

Graham and Parks School

Cambridge Public Schools JK-5

School Council

29 September 2022

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Committee members in attendance:

Administrative Appointees:

Kathleen Smith- Principal
Lauren Morse - Family Liaison
Jodi Rich - Community Representative

Parent Representatives

Shawdee Eshghi
Christian Henry
Vivian Pales
Jessica Britton

Teacher Representatives:

Debra Gadsen-Holliday
Melissa Mihos
Kaitlinn Baumman
Stefanie Gardner

Other attendees

~20 parents

Principal's report

Staffing

Paras

- in the past some classrooms were staffed through internships with Lesley
- person running this program retired so there are no interns but reconnecting with this person later this fall
- during COVID, there was extra budget for paras but this is not the case this year
- Para allotments - all SEI and K get full time paras. There are 6 general education paras, Grades 4 and 5 share a para
- There is a special need for an extra para in K right now to stabilize a specific situation so 4th grade para switched to K
- Now grade 2 is sharing a para, grade 4 is sharing a para and actively hiring for a new para

Facilities update

- asbestos removal in 3rd/4th wing and first/second wing
- went up until deadline and impacted teachers' abilities to set up classrooms

Health update

Lunch in cafeteria

- two grades eating at the same time - makes a long line and doesn't allow distancing
- 10 covid cases each week for 2 weeks - they think cafeteria transmission may be a part of it
- now lunches are staggered so no grade level eats with another
- good coordination between teachers and staff

- this was implemented today
- Infection control team
- will meet every other week to review cases

Family Engagement updates

- school council will alternate in person and on zoom

Principal's entry plan/ listening tour

- is conducting interviews with staff with three questions and now wants to get feedback from parent community
- will share results at a faculty meeting in early november
- not clear if these results would also be shared with the greater school community

~5 mins discussion on each topic

Tell me about the community

- Very cozy and close knit; kids and families feel safe here
- Teachers are incredible - many families feel very lucky each year only to get another amazing teacher the following year
- Project Based Learning is what makes G&P unique and beloved by children and parents alike

What is working?

- Project Based Learning is a hallmark of the school - allows kids to learn in an open ended way that will stick with them beyond the grade and also allows teachers some freedom and creativity that leads to stronger connections with the students
- Teachers are able to see each student and provide what they need
- WIN blocks allows students to finish work without being hurried

What are the challenges and what should be the priorities to address?

- The building is old
- Many diverse international and other communities within the school but there are largely separate from each other
- SEI families have concerns about their children being behind relative to native English speakers
- iReady assessments stress some kids out and any time spent preparing for these tests take away from Project Based Learning and more meaningful teacher-student interactions
- How can we incorporate climate change understanding and readiness even more into the curriculum at all levels? It's the ultimate project based learning opportunity.

2022-2023 Graham & Parks Steering Committee Members

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Jodi Rich – Community Representative

Teachers: Debra Gadsen-Holliday – Co-Chair, Melissa Mihos, Kaitlinn Baumman, Stefanie Gardner

Parents: Shawdee Eshghi, Vivian Colon Pales, Jessica Britton, Christian Henry