

School Council
Minutes for October 5, 2023
6:00 – 7:00 pm in person & virtual

School Council Meeting Norms

Take an inquiry stance
Ground statements in evidence
Speak your truth and be open to other perspectives
Hear all voices and stick to protocol
Start and end on time
Be here now

Council Members in attendance: Kathleen Smith, Lauren Morse, Jodi Rich, Aboma Dirbaba, Debra Gadsen-Holiday, Melissa Mihos, Kaitlin Baumann, Karima Cherguaoui, Nasrin Belali, Mary Clancy (attended by zoom), Christian Henry, Genie Marshall, Gwen Savitch

Attendance: All council members present, except Talia Greenberg (prior engagement), as well as approximately 16 community members, including Guy Rosenzweig, Anna Bergholz, Andrea Eichman, Anna Bialkowska, Brook Hopkins, Ela Ben-Ur, Shawdee Eshghi, Anita Hurwitz, Will Hurwitz, Kathleen Roosevelt, Kim Bostic Williams, Laura Clawson, Ben Smith

And another 18 people on Zoom, no sign in was taken for our virtual observers.

1. Meeting Convened: By Co-Chair: Christian Henry @ 6:00pm
2. Introductions 6:00 - 6:05 pm
3. Welcome to the G&P School Council: (Debra and Lauren) 6:05 - 6:25 pm
 - a. Roles: Parent Representatives, Teacher Representatives, Co-Chairs, Secretary, Family liaison, Technology Manager
 - b. How we will collaborate (norms)
 - c. Purpose (School council handbook, see 2 page [prereading here](#))
 - d. Go around: Potential topics to be discussed this year

Notes:

- We started introductions with a quick survey of who's in the room. Ex. current G&P parents, former parents, staff members, district staff, Parent Liaisons, educators....
- Roles of the School Council were shared with the group. *see pre reading link above
 - Parent Representatives
 - Teacher Representatives
 - Co-chairs: Facilitate the meetings. Based on New CPSD Guidelines the school principal and one parent rep. Serve as co-chairs. Christian Henry has offered, but any parent rep can volunteer to take on that role.
 - Secretary: Debra Gadsden-Holiday offered, but any member can have that role
 - Technology Manager: Oversee the tech for those joining the meeting on zoom: Kaitlin Bauman offered to take that role.
- Norms: [see the **presentation slides**]
 - New norms as a community, norms are how we will collaborate as a group
 - **Take an inquiry stance**
 - **Ground statements in evidence**
 - **Speak your truth and be open to other perspectives**

- **Hear all voices and stick to protocol**
 - **Start and end on time**
 - **Be here now**
- They may look familiar, they can guide our work together
- Sticking to evidence, offer a rationale when stating a point of view
- Sentence starters: I see, I noticed that, I saw evidence
- We can support one another by holding each other accountable
- Inquiry stance, challenges us to ask questions that allow insight into someone's point of view
- What led you to think that? I'm hearing you say. I'm wondering what you mean by " Can you say more about that?
- Overview of School Council Responsibilities
- Potential topics to be discussed this year
 - What did we do last year? Katherleen shared her Entry Plan, Looked at MCAS data in Math and Literacy, We reflected on what we have learned and lost from the Pandemic, School Improvement Plan, New Math Curriculum. We shared a lot of data.
 - New Topics:
 - Deep dive into data and what educators are doing to meet goals.
 - Increase in school events ex. Welcome events for new families.
 - Staffing in classrooms.
 - Revisit conversation around Project Based Learning
 - SIP and how the goals and objectives are supporting families and students.
 - School-Family communication and transparency
 - What does equity look like at G&P
 - New CPSD Schedule Guidelines
 - *It was noted that there are more topics that can be discussed in 6 meetings. Can we create smaller committees that can have discussion around some of these topics?

***Suggestions:** Send out SC meeting minutes. Share slides from SC meetings. We will share notes as well as slides, when appropriate.

4. Shared responsibility: School Improvement Plan (SIP) 6:25 - 6:45 pm
- a. Purpose: a tool for defining improvement
 - b. Review revised District-wide template, milestones, data, process & timeline
 - c. Lessons from the learning process under new leadership: 2022-2023
 - d. Goals: Math, Literacy, School Climate, School Attendance
 - e. Supporting the shifts in curriculum, load on families, and evolving needs.

Notes: [See the district wide [School Improvement Plan Template](#)]

- **SIP:** Is the tool we use to set goals based on data and define our plan for improvement
 - New CPS process and template was designed and will be used to write our new SIP
 - Goals this year: Math, Literacy, School Climate, Attendance
 - Early goals will be shared with the community at the next School Council meeting.
 - There will be two year goals (long term). There will also be 90 day milestones (short term) that will allow us to monitor progress along the way.
 - Attendance is an area of concern, which is why it is listed as an area for growth.
 - Question posed: Has attendance gotten worse over the years?
 - We made lots of improvements in attendance at G&P over the course of the year last year, which we celebrate, however a concerning number of students missed more than 10% of the school year due to family trips, which are unexcused.
 - Absences due to illnesses are excused, students should stay home if they are sick.
- **Data we use to design the goals:**

- Literacy and Math data will be MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System)
- Attendance data comes from Aspen: We looked at the percentages of the types of absences across the school year. Lots of ways to look at attendance with an equity lens.
- iReady and mClass data will be used as needed to draft goals.
- **Next Steps:** A draft of the data will be shared at the next School Council Meeting in November.

5. School Administration Report

6:45 - 6:50 pm

- a. Staffing & Professional development updates
- b. Facilities updates
- c. Health policy updates

Notes:

- **Professional Development**
 - LETRS Training: K-3 educators are attending training in the Science of Reading and how to better align our literacy practices with the newest research.
 - ELA Curriculum Review Team: Several G&P teachers are on the team. They will make recommendations for adopting a new ELA curriculum for grades K-5.
 - Illustrative Math: Yearlong PD for educators as they teach the new Math Curriculum.
- **Facilities Updates:** Lighting on first floor being replaced.
- **Health Policies:** There are a few Flu & Covid clinics coming up, details in last week's Greer Gazette. Continuing to test students when they are sick remains part of our COVID protocol. Reach out to the School Nurse Bonnie, if you have questions.

6. New business & community feedback

6:50 - 7:00 pm

Notes:

- Staff: Getting more paras. Will the school be able to hire more paras to support classroom teachers?
 - Staffing allocations come from the district budget. We have used all of our funds for support staff from the district.
 - Staffing budgets are based on the number of classrooms.
 - In the past paras have been hired using School Improvement Plan (SIP) funding. This funding is set aside for professional development and other strategies on the action plan aimed at improving outcomes for all students.
 - In the past, we also had interns who were working in the classrooms as paras; efforts were made to recruit interns last year.
- Is having two teachers in each classroom no longer a goal?
 - Paras were allocated to the classroom after the placement process in order to support our most high-needs students.
 - Not all classrooms have high needs students.
- Kathleen suggested that people with additional questions re: staffing reach out to her to schedule a meeting

7. Meeting adjourned by Christian Henry at 7:05 pm

*Respectfully submitted by Debra Gadsden-Holiday

2023-2024 Graham & Parks School Council Members

Administrative Appointees: Dr. Kathleen Smith – Principal & Co-chair, Lauren Morse – Family Liaison; Jodi Rich – Community Representative;
Aboma Dirbaba - Community Representative

Educator and staff representatives: Debra Gadsen-Holiday (Secretary), Melissa Mihos, Kaitlin Baumann, Karima Cherguoui, Talia Greenberg

Family and caregiver representatives: Nasrin Belali, Mary Hermann, Christian Henry (Co-Chair), Genie Marshall, Gwen Savych