At the first AAPAC meeting of the school year, new Executive Director of SISS Dr. Marianne Fidishin spoke to parents. Dawn Linden, assistant superintendent of instructional services and Dr. Jeanice Swift, superintendent, joined her. Because we ran out of Q&A time at the end of the meeting, the following unanswered parent questions were forwarded for follow-up. These questions were answered by Dr. Fidishin and her team. We hope you get the answers to the questions you had, and look forward to seeing you at the next AAPAC meeting (Monday, November 4).

AAPAC Parent Questions and Responses from SISS

1. The reading intervention program serves K-2 students. What supports are available for those struggling in 3-5? General education and special education. Lexia, other supports are put in place through the Achievement Team process (i.e. higher frequency, smaller groups, differentiated practices)

2. I have a question about "rest and return" in the responsive classroom. Are all teachers trained in this? Is it explained to the kids how it works? Some elementary schools and teachers are trained in the Elementary Core Course practices, which includes rest and return. It's a tool that is used in the classroom for self-regulation that is modeled and practices with students.

3. Concerned about teacher pay inequities (e.g. new teachers to AAPS brought on Step 4 pay; teachers hired in without experience stays at Step 1?) How do they stay motivated to take on culture change? We negotiate rates of pay on hire based primarily on the experience they are coming with to the table. If they have no experience, we can't justify granting them 'experience' credits. Our starting rate is for anyone with up to 2 years experience. That's not usually a concern with new hires - they understand steps are aligned with experience.

4. Dyslexia-please update on the District's plan. The district has utilized outside consulting to establish academic programming including Foundations, considered the current best practice program for dyslexia.

5. Who are you consulting for your work on bias, etc.? Are people of color involved, parents, students, etc.? The District has been partnering with TregoEd to assist with development of processes and procedures, including the SISS Improvement Plan/Strategic Plan. However, I have extensive experience addressing and developing plans for bias, equity, and inclusion in larger, diverse school districts.
6. Can you give some specific examples of disproportionalities that you hope to address?

The district has seen disproportionate representation of students of color in overall eligibility for special education as well as under the eligibility of Emotional Impairment. We also have a disproportionate representation of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Health Impaired.