

CATALINA FOOTHILLS HIGH SCHOOL

SITE COUNCIL SUMMARY REPORT

SCHOOL YEAR: 2020 - 21

May 25, 2021

Catalina Foothills High School Site Council is purposed with the task of providing the school stakeholders with information about our ongoing work as a school, and to support the efforts of student learning and achievement. The CFHS community was faced with a tremendous challenge in the 2020-2021 school year. The high school, like others, was closed for the entire 2019-2020 fourth quarter, and all our students were forced to finish that year through a remote learning/teaching model. This was due to the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. All Arizona schools were affected as school districts closed their doors in mid-March 2020.

The Catalina Foothills schools spent the summer of 2020 developing strategies, procedures, health and safety practices, and teaching/learning approaches that would best serve our teachers and students in an academic environment that seemed to be everchanging. The school year began with all students learning remotely at home. However, plans and technology were being put into place so that the school could transition to a hybrid teaching/learning model that would begin later in the fall. Our school's aspirational re-opening date became October 26th. The re-opening was a process that began to take shape in the early fall of 2020. Families were given the option to return to in-person learning for 2 days per week or to continue with 100% remote learning through January.

This school year, the CFHS Site Council spent much of its time and energy reviewing the work being done to create the best possible model for teaching and learning under the restrictions of the pandemic. Major areas of academic life were adjusted to meet the safety demands of our students. These changes touched all aspects of school life. The Site Council focus to evaluate our teaching and learning mission did not change, but we did need to examine these efforts within the context of COVID-19. Still, Student Council, Assessment/Testing Data, the Family Faculty Organization, School-Wide Updates, and a review of Documents and Data Points formed the basis of Site Council's effort. This structure formed the process through which we judged our successes as a school-wide learning community.

School Updates

The school year began with our students at home participating in their classes as remote learners. The aspirational date for beginning some form of in-person learning became October 26th. However, the Pima County Health Department became central to any re-opening decisions. Limits to classroom size, movement on campus, the nature of lunch, passing from class to class, and co-curricular activities were ever present challenges to any reopening. At first it was believed that the in-person to remote populations would be approximately 60% in-person to 40% remote learners. These figures were based on an early set of surveys sent out to Foothills families.

Teaching was going to be very different for both student groups, yet everyone would be taught at the same time. Tracking cameras were purchased to better serve all teachers. Depending on the nature of the lesson, these devices followed the teacher in the classroom or were able to display their computer screen to both remote and in-person learners. By October 26th, all teachers, except a few, were teaching from school.

It became apparent that no schedule would be perfect. It was important that teachers be provided with workloads that were manageable, and still meet the CFSD and Arizona standards through which all students must demonstrate mastery. Zoom and GoogleMeet informational meetings were held with parents to share our plans and to collect feedback.

At this point, people were feeling like there were few good answers. Educators are usually capable of being given a problem and then finding the solution. There was a sense of frustration due to all the changes, but everyone re-focused, adapted, and became more flexible in search of the best answers.

The in-person aspirational start of October 26th for 2-day per week in-person learning seemed realistic after the Pima County Health Department gave its okay for schools to begin conducting hybrid teaching. On that date CFHS began in-person learning. It was a success, and both students and teachers were happy to have in-person contact. Through the end of the first semester there were no COVID cases transmitted at school. Students and teachers were complying with this new normal, and the established in-school safety requirements were working. Finals were conducted for all students remotely. It was felt to be an issue of fairness and equity for everyone.

Students on the Site Council voiced strong appreciation for what their teachers were doing to educate them. However, several of these students expressed the belief that much of the classwork was taking place “outside of class time”. Due to the teaching/learning circumstances, students felt teachers were forced to reduce curriculum. Also, students expressed the sense of doing what was needed to be done to meet the assignment deadlines instead of engaging in “true learning”. It was speculated that perhaps remote learning may have upset the balance between teachers and students. Open communication between everyone in the community was essential to getting all of us back to feeling excited about learning. In addition, our Site Council students felt that many CFHS students were missing the important part of the high school experience of seeing friends, getting outside, and engaging in co-curricular activities. The remote students were feeling disconnected from their in-school classmates and were also missing out on the ‘other half of education’.

Some teachers observed students being more active and engaged upon returning to school under the hybrid model. In math, the use of the camera helped with the integration of the remote students to their in-person counterparts. Transparent and honest conversations or communication among all community members was applauded. The principal expressed the need for better connections and support for the entire learning community.

When second semester began there were over 800 students attending in-person, and over 900 remaining at home as remote students. Teachers enjoyed having students back in person. In January, with the start of second semester many more students had returned to school. Still, the

added challenge of ‘where does the attention lie’ manifested in the need to focus back and forth between students in-person and those at home. There was continued concern for students who had developed a sense of both social and academic apathy. Teachers observed that some kids looked fragile, and social media appeared to be having an increased impact on student’s lives. Our students have always had both a virtual life and a real life, but for many this year the virtual world became far more important.

Some remote learners expressed a comfort in the remote style of learning. They talked about the ease of organizing their work and classes. They developed a pattern to make their classes and the school day less repetitive. However, the loss of conversations with teachers and peers before and after class was strongly felt by these students. Even in-person students did not have a typical curricular experience. They were not able to do small group work or collaborate as often on academic assignments.

Life at school has slowly been getting back to normal. On March 15th, students had the option to return to a 5-day in-person learning or remain fully remote. One Site Council teacher expressed that he was seeing, “kids being kids” on campus. Some teachers have found the cameras to be very useful while others have seen the cameras as a source of frustration. Many faculty members see both sides of the technology issue. Cameras can be helpful, yet some teachers found that they got in the way and did not accomplish what they were intended to be used for. Everyone agreed that CFHS teachers are blessed with having a myriad of resources, as well as access to the necessary technology to fulfil the needs of both remote and in-person learners.

Assessment/Testing Data

Again in 2020-21 assessment and testing at CFHS was not as extensive or robust as in a normal school year. However, we did administer the spring 2021 State-wide AzM2 and AzSci tests to sophomores and juniors, respectively. Also, all interested students were given the PSAT, and the SAT and ACT were available throughout the year. Students registered for a total of 950 AP exams. This is up from previous years, and this year the AP exams will be administered in-person with no open notes. Again, there was no administration of the CWRA+.

It should be noted that the compiled data of CFHS student participation in the 2021 State mandated in-person tests was remarkable. Almost 90% of the in-person and remote 10th grade students completed all five of the AzM2 tests. Over 93% of all 11th grade students took the AzSci science field test. Again, considering the number of remote students that are enrolled in those two grades, the achieved completion percentage rates are an impressive accomplishment.

Student Council Updates

Student Council had a very engaging and successful year. Because they were forced to get creative with their events, our Council did a great job adapting to the changing nature of the 2020-2021 school year. In the fall, Student Council presented a Patriots Day video broadcast which was sent out to all classes. Also, the Spirit Conference went well, and a lot of good feedback was received. However, with over 800 students on the same website at the same time, things did get a bit chaotic. Student Council organized a Virtual Game Night, and Freshman elections were conducted virtually. Club Fair was also a virtual event.

Later in the fall, our Student Council teacher sponsor reported that many of their plans were on hold, pending the re-opening. One primary goal was to create a sense of normalcy for the school-wide community. November brought a virtual talent show, and in December the motivational speaker Carlos Ojeda was streamed to our students. The talent show raised over \$1,000 and was carried to over 140 devices. Foothills and Salpointe organized a food drive called 'Food Fight' and between the two schools, over 4,000 canned goods were collected and donated to the Food Bank. It was estimated that more than 100 Tucson families would benefit from this effort.

Throughout the year Student Council continued to network with other councils through AASC. SC leadership attended the state convention, and found it to be a powerful, impactful experience.

During second semester Student Council drew its attention to activities that would lift people's spirits and build community. Videos were produced that put teachers and students in the spotlight and highlighted their interests and unique accomplishments. A virtual Valentine's Day event was conducted. Student Council presented Game Show Night which was organized as a *Jeopardy* style event. It generated over \$1,400 which was donated to Juvenile Diabetes. Student Council received an award for their efforts.

Student Council is currently working hard on senior graduation, and several end of the year activities for the class of 2021. They have organized a senior slide show and an outdoor "Senior Sendoff" event is planned in lieu of our traditional Grad Night. Working with the FFO, Student Council will present seniors with an evening of dinner, games, awards, and stand-up comedy. There will be carnival activities and the available food trucks will serve all who attend. The official theme is *Golden Getaway*.

Finally, Student Council planned and hosted an end-of-the-year faculty breakfast with a video tribute to teachers. Student Council is also keeping up on its various community service projects, and they are already thinking about and planning for next year's Homecoming events.

Counseling Office Updates

Counseling was able to accomplish much of what it does in a normal school year. ECAP took place for all 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students. Course selection transpired in February, and State-wide testing occurred in April. The impressive participation rates for those assessments have already been discussed.

In the late fall counseling offered a virtual calming room for students and staff. Small group activities were conducted in the late fall. It was difficult to get students to use the NEST or get tutoring as they were not being able to connect to these services in person.

College month was an excellent activity to present virtually, and College Information Nights occurred throughout the fall. CFHS earned an award for our FAFSA completion rate among large high schools. As of early April, over 65% of our seniors had completed the FAFSA. As a result, CFHS won a trophy and 3 laptops that were awarded to 3 students.

Counseling wants to continue to use Google Classroom next year to help with resources and communication.

Family Faculty Organization Updates

This school year the high school FFO was very active. At the beginning of the year teachers received gift bags and Target gift cards. FFO meetings were conducted on GoogleMeets and remote speakers gave talks on topics ranging from 'Decoding Child Behavior' to 'Planning College Funding'. To ease people's minds about the COVID-19 vaccine, FFO organized a speaker to discuss the subject. It was the highest attended meeting of the year.

CFHS face masks were designed and became available in the FFO school spirit store. People could order the masks on the website and then pick them up at the school's front desk. This was an addition to the spirit wear items for sale.

FFO donated \$600 for library supplies. Masks with clear covers were purchased for our hearing-impaired students, and for the World Language teachers. Other FFO activities included selling holiday gift cards, both a teacher/staff take-and-go breakfast and luncheon, and a clothing drive for Big Brothers/Big Sisters. It was their biggest clothing drive ever and raised over \$1,800. The FFO was able to accomplish these many activities even though parent engagement was hard to maintain. Everyone is looking forward to an energetic start to next school year.

As mentioned earlier, FFO worked with Student Council to put on graduation events for our seniors. This was headed by the Grad Night committee to offer a safe gathering after graduation for the seniors.

Review of Documents/Data Points/Areas of Focus

Due to the unusual nature of the school year, teaching and learning within the restraints of the pandemic became our primary school-wide focus. The curriculum, learning type (in-person/remote), safety issues, technology, and approaches to assessment were all focal points for CFHS and the Site Council during the 2020-21 school year. The COVID-19 pandemic affected all aspects of our school community. The administration was proud of the manner and degree of success that teachers demonstrated regarding remote and hybrid teaching. Students showed flexibility in the classroom whether it was virtual or in person. So many people worked so hard to give our students a sense of normalcy in their day-to-day school experience.

Counselors conducted ECAP at all grade levels. The ECAP pathways are career interest inventories for freshmen, personality inventories as they relate to careers, colleges, and majors for sophomores, and for juniors an exploration into colleges, and future career course pathways. Seniors engaged in the college application process which included deadlines, other post-secondary opportunities, and pathways.

The counselors were able to serve our students with a continuation of small groups and set up a virtual room for students and faculty to be used for decompressing and talking about concerns and issues they were experiencing.

The principal defined the school-wide goal of communication and coming together in these difficult times. The positive impact of increased communication was very helpful and allowed

everyone at CFHS to gain strength and support from each other. Student Council played a critical role in this effort by organizing numerous student generated activities and projects.

The year is ending with our attention being directed toward our seniors and their graduation. The FFO and Student Council have come together to provide these students with a meaningful and memorable end to their high school experience.

Conclusion

The 2020-21 school year provided for numerous accomplishments within the Catalina Foothills High School community. The flexibility displayed by teachers, administration, staff, and especially students was noteworthy in many ways. There were so many challenges faced by our learning community: changes to the schedule, different approaches to teaching and learning, safety precautions, assessment, co-curricular, and basic social interactions between the students, as well as between students and their teachers. The entire school-wide community demonstrated a high degree of perseverance and resilience which resulted in achievement and success. CFHS worked hard to deliver the best possible education in unusual and difficult times. It is a tribute to everyone that the entire community's energy remained positive and supportive. So many of our normal yearly activities were affected by the pandemic and yet, so many of these activities still took place and managed to provide much of the satisfaction associated with their intended purpose. Athletics, clubs, the arts, school traditions, graduation, award ceremonies, and especially academics took place throughout the year. Staff and students felt an appreciation for a school experience that in previous years had been taken for granted. Today, we refocus ourselves to the possibilities of the 2021-22 school year and the future of CFHS.