the adult population is unable to read above a sixth-grade level.
- Third grade is a big metric; if kids are reading on grade level at third grade, then they have a higher likelihood of graduating on time and having post-secondary opportunities.

School Board Meeting

- Dr. McDade will give the status of the schools.
- The presentation at this meeting is the same as the school board meeting the night before.
- The advantage is the opportunity to ask specific questions and talk to Dr. McDade and her team.

Assessments

- Students should show understanding across contents.
 - They shouldn't just answer multiple choice; they can show they understand the concept with a song or by articulating it.
- Math problems are more contextual in nature.
 - Students have to read the problem and understand what it's asking them to do, its not just computation anymore.
- In upper grades, some of the computation demand has been elevated off by giving students a calculator for certain aspects.
 - This is to get them to think deeply about the content so that it's relevant to their actual experience.

Financial Literacy

- Question from Mrs. Vaughn: Has there been any thought about putting financial literacy in at least the fifth-grade level?
 - There has not been discussion about that from a content perspective.
 - There are auxiliary organizations that are sharing resources with schools.
 - Someone discussed adding financial literacy to the next strategic plan.
 - Ms. Boles added that High school home economics classes teach students how to write checks.
 - Example of Financial Literacy Awareness Week idea: "Want to go to the library? Do you have \$5 to enter?"
 - Ms. Libby added that first and second grade integrate token economies that align with financial literacy.
 - Many kids' understanding of money is that it's a plastic card.
 - Ms. Claros added a learning experience while writing a check. She explained to her children that you have to write out the numerical word and add "and" when writing a check.
 - Ms. Vaughn suggested using hands-on activities like fake money to teach kindergarteners about quarters and cents.

PWCS and SACI

- If you Google "PWCS and SACI" it will be the first result.
- The website has meetings, agendas, and presentations, even from past years.
- The latest presentation hasn't been uploaded yet, but the slides are mostly copy-pasted.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- Enrollment is currently at 857 students, with fourth grade being the largest group.
- Enrollment is a little above projected but below the typical 910-915 range.
- Family engagement opportunities are forecasted on the calendar.
 - Last year included a literacy night, math night, and multicultural night, as well as Field Day.
 - Literacy Night had a very high turnout (close to 700 people) compared to Math Night (below 50).
 - The difference may have been the PTO sponsoring pizzas for Literacy Night.
 - They are trying to expand food opportunities at family event nights to boost family engagement.

Math and STEM Night is planned for December.

- The goal is to help parents understand the math strategies being taught and to show the scientific inquiry process.
- The event aims to be fun and show how learning applies beyond the classroom.

Art Night

- Art is included in STEAM
- The school no longer has Ms. Tice, who was passionate about having a school wide art show.
- Ms. Libby will speak to Ms. Connors about integrating an opportunity for student artwork to be displayed.
- The art show was a "monumental effort" that required hundreds of hours, which means it cannot be replicated in that capacity.

Possible Field Trips

- Mrs. Libby mentioned she visited a lot of museums over the summer and D.C. and had the idea of having students visit D.C., because many may have not been.
- The idea is to provide transportation via a county bus to visit D.C.
- There would not be any art gallery meetups since Ms. Tice is no longer at the school. She would organize these events.
- Mrs. Vaughn suggested Planet Word Museum, the museum is free and teaches about different languages and words.
 - The museum is interactive, and features exhibits on various languages and cultures.
 - Museum is located on K Street, near 13th Street Northwest.

Budget and Family Engagement

- Revised budget expected in October after the September 30th count date.
- PTO has funded buses for field trips in the past, but their budget is currently lower.
- Seeking ideas for family engagement opportunities and encourages emailing suggestions.
- Considering activities with other elementary schools to help students connect before middle school.

School Boundaries and Community

- The school feeds into five middle schools, creating a different dynamic compared to schools that receive students from a single elementary school.
- The school's boundaries are described as "like an octopus" due to the way the school was created, drawing from various sections of different communities (Hope Hill, Minnieville, Winding Creek Reserve and more).
- The fragmented boundaries result in a very diverse school population.
- The goal is to have a minimum of six events, including back-to-school night.
- Suggestion to have a social studies night for fourth grade.
- Mrs. Libby also mentioned that the Jamestown people bring the artifacts to the school, instead of a field trip to Jamestown.
- Suggestion from Ms. Claros to have a sports night, with local organizations providing programs like karate and track.

Staffing Needs

- Still looking for one and a half level one special education teachers.
 - Allotment increased due to student demographics.
 - Finding highly qualified teachers is difficult.
- Recruiting for a temporary teacher's assistant (TA) for special education.
- Looking for a fourth-grade teacher due to a teacher being promoted.
 - A certified teacher is filling in temporarily.
- Recruiting for another early childhood special education preschool teacher.
 - Anticipating additional students needing the class open around November/December.
- Special Ed. Positions need to have a bachelor's degree, don't have to have teaching experience, but must have had worked with students with disabilities in some capacity.

Funding

- Multilingual education funding was initially facing cuts at the state level, but Dr. McDade secured the budget for the current year.
- The division made adjustments to ensure money stayed with schools.
- Future funding is uncertain, but Dr. McDade prioritizes learning and outcomes for kids.
- Funding for these programs is primarily a state issue, with the state of Virginia driving the funding.

Grading Regulation

- The link to the current grading regulation will be uploaded onto the school webpage.
- Reinforcement that when students take assessments on Mastery Connect, the cut scores in the Mastery Connect program do not abide by the county's cut scores.
 - Custom reports have to be pulled from the program to know how students performed.
 - The metrics are directly aligned with the standards based grading rubric.

Standard of Learning (SOL) Assessment

- The state is wanting to adjust what a passing score is on the SOL assessment.
 - The levels for passing, like the third grade reading assessment, would require a

444int score out of 600 (for the current school year).

- The previous passing score was 400.
- The change is based off research from the national NAEP survey, indicating that Virginia was not expecting as rigorous a performance of learners as other states.
 - The belief is that the SOL has been measuring minimum competency.
- Score reports show subgroups of how a student performed and where they had difficulty.

Momentum Assessment & SuccessMaker

- Momentum assessment is a universal math assessment for students.
 - Initial scores showed students have significant needs.
- Data from the Momentum assessment transitions to SuccessMaker.
 - SuccessMaker allows students to work on personalized learning.
 - It helps develop skills, with one teacher able to address 24 different skills during independent and collaborative time.
- Successmaker is self-programming, whereas teachers are more involved with IXL.
- Successmaker is looking at building up gaps that students have in their learning, whereas IXL is reinforcing current and or recent content in that specific area.

SOLs

- SOLs are still used because there's federal or state funding tied to it.
- Teachers teach the standards, not to the test.
 - Test blueprints give a framework for what the SOL is supposed to look like.

Attendance

- The division changed its attendance regulation so that family vacations are not approved absences.
- The state is trying to prioritize students being in school to be available for learning.
 - It's hard to measure student progress if a student has missed 25% or 30% of the school year.
- Students enrolled in school cannot suddenly join the virtual school unless there are spots available and the registration timeline aligns.
- Families generally prefer in-person attendance when their children are present in the country.

CITIZEN TIME

Fifth Grade Spelling Tests

- Fifth grade spelling tests no longer provide a word list due to the Virginia Literacy Act, which focuses on applying skills rather than memorizing words.
- Tests assess the application of taught skills, and data from the tests is used to identify areas where students need additional support.
- Resources and practice materials aligned with the skills being taught can be shared with parents to support home practice.
- Communication about the specific skills being focused on each week would be helpful for parents to provide targeted practice at home.

Disciplinary Practices

- Classroom disruptions are addressed according to the code of behavior when an administrator is made aware of the situation.
- Teachers manage some behaviors within the classroom context.
- The focus is on minimizing classroom disruptions and supporting students who are not misbehaving.

Disciplinary Actions

- Tier 3 offenses in elementary school involve repeated behavior.
 - Whether repeated behavior jumps to tier 3 depends on the nature and severity of the incident.
- The code of behavior is designed to support families in understanding expectations and schools in navigating disciplinary practices.
- Removing a child from the classroom is sometimes necessary for the physical safety of staff and students.

Dean of Students

- Does our school have a Dean of Students? No, but it would be great to have one.
- Middle schools have deans of students who handle all disciplinary matters.
 - Two positions were created in the last two years to support middle schools and streamline disciplinary practices.
 - This alleviates the discipline aspect from school administrators, allowing them to focus on instruction.
- There are no plans to introduce dean of students in elementary schools, though it is on a "wish list."

Addressing Classroom Issues

- Parents are encouraged to email the teacher if they have concerns about ongoing issues in the classroom.
- Frame the message as a desire to support the child's learning experience and partner with the teacher.
- The idea of clarity in expectations is appreciated.

Attendance Rewards

- Classes with 90% and above attendance may get to dance with the sea lion mascot.
- Daily attendance shout-outs are given during morning announcements for classes with perfect attendance the prior day.
- One class per grade level gets a recognition per month.
- Last year, the counselor provided popsicles.
- Students get very excited when their class is announced for having perfect attendance.
- A suggestion is made for teachers to have a day off if their class has perfect attendance. This is not possible.
- Recess coverage or a longer lunch can be coordinated for teachers.

Question about All In Tutoring

- All In Tutoring is available to students who meet certain criteria.
 - Teachers and staff provide tutoring before and/or after school.
 - It is funded by the state to boost achievement for all learners.

- An All In Tutoring coordinator helps manage the program.

Question about PTO Meetings

- The Zoom link for the PTO meeting was sent in the weekly Sea Lions flash letter this week.
 - Ms. Vaughn mentioned she did not see the link for the first meeting.
- PTO meetings are currently held via Zoom, a decision made by the PTO board based on member preference.
 - A hybrid model was previously used, but a survey indicated a preference for Zoom.
- Suggestion to bring up the possibility of hybrid meetings (both in-person and Zoom) at the next meeting.

Parent Involvement & Expectations

- A parent expresses wanting to understand what teachers, admin, and staff truly want from parents.
 - They don't want to be overbearing.
 - They ask what the "ideal parent" looks like.
- Ms. Libby appreciates the question and says she can put it before each grade level to determine expectations of parents.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Parents want to support teachers by helping with tasks like making copies.
- Ms. Mancil sent out a volunteer email.
- Profile of a Parent suggestion to create a PowerPoint presentation for parents outlining the type of parent the school would like.
- The idea of clarity in expectations is appreciated.

Attendance Rewards (Parent Suggestion)

- Could classes with 90% and above attendance may get to dance with the sea lion mascot.
- Daily attendance shout-outs are given during morning announcements for classes with perfect attendance the prior day.
- One class per grade level gets a recognition per month.
 - Last year, the counselor provided popsicles.
- Students get very excited when their class is announced for having perfect attendance.
- Could there be teacher perks, a suggestion is made for teachers to have a day off if their class has perfect attendance.
 - This is not possible.
- Recess coverage or a longer lunch can be coordinated for teachers.

FUTURE TOPICS

- Clubs and tutoring programs will be discussed.
- Robotics and Battle of the Books have already started.
- PTO funding for clubs is pending.

- The PTO is working to increase membership to support their budget.
- Historically, the PTO starts communicating about funding in November.

NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting is scheduled for November 18th via Zoom.
- A hybrid option may be considered.