


November 3, 2021, 7-8:30pm

School Council reps present: Abdel Sepulveda (principal, co-chair), Pam Pecchio (parent co-chair), Tina Lieu (parent rep) Michele Lippen (educator rep), Marissa Fried (educator rep)

Total participants: ~22

Updated [Key Takeaways](#) from Wednesday Oct 27 Tea with the Principal, COVID Q&A
[And here are the remaining COVID-19 questions](#)

Action Items

- **Ms. Lippens** gather MCAS numbers with context (as explained by Ms.H) by the next SC meeting to insert into Oct 6 SC meeting minutes
 -  2021 Peabody MCAS Data_Public
 - [Fall MCAS Data from DESE](#)
- **Mr. S** - talk to Peabody wellness committee and ask about food policy at CPSD
- **Pam** - Ask Nicole to connect the volunteers for the Peabody Mission subcommittee so they can get started; get a subcommittee manager selected who is responsible for making sure the subcommittee meets.
- **Nicole** - Send out lunch aide posting and CHA nurse aid posting to whole school to see if parents want to apply or can forward to their network. Also, ask to see if there is interest in volunteering to be a lunch aide.
- **Tina/Nicole** - Figure out how to get meeting minutes for each meeting uploaded to school website so others can see it.
- **Mr. S** - Work with Nicole to link in the flowchart of what to do in every positive email and definition of “close contact”
- **Next SC meeting:** Continue topic of Address Cultural Celebrations and Education around Holidays and ask equity audit team for ideas/input

Agenda

1. Introductions (5 mins)
2. Vote to approve minutes from Oct 6 meeting:
3. Tabled from last meeting:
 - a. Address Cultural Celebrations and Education around Holidays
 - b. Food Rewards/Celebrations in Classrooms
 - c. What is Peabody’s Mission and Vision?
 - d. Subcommittee volunteers
4. Feedback from the council on how the school handled Halloween this year.
5. Update on current openings ??
6. Ideas to preemptively address students spending more time indoors as the weather gets cold.
7. Discuss remaining Covid questions from Oct 27 Peabody meeting

Introductions (5 mins)

Vote to approve minutes from Oct 6 meeting

Minutes approved. Notes from the last meeting below, for reference. (Missing MCAS numbers) - Ms. Lippens to share MCAS numbers with context by next SC meeting (e.g., some grades had large number of opt outs for example). Everyone present at School Council meetings can vote.

Tabled from last meeting:

Address Cultural Celebrations and Education around Holidays

Hope this will have a positive impact on how we teach

- Staff gets bite-size professional development (PD) each day from Mr. S (culturally responsive learning, etc.) using an SEL approach.
- So, for example, tomorrow it will be talking about Diwali which starts tomorrow for 5 days.
- To say that we don't celebrate anything because "we are too diverse" is akin to saying "I don't see color" which isn't equitable.
- Vision: Kids to leave Peabody multicultural and multilingual (understanding nuances, not necessarily speaking fluent); to understand "the world is bigger than my house"; e.g., read literature beyond the European canon
- Thoughts from council participants
 - Make it educational and not token celebration (like in the past "wear red on Chinese New Year")
 - Celebrate it authentically. E.g., a parent did a zoom with school class to talk about the holiday celebration in their house.
 - Cultural celebrations/educations: Means we remember that children bring background knowledge to class that enriches the classroom. Ask what advancements in literature, science, etc. are represented or underrepresented in our curriculum and highlight those. (e.g., much math was created by Muslims)
 - Also don't want to diminish traditions like Santa Claus, but just add more.
 - One family that doesn't celebrate Xmas finds this is a difficult time a year with the "overpowering" presence of Xmas at school. Would plea to not over emphasize the coming Christian holiday (worksheets with Rudolph, Xmas trees, etc.)
 - Problem: historically Peabody hasn't done a good job celebrating all cultures evenly.
 - We also don't want to do harm (e.g. tokenism). So be aware of the impact of a worksheet for small kids that emphasizes Rudolph.
 - Would like to make learning available school wide and not just to those classrooms with parents who have that knowledge. Also to avoid "overusing" a family as a resource.
 - Last year there was a video that a parent shared about Ramadan for classrooms to watch.
 - How does the whole school find out about a coming cultural event?
 - How about a video shown to the whole school at the start of the week, which could be shared through the whole school
 - At Indian school: family pre-records a video and shares with all the classes who are watching it at the same time right before class starts.
 - Mr. S. holiday info could be shared in the morning announcement - would have a great positive impact on children who celebrate it (because their own culture is acknowledged, highlighted at school)
 - We can also ask the equity audit team for feedback.

>>Move to continue on this topic at the next SC meeting

Side question: Are we teaching about climate change to our children?

Food Rewards/Celebrations in Classrooms

CPSD wellness policy is that food should never be used as a reward/punishment and it should never be candy or soda. (Need to ask Peabody wellness committee which includes Tracy P. (health teacher), Mr. P (PE), and Nurse Bella)

What is Peabody's Mission and Vision?

Want it to be something quick, simple, that anyone from K to a new family can remember.

And can be used as a SEL tool to keep us grounded.

Ideas

- Appoint a subcommittee manager to make sure it meets
- Have a focusing question -- maybe it's being student-centered
- Ideas: Be curious, be kind, love learning for the rest of my life
- Citizenship, critical thinkers

Subcommittee volunteers

>>Ask Nicole to email the volunteers from last SC

Feedback from the council on how the school handled Halloween this year.

- No behavior issues, was another regular day. Attendance rates were the same as usual
- A few lower grade kids were upset they didn't wear costumes, so teachers got creative
- Prefer something that doesn't rely on a store bought costume
 - Pajama day is also an equity issue as not everyone has "school-worthy pajamas"
- The Halloween celebration/costuming caused angst in some kids (didn't want to wear, but then did want to wear when they got to school)
- Halloween is part of the American experience
- But even something new will create anxiety among some. Want to think more about how to minimize that.
- Could we use an art class to make a mask or a hat? But then does that take away from art class curriculum or what if a child is absent and doesn't make it.
- The reality is you can't get away from all anxiety, but it's good to grapple and struggle w/it.
- Are adults worrying too much? Kids usually follow the adult's lead.
- From a teacher view: Halloween went well, but need more time to prepare (email was sent only a couple of days before 10/29); since then kids are bringing in candy, but if they try to share can cause issues with allergies
 - Mr. S will address candy-sharing issue w/teachers in a memo tomorrow

Looking ahead -- Mr. S asks for feedback on:

Native American Heritage month is November.

Some families don't celebrate Thanksgiving (even the "giving thanks" is causing harm).

Update on current job openings

Made offer to a math interventionist - hope to hear back from candidate on Thu or Fri

2 openings for interventionist - the 2nd math interventionist position was switched to literacy based on data of the need we have. We have 1 one reading interventionist and her load is full.

Hired a new SEL (social emotional learning) paraprofessional who started today. Very qualified, using this position to get necessary hours for licensing (he is an adjunct professor at Lesley and has worked with our current Social Worker - Maya). This position allows our school to be more proactive/preemptive in SEL (e.g., SEL groups, lunch bunches).

Openings for lunch aide and hired one person, but suddenly stopped communicating, so starting to look again. (It's 10-12/hrs per week). Send any possible candidates to Mr. S.

Ideas to preemptively address students spending more time indoors as the weather gets cold.

- Expand cafeteria into the lobby space (each grade about 50 students; cafeteria holds 100)
 - But need to make sure they won't run into anyone transitioning through the space
- Idea to have parents volunteer to be lunch aide or get paid if they can commit to one day a week to cover lunch. Volunteers could cover the other shifts and be responsible for finding a sub if they can't do a shift they signed up for.
- Can some students go home for lunch? One family has a nanny that picks up kids for lunch and recess. But leaving has to be logged as a dismissal and then logged for reentry. This is for liability reasons, we have to know where all the children are. Doing that at a greater volume would be a greater challenge for SEL and thinking. Kids look forward to that less structured time to chat and play with friends, which is part of school.
 - Also tricky as we have a short day and kids would be missing a social aspect.
- Can we get the word out more broadly about the position? Send a job posting to the whole school list and ask for volunteers.
- Speaking from personal experience, there are some immigrant parents can't work so would be willing to volunteer
- Some parents asked if they can donate chairs and tables so that outdoor dining can continue beyond when the ground is too cold to sit on. Is there space to store? Or is it outdoor furniture that can stay outside.
- Last year even during winter, lower grades had lunch outdoors. Tried to find a dry area for lunch. The fear was greater then so made the best of it outdoors and there were also fewer kids so easier to space out kids.
- At Friends of Peabody meeting (this is happening across the district) we heard that the tent will have to come down because of snow. Will be back up in the spring. But kids can eat outside even without the tent.
- Could we teach the kids sign language so that there is less temptation to talk at indoor lunch.

Discuss remaining Covid questions from Oct 27 Peabody meeting

Now that the FDA has approved ages 5-11, will most kids be vaccinated? Many in our community are likely to get their kids vaccinated. In Boston some with 80%+ vaccination rates asked for mask waiver.

Pool testing for 4th and 5th grade is on Thursday and then results come over the weekend and if there is a positive case, then parents are scrambling to find a test site.

Generally you want to stagger the testing or you might miss potential cases, so not good to have them all at the start of the week..

Nurses are short staffed and CHA is trying to hire an additional aide.

PCR test program is funded by state so we have to follow their guidelines.

>>Suggest to send nurse aide job description out w/lunch aide

Even excused absences (e.g., out due to quarantine) are considered as “chronically absent” by DESE
Is there a consistent approach to what to do w/the kids when they are at home so they don’t fall behind.
How are we making sure they are keeping up in their education?

>>This is a limitation we are encountering this school year. Teachers are sending work home, but it’s still not enough. Teachers are doing their best to catch up the kids when they return.

The remaining COVID questions are confusion about protocol.

What do I do if my kid is sick?

What if I wasn’t a close contact but my kid played with one who was.

Maybe need to link the flowchart of what to do in every email or even definition of “close contact”

Final words - encourage kids 5-11 to get vaccinated. Wait a few days and should be able to sign up for CPSD vaccination clinics in November.

Celebratory Note: Have a wonderful Diwali! Ms. Hedrington will be recording a TED talk tomorrow. And speak at a statewide school committee convention in Mass.