To: Board of Directors  
From: Robert O’Donnell, Vern Bock, Will Stout, Randy Brown  
Re: Proposed fifth special as part of the student day proposal for 2018-19  
Date: Dec. 1, 2017

At present, our elementary programming includes four specials that meet once per week (music, physical education/health, art, and library). Should the student day proposal be approved, we would add a fifth special. Beginning in October, we initiated a series of outreach efforts to identify interest from stakeholders regarding programming content. The processes were:

- Qualitative (Focus Group) analysis with multiple stakeholders  
- Parent and faculty quantitative survey and analysis  
- Student quantitative survey and analysis.

Qualitative (Focus Group) analysis with multiple stakeholders

- **Parents and teacher focus groups:** To help construct the parent, staff and student surveys, a PSU Smeal College of Business faculty member, Dr. Gus Colangelo, trained non-SCASD, unbiased facilitators in focus group protocol. Between Oct. 13 and Nov. 16, the trained facilitators led 16 separate one-hour focus groups — one with parents and one with teachers at each school. Each focus group was entirely recorded and transcribed. All transcripts are available online at the Student Day Proposal site ([https://www.scasd.org/studentday](https://www.scasd.org/studentday)). The transcripts were analyzed using Grounded Theory, a research method utilized to complete rigorous analysis of qualitative research. Through this analysis, a quantitative approach was taken to categorize qualitative suggestions for the fifth special, which resulted in the emergence of three options — Spanish language and culture, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), and personal development. Spanish emerged as a proposed choice because, among parent/guardian focus groups, it was the prevalent suggestion for a foreign language. This process led to the fifth special survey that was sent to all K-5 parents/guardians, all K-5 faculty, and another survey completed by fourth and fifth grade students.

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Parent and faculty quantitative survey development, implementation and analysis:
A quantitative survey was developed in collaboration with the PSU Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis using the top three options that emerged from the focus groups. Descriptions for STEM, personal development and Spanish language and culture were developed in consultation with the curriculum office and included in the survey. Each elementary school parent, guardian and faculty member with an email address registered with the district was invited to participate in the survey from Nov. 21 through Nov. 29. Within the survey, respondents were asked to support or oppose each option using a Likert Scale — i.e. respondents could strongly support or strongly oppose each of the three options on a seven point scale. Respondents were then asked to rank the options according to their highest preference. The survey required answers to all of the questions. Additionally, participants who desired to provide further feedback regarding the fifth special or any aspect of the student day proposal were directed to do so through the student day website linked above or by emailing info@scasd.org. We received no additional feedback through this address.

The target audience for the survey was those most immediately impacted by the proposed fifth special—current K-5 parents and faculty. During the survey window, four reminders were sent to parents and faculty who had not yet responded (11/22, 11/27, and two on 11/29).

To maintain the integrity of the survey, it was designed to allow only one participation/response per email address. In collaboration with Dr. Ed Fuller, this was thoroughly tested and found to be secure.

The survey was sent to 4,273 people — 4,038 families and 235 faculty — and we received responses from 2,074 people — 1,936 families and 225 faculty (these numbers add up to 2,161 because some faculty are also parents). Overall, the survey had a 49% response rate.

These responses, analyzed with support from PSU’s Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis, show the following:

- **47.5% of respondents ranked STEM as their first choice.**
- 26.2% of respondents ranked Spanish language and culture as their first choice
- 26.2% of respondents ranked personal development as their first choice
- **86.7% of respondents support STEM (strongly support or support)**
- 67.6% of respondents support Spanish language and culture (strongly support or support)
- 63.0% of respondents support personal development (strongly support or support)
● **Student survey implementation and analysis:** To complete a thorough stakeholder input process, we also incorporated student voice by surveying 805 fourth and fifth grade students. This age group was selected because we felt it was the most developmentally appropriate age group for this survey.

The student survey included the three options, a brief description of the options, and an invitation to make a statement supporting their choice.

The survey results of 805 respondents have been analyzed and are as follows:

- 57% of respondents ranked STEM as their first choice.
- 30% of respondents ranked Spanish language and culture as their first choice
- 13% of respondents ranked personal development as their first choice

**Recommendations:**

The input, evaluation and analysis from the various stakeholders using a variety of methods converged on STEM as the recommended fifth special content area for elementary students within the student day proposal.

We appreciate the thought and care that families, teachers and students put into their contribution to our analysis, as well as additional suggestions that came from the fifth special focus groups. These ideas included:

- World culture
- Leadership and collaboration skills
- Life skills
- Anti-bullying
- Social/emotional wellness
- Conflict resolution
- Mindfulness

As we continue to develop the K-5 comprehensive curriculum, many of these recommended learning experiences will be addressed. World culture will be addressed in our updated social studies curriculum. Additionally, a comprehensive school counseling curriculum will be proposed to address mindfulness, social-emotional skill development, leadership and collaboration, anti-bullying, and conflict resolution.
SCASD Fifth Special Survey for K-5: Open Nov. 21 until 11 p.m. on Nov. 29, 2017

Q1
Check all that apply to you.

Answered: 2,074  Skipped: 0

- Parent of current K-5 student: 93.35% (1,936 responses)
- SCASD K-5 faculty member: 10.85% (225 responses)

Total Respondents: 2,074

Q2
Spanish Language and Culture as the fifth special The purpose of a Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) program would be to expose students to early second language development, global learning, and cultural awareness and appreciation by teaching Spanish. The curriculum could include: building functional skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and developing an understanding and appreciation for other cultures. Please select your level of support by choosing one box only.

Answered: 2,074  Skipped: 0

- Strongly support
- Support
- Slightly support
- No preference
Q3

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) as the fifth special! The purpose of a STEM program would be to engage students in developing solutions for challenges and real-world problems while applying science, technology, engineering and mathematics in an integrated fashion. The curriculum could include: engineering, physical and life sciences, robotics, circuitry, coding, forensics and aeronautics. Please select your level of support by choosing one box only.

Answered: 2,074  Skipped: 0
Q4

Personal Development as the fifth special survey. The purpose of a Personal Development program would be to acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions; set and achieve positive goals; feel and show empathy for others; establish and maintain positive relationships; make responsible choices; and build self-confidence. The curriculum could include: mindfulness, team building, leadership, career exploration, social awareness and relationships, decision making and civic engagement. Please select your level of support by choosing one box only.

Answered: 2,074  Skipped: 0

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<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly support</td>
<td>36.50%</td>
<td>757</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>26.52%</td>
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<td>Slightly support</td>
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<td>No preference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slightly oppose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
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<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly oppose</td>
<td>3.52%</td>
<td>73</td>
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Total Respondents: 2,074
Preferred option. Ranking all three options is required.

Answered: 2,074  Skipped: 0

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<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish Language and Culture</td>
<td>26.23%</td>
<td>33.94%</td>
<td>39.83%</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>2,074</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering &amp; Mathematics)</td>
<td>47.49%</td>
<td>37.99%</td>
<td>14.51%</td>
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<td>2,074</td>
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<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>26.28%</td>
<td>28.06%</td>
<td>45.66%</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>2,074</td>
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</tbody>
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