

# December 15, 2021, 7-8:30am

Participants: Abdel Sepulveda (principal, co-chair), Pam Pecchio (parent co-chair), Tina Lieu (parent rep), Karim Ahmed (parent rep), Michele Lippens (educator rep), Marissa Fried (educator rep)

Total: ~18

## Next School Council (SC) Meeting: 7pm on January 12th

### Action Items

- **Mr. S** - to share w/families and make sure that info re meaning of “shelter in place” etc. is posted clearly on our website.
- **Mr. S** - send reminder to staff and families about avoiding having food for celebration; include non-food celebration ideas (from Pam)
- **Mr. S** - Verify that the lunch aide posting is back up (was taken down although 1 position is still open)
- **Mr. S** - To send Tina the nurse’s aide position link for sending out via Room Parents
- **Pam** - Forward resource with non-food celebration ideas to Mr. S
- **Pam** - Send an email to Ms. Lippens and Sebastian S. (to lead) to get the Peabody mission and vision started
- Next meeting agenda:
  - School Improvement Plan presentation
  - Discuss moving all School Council meetings to evening as mornings are difficult for many

### Agenda

1. Introductions (2)
2. Vote to approve minutes from Nov 3 meeting -- Approved
3. New Business
  - School Improvement Plan presentation -- postponed until next SC meeting
  - Two Shelter in Place events
4. Address Culturally Responsive Teaching/Learning -- Feedback from Equity Team?
  - How do we share information about major cultural/religious events pertinent to the community?
  - Incorporating more cultures into curriculum -- teachers are getting resources around this. Ms. Vecchiarello, Ms. Bourne, Mr. Travers (continually updating the books to be more diverse and also had a virtual author visit with American Born Black author and illustrator recently)
5. Food Rewards/Celebrations in Classrooms
6. What is Peabody’s Mission and Vision?
7. Updates

### Two Shelter in Place events

Sunday morning an individual put out a message on social media saying they were going to go to the Peabody School complex and hurt themselves and they wanted an audience. The police contacted the schools, and the “shelter in place” was put in place.

- Means we still have our normal day
- Staff let kids know if they see a police officer, they could just say hi
- School had no details to share (did not have any more info than parents got)

Unknown if the person was connected to Peabody/RAUC -- police did not release any info about that to the schools. Monday afternoon, police determined the threat was no longer valid (message originated from the Midwest -- based on social media tracing) and allowed for a regular dismissal with police presence.

**Tuesday** - police said we needed to put on the “shelter in place” again. The same individual said “he was going to turn himself into the police in front of the school between 10:15-10:30am. Police couldn’t get the person to do this somewhere else, so deployed police officers around school perimeter/complex both in civilian clothes and uniformed inside and outside the building. The time passed and no one showed up. So at 1:30, police instructed the school to do a modified shelter in place (“lock and hold”). There was police presence, but people who work/attend the schools could enter.

Parents wanted more info but the police could not share because it would hinder the investigation. The police still don’t know exactly who the person was. Our School Resource Officer has been visiting the school daily.

Q: Is there somewhere that defines what is a “shelter in place” and “lock and hold”? It would help the parent/caregivers understand what these mean.

Educator comment: The answers would be helpful as a reminder to new staff, too.

A: Every classroom has a flip chart that explains all the terms and has “cheatsheets,” which Mr. S will share w/families and make sure that info is posted clearly on our website.

- Shelter in place means the threat is external; all doors are locked; if kids are outside they have to come in; shades on the street side are down; but the rest of the day goes on as “normal.”
- Lock and hold is a Cambridge concept = a modified shelter in place

### **Address Culturally Responsive Teaching/Learning**

We will acknowledge in morning announcements and lessons for major holidays like Diwali, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, Lunar New Year, etc. But we are not going to lift one holiday over the others. That is, one should not be the “default” and others are seen as “exotic.” (e.g., to have a “show”). Would prefer not to put a “freeze” on holidays (Mr. S had the experience where a school wouldn’t acknowledge any holidays and it became toxic. e.g., cancelling Valentine’s Day resulted in people (not at the school) sending death threats for being “anti-American”). If we don’t acknowledge holidays it’s akin to saying “I see no color.”

Reflecting on how we handled Halloween, it went well. It was teaching and learning as usual and it was a good day. No incidents re: behavior. It was a good compromise. It is part of the greater culture, so it’s ok to wear costumes to school, but with rules.

Teachers receive a bite size memo from Mr. S on topics such as for Diwali, Hanukkah with a video they can show the kids. It won’t take all of a lesson but will be embedded in the day. Mr. S is offering a platform to those who celebrate the holiday (if they choose) to do the morning announcement to mention/talk about the holiday.

Q. What is the policy around teachers wearing hats, jewelry around the holiday?

A. The message is to be culturally responsive, but I need to be careful about telling people what to wear. Mr. S has not had a discussion with staff about that.

Q. What about activities that are heavily Christmas related like coloring sheets of elves and gingerbread?

A. Mr. S has instructed the team about focusing on winter themes and keep it general (not holiday focused).

Q. What about St. Patrick's Day?

A. Teachers can connect it to social studies about this holiday that Irish people celebrate (as part of other cultures and religions) but it won't be like everyone has to wear green.

Incorporating more cultures into curriculum -- teachers are getting resources around this from literacy coach Ms. Vecchiarello, and librarian Ms. Bourne, Mr. Travers are continually updating the library books to be more diverse and also had a virtual author visit with American Born Black authors and illustrators recently.

### **Food Rewards/Celebrations in Classrooms**

- Mr. S will emphasize with staff that there shouldn't be food in the classroom.
- But it is also families that are sending in food for birthdays.
- Mr. S will send a reminder to staff and families about avoiding having food for celebration.
- Suggestion to provide substitute, non-food ideas for birthday celebrations. Pam has a resource for this and will pass to Mr. S.
- It is also being culturally responsive (to not have food) as many candies contain gelatin that Muslim children can't have.
- Food allergies are a real issue.
- The CPS policy actually does not allow candy and soda at school.

### **What is Peabody's Mission and Vision?**

- We need to rekindle the subcommittee to get this going. It is meant to be composed of educators and caregivers.
- Katie S. has volunteered her husband Sebastian S. to be the subcommittee initiator (get the subcommittee organized and a meeting together) who volunteered to be on the committee
- Ms. Lippens is happy to join the subcommittee w/the others

### **School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

The presentation has to be postponed because the meeting where Mr. S was to present it to the superintendent and her cabinet was postponed due to principals having to respond to positive COVID cases at various schools. Once he has the green light, he can present it to the SC. Even after Mr. S presents it to the SC, the SIP will remain in draft form as it needs the SC's feedback. Then it will get redrafted being voted on

### **Updates - Staffing**

- Ms. Londino (25+ year special education teacher for grades 3&4) is retiring in December. Ms. Costa (current 3rd grade teacher) was chosen to replace her (hiring is done by the Office of Student Services).
- To fill the resulting opening for grade 3 (had over 17 applicants) the hiring committee was Ms. Hedrington, Ms. Jeudy and Mr. S and also paraprofessionals and a 3rd grade parent (who couldn't make the interview) and a second parent couldn't make it either. Interviews happened yesterday and had some excellent candidates. The new teacher is Paige Bacci (current paraprofessional in 3rd grade room) who is finishing her Master's Ed in Dec. This will be announced to the staff today and then to the families.

- Additional note: Last year there were several 2nd grade teachers. 3rd grade parents were concerned about all the turnover. One more reason to hire Ms. Bacci was that she knows the kids, the curriculum and many of our parents, so that would also minimize disruption to the class.
- Parent comment: Appreciate the effort to find a new teacher that will make the transition almost seamless.
- So now there is an opening for a 3rd grade paraprofessional.
- One lunch aide has been hired but there is still one opening. The job posting was taken down, so it needs to go back up to find the 2nd lunch aide.
- The nurse's aide position is still open. Mr. S to email the link to that job description to Tina so it can be shared out via Room Parents

FYI, Special educators are licensed for K-6 grades, but the assigned grades depend on caseload based on student needs.

#### New interventionists

- New math interventionist is Efrate Sinthia (pronounced Ms. "Cynthia") from Indonesia. She is eager to work with the kids and has met all the teachers and is learning about the new math curriculum.
- New literacy interventionist is Cheryl Wong who comes from the Morse School. She was by far the most qualified. She has a degree in reading and is well-versed in the reading programs we use. She started last week.
- One position is permanent and the other is 1 year only, funded by COVID relief funds, but Mr. S hopes to keep them by finding other funding as there are kids who are significantly below grade level due to remote learning.

#### **Updates - Curriculum**

Zones of Regulation for social emotional learning (SEL) has been rolled out so you might hear your kids talk about "I'm in the blue/green/yellow zone". The SEL team will send out an email to explain what that all means. (Past students of Ms. Costa might already know what those refer to.) All feelings are ok but not all behavior is ok.

#### **Equity Audit**

Q. Did Latinx and American Born Black families focus group happen?

A. We did contact the families and they were to have met this Monday but they never got the link. Mr. S will talk with Mr. Fernandez about that. We are behind, the report isn't ready. When ready, the report will be shared with families and staff.

Suggestion: Instead of PJ day (mentioned at last meeting that this is an equity issue as not all kids have PJs suitable for wearing in public) we could do what RAUC does which is PJ/comfy clothes day.