

Graham & Parks School Council
Cambridge, MA

Agenda for January 11, 2024
5:30 – 7:00 pm in person (with option to watch live)

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

G&P Council Members in Attendance: Kathleen Smith, Debra Gadsen-Holiday (Secretary), Melissa Mihos, Kaitlin Baumann, Karima Cherguoui, Talia Greenberg, Lauren Morse, Nasrin Belali, Mary Hermann, Christian Henry (Co-Chair), Gwen Savych, Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich as well as Dr. Ray Porch, Director of Family Engagement

Council Members absent: Genie Marshall

As well as 6 community members: Anna Shin, Elizabeth Patton, Kim Bostin-Williams, Guy Rosenzweig, Laura Pirani, Jess Goetz

... and others on Zoom (no sign was taken for our virtual observers)

1. Meeting Convened @ 5:37 by Christian Henry 5:30 pm
2. Introductions 5:30 - 5:35 pm
3. Where have we been? Where are we now? 5:35 - 5:50 pm
 - Feedback Shared
 - [Q&A](#) with the Leadership Team
 - G&P Leadership Structure
 - G&P Summit (see slide deck)

- Feedback from the last meeting was shared. Due to the feedback, the SC adjusted the format of today's meeting to allow for more family input.
- We have a Q&A with families and the G&P Leadership Team. *See notes above. Kathleen is committed to providing more opportunities to engage in dialogue with families and caregivers.
- G&P Norms were shared to guide our work together.
- Protocols are used as a way to support equity of choice. Some community members felt that the last meeting was too structured and the protocol prevented them from fully engaging. This feedback was taken and will be kept in mind as we continue our work together.
- **G&P Leadership Structure:** Includes 4 teams; Faculty Advisory Committee, Instructional Team, Social Emotional Team, Equity Team. Chairs from each team come together to form the Leadership Team.
 - During first year, there was only one leadership team, with no SEI or ML representation.
 - PLC
 - On ramps and off ramps, it can be valuable to have consistency to have the work

continue but it can also create conditions where certain staff members have relationships with administration that not every has

- G&P Summit: Made up of representatives of the staff and all of the programs at G&P. Henry Turner, was hired as a consultant to lead us in exploring anti-racist leadership. He was well received and guided us in articulating a goal and intended outcomes for our School Improvement Plan. (SIP) Henry guided us in leaning into taking a learner's stance, as we uphold our vision to be a more equitable school through this School Improvement Process.
- School Improvement Plan Process began with Tony, the Claudie picked up the work and we are now continuing the work
 - Teams:
 - What does effective teaming look like in a school?
 - Focused on adult learning
 - Anchored in the core work of the school which is teaching and learning
 - Routinely gathering data and act upon it so we can continue to improve
 - We ended with a clear Vision for the SIP, as well as a Leadership Team Structure.
 - Teachers were given the opportunity to share their preferences of joining a team and opt in.
 - Next Steps:
 - Build consensus about how teams should/will uphold the values of becoming a more equitable school.
 - Continue to craft the School Improvement Plan with input from all stakeholders.

4. Where are we going?

5:50 - 6:00 pm

- [Purpose of School Council](#): Main responsibilities
- [School Improvement Plan](#)
- Budget Process

School Council Responsibilities:

- An advisory committee, adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards
- Identify the needs of students attending the school in the relations to the goals
- Collaborate with school community and district instructional staff to form an annual SIP to be reviewed by the School Committee
- Review the school budget annually
 - Majority of the school budget goes towards staffing
- Review the student's Rights and Responsibilities handbook
- Asses student discipline data

School Improvement Plan: Working on the SIP this evening. *See notes below

5. Shared Responsibility: School Improvement Plan

6:00 - 6:30 pm

- (15 min) Building a Collective Understanding - Small Groups
 - i. JigSaw Protocol - groups will build an understanding of a portion of the School Improvement Plan and share it with the larger group.
 1. What does the data for this area show?
 2. Explain the goal in your own words?

3. Name 1 or 2 major actions the school will take to accomplish this goal?
- (15 min ~ about 4 min per goal) Share Out

Share out Notes:

Math:

- Noticed the percentage of students meeting or exceeding has increased slightly, but a large percentage of students continue to not meet or exceed expectations.
- Current rate of AA students meeting or exceeding expectations is low.
- The Action plan seems to only address one community within our school; African-American students.
- 19% of Black/AA students are meeting or exceeding expectations, which means 81% are not. If that was my child, I would be concerned.
- Is the goal too ambitious? How do we attain it?

Action Plan:

- The adoption of the new math curriculum with the tier 1, 2, and 3 feels really powerful and feels like something that is impacting all students and will hopefully impact all students and specifically bring up the percentage of success for AA students.
- Focus on time for our educators to learn and understand the curriculum and unpack it with their fellow teachers and adapt it well
- By shifting our focus on education practices, All students benefit, not just those underperforming!

School Climate and Culture:

Noticings:

- Not a lot in the data for this one, so only a few
- The data is not disaggregated
- We learned that the survey this data is based off of is split into different competencies, so the data could be further disaggregated

Goal:

- This is very foundational work that will create social emotional learning and instruction across all grade levels and to have a consistent approach to discipline that includes multiple perspectives including caregivers

Actions:

- Sharing information about SEL competencies with families and the importance of working with families to understand their SEL
- Creating a new consistent curriculum for all students (Second Step)
- Training and supporting staff on culturally responsible expectations for behavior

Chronic Absenteeism:

- Noticing about the use of some of the terminology; a few of the words felt a bit hard to understand
- Communication with families resulted in improving attendance
- The school in general is not geared towards perfect attendance. If we want to improve, we probably need a reward for that.
-

School wide understanding of the district attendance

- Includes staff, family, community, everyone

What does it mean to have a culturally responsive approach to chronic absenteeism? Includes a 1:1 approach with individual conversations with families rather than every family receiving the same blanket letter. What one's family's barrier is might be very different than another family (ie. a family's vacation vs a student who is missing the bus every day)

Thinking about shifting it from absenteeism to attendance in order to be asset based

Literacy:

Round 1: Noticings

- Between 2019 and 2023 for the most part our white students have scored pretty much the same and our African American students continued to decline in meeting or exceeding expectations
- When looking at 3-5 as a whole, there was a little dip in 2022 then it looks like we recovered with the cohort in the 60ish% range
- 17% is such a low number, very shocking/hard to look at
- We are the lowest achieving in our MCAS 2023 data for our African American students

Wondering:

- One parent brought up a concern about "mixing the SEI data in with the rest of the students"

What stands out in the action plan?

- "In literacy, the most important part is phonemic awareness and mastering all the phonemes to be able to combine things and it looks like that is there in the action plan"

6. School Administration Report

6:30 - 6:50 pm

- Staffing & Professional Development Updates
 - i. January 2 PD Day
 - ii. Racial Identity Work with OEIB and Henry Turner
 - iii. Data Wise Institute
- Facilities Updates
- Health Policy Updates

January 2 PD:

Literacy:

- mCLASS, talking about data
- Felt helpful to get feedback from colleagues
- Received feedback from previous observations

ML:

- Guest speaker
 - Sped referral process for ML learners
 - The bottom line is there is no "catching up" for language learners
 - What is a reasonable benchmark that we can use to ensure only students who actually need sped services will receive them

Equity work with OEIB and Henry Turner:

- Continued the work that was started at the Summit with Henry Turner
- Manuel Fernandez led Staff in a workshop to begin to explore our identities and how that can lead us in our equity work. He will return late this year to continue this work.

Data Wise:

- Five g&p staff members
- At every level it seems to be that teachers are given autonomy in what they want to look at in terms of assessing and inquiry
 - Our students are doing this but we see in the data these students aren't being reached, we are doing these things well but _ may be an area of continued growth
 - Use research, PD to create a plan and then assess said plan
- Not all about number crunching and charts, it has been very eye opening and teachers are excited to implement when they return to the classroom
 - Thinking about how we take what we have learned at the institute and implementing it at our school
- The structure for collaboration makes so much sense once you have the opportunity to practice it
 - Feel confident that they can bring this learning back to others at our school

Facilities Updates

- First Floor has new lights.

Health Policy Updates

- Thank you for continuing to test students after school breaks.
- A slight increase in Covid cases.

7. Family Liaison Update

6:50-7:00 pm

- Draft of Family Engagement Calendar
- Family Math Night
- Math Coffee

- Draft for a family calendar, really looking at the arc of the school year, looking to have one big family event every month
- Going to meet with Friends of G&P to make sure it aligns
- In the future want to have the calendar set by August so families can put it in their schedules
- Should be coming in the next few weeks
- Family Math Night and Math Coffee are coming up in the next few weeks, both really designed for families to get a sense of what our new math curriculum looks like, sounds like and feels like.

Meeting was extended til 7:15 for Community Comment:

- We spent a lot of time thinking how this would be structured at these meetings, the Nov meeting left some folks feeling upset that they did not get to voice things they were hoping to bring up
- We are not necessarily prepared to react and respond, so during this time we have allocated 15 minutes tonight to allow people to make comments and school council will listen and receive and then think about how to follow up
 - At the next meeting?
 - and / or in writing as needed

8. Community Comment

7:00-7:15 pm

Comments/Questions:

- Caregivers being invited into the equity work, I think it is way overdue and need to address the issues that are present in the community
- The additional 15 minutes of comment felt like a misrepresentation
 - Thought it needed to be more specific
 - Felt as though the agenda wasn't shared early enough
- Principal's Coffee: was surprised that Kathleen didn't answer any questions, there were some parents who asked for a response and there was not a response given.
- A parent raised a question about whether or not the **Comments/Questions** portion of the meeting was supposed to be focused on the meeting agenda items, or is any topic allowed?
- A parent raised a concern of not feeling like they had enough time to look through the data, perhaps ahead of time families could have copies of the information in order to digest at their own pace (recognizes that this puts a lot of work on administration)
 - Would have loved getting to see the packets of data from the other groups as well
- One family member raised up that all staff members at the Principal's Coffee were there voluntarily and had actually requested to be present and share their perspective

Ray: We gave G&P flexibility in how this Q&A is run but we are going to move forward now because this is not a back and forth, and we need to respect how this space is run.

Coffee Hour:

- PBL: How do we fix the problem?An educator expressed concern that they don't really do PBL ,but do projects. Is there a plan?
- Enjoyed the format of this meeting and the format of Principal's Coffee as well.
- A parent stated that they felt it was really great to hear from members of the Leadership team
- . It was clear that a lot of thought went into the planning for tonight and wanted to give acknowledgement of that

8. Meeting Adjourned by Co-chair Christian Henry @ 7:15 pm

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 Cherguaoui, Talia Greenberg

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