

Graham and Parks SCHOOL COUNCIL
(Official Minutes)

School Council Meeting: Thursday, May 16, 2024

Called for 5:45 PM at the Graham & Parks School, 44 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

School Council Members Present: Kathleen Smith, Christian Henry, Lauren Morse, Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich, Debra Gadsden-Holiday, Talia Greenberg, Karima Cherguaoui, Kaitlin Baumann, Melissa Mihos, Gwen Savych, Genie Marshall, Mary Hermann, Nasrin Belali

School Council Members Absent: No Members Absent

With Kathleen Smith & Christian Henry serving as co-chairs, and a quorum of the Graham & Parks School Council being present, Co-Chair, Christian Henry called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm and read the call of the meeting.

- This meeting of the Graham and Parks School Council is called to order at 5:45 pm. Would the Secretary please call the roll call for a vote to proceed.

The meeting proceeded with a roll call vote of the members Present

Kathleen Smith, Christian Henry, Lauren Morse, Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich, Debra Gadsden-Holiday, Talia Greenberg, Karima Cherguaoui, Kaitlin Baumann, Melissa Mihos, Genie Marshall, Mary Hermann, Nasrin Belali, Gwen Savych,

- Introductions & Opening 5:45 - 5:55 pm

- Minutes for Approval April 11, 2024

Motion moved by Debra Gadsden-Holiday to “approve THE MINUTES OF THE GRAHAM & PARKS SCHOOL COUNCIL FOR the April 11, 2024 meeting Seconded by Melissa Mihos

- ***Roll Call vote:*** Kathleen Smith, Christian Henry, Lauren Morse, Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich, Debra Gadsden-Holiday, Talia Greenberg, Karima Cherguaoui, Kaitlin Baumann, Melissa Mihos, Gwen Savych, Genie Marshall, Mary Hermann, Nasrin Belali
- ***Results: Minutes of the prior meetings accepted by unanimous vote.***

Review of Executive Session minutes of March 14, 2024

- As a result of a request that was made on April 26, 2024 for the minutes of the March 14, 2024 executive session minutes and in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting, the Graham & Parks Council is conducting a review to determine if the continued non-disclosure of the minutes is warranted.
- On a motion made by **Talia Greenberg** and seconded by **Mary Herman**, the Graham & Parks Council has reviewed the March 14, 2024 executive session minutes and has determined that the continued non-disclosure is no longer warranted

- **Discussion:** What was the reason why we needed to disclose these minutes? Has the complaint been resolved? Is there still a need to keep the minutes non-disclosed?

Roll Call Vote:: Kathleen Smith, Christian Henry, Lauren Morse, Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich, Debra Gadsden-Holiday, Talia Greenberg, Karima Cherguoui, Kaitlin Baumann, Melissa Mihos, Gwen Savych, Genie Marshall, Mary Hermann, Nasrin Belali

Motion passed by unanimous vote.

- Kathleen reviewed the School Council Norms that we hold each other accountable to.
- Feedback from April 11 School Council Meeting
 - **PLUS - What went well?**
 - Great turnout, lots of people engaged at the school, including support from district representatives
 - Zoom option that was easier to hear and had a chat question option
 - Appreciated thoughtful questions from council members about the School Climate Data
 - **DELTA - What can we do better?**
 - Small groups could be a better way to connect
 - Questions about district leaders in attendance
 - More time for discussion among Council members
 - Would like to hear more about the School Improvement Plan, including timeline for implementation and where it stands now

- School Administration Report

5:55 - 6:05 pm

- Staffing & Professional Development Updates
 - JK/K SEI position: The District ML(Multi-Lingual) Department will take the lead on this. Staff and Parent reps will be invited to be part of the hiring committee. Beth Kirshner will oversee the hiring process.
 - Grade 5 Position: Committee is being assembled with both staff and parent representatives. Names were due this week and a committee will be formed tomorrow..
 - Assistant Principal position: District is overseeing this hiring process.
 - Extended Term Substitutes: in Grades 1 and 2: Those positions will be posted and interviews committee will proceed soon afterward.
- Facilities Updates
 - Floor work: out to bid No update at this time
 - Kathleen and John Okie are working on making a list of building concerns that need to be addressed.

a. Review self-assessment

Survey was given to the School Council members to complete ahead of this meeting to help guide our reflection and discussion.

- Results: * [Slide Presentaion](#)

b. Develop action steps

- There were several members who said that they didn't have access to training. Can we optimize those who have been here for a long time? Can we use the expertise of those who have been on the School Council Before.
- Transparency is really important and we could do better in making sure that all of our work and decision making procedures are shared with the greater community and provide time for them to offer feedback.
- Two year terms can often lead to a brand new Council with all new members. Might there be a way to make connections between what happens within one 2-year term, with the next? For Example, share actions steps for those serving the next two year term.
- Action items from each meeting being shared and a plan for how to work towards solving them, with transparency. We should be accountable for all of the items that are lifted up in each meeting. There should be a time to address them and a plan for how the information will be shared with the whole community.
- Diversity of parent members who are new to the school with those who have been here longer.
- Will there be any District Support or ways to connect with SC from other Schools? Can we have training together?
 - There is a plan for all New School Council members to get training together. Lauren will reach out to see if all SC members will be able to attend the training.
- **We are Committed to training and ensuring that all of our members are well versed in their role as SC members.**
- **Transparency and Feedback Loops.**
- **Continuity and Follow Through**

- Kahtleen Smith, School Principal, started by presenting the Literacy and Math Goal Updates.
 - **Literacy Goal:**
 - **Progress:**
 - 8 out of 20 (40%) of Black/African American students had a composite score of well below grade level on iReady Reading Beginning of Year (BOY) Assessment.
 - 4 out of 8 (50%) Black/African American students in grades 3-5 met their MOY **stretch** growth goal
 - 7 out of 8 (87%) met their MOY **typical** growth goal
 - **Strategic Actions**
 - Continued emphasis on foundational reading block K-3 (Phonemic Awareness & Phonics)
 - Implemented Close Reading practices
 - Implemented strategic data-driven small group reading instruction
 - Provided targeted Tier 2 instruction during the W.I.N. (What I Need) block .W.I.N block are 30

minute intervention blocks for each grade level. No new Learning/Intervention happens during this time, so that students may receive targeted small group, skills based learning. This practice can help close the opportunity Gap amongst our students.

- **Math Goal:**

- **Progress:**

- 7 out of 22 (32%) of Black/African American students had a composite score of well below grade level on iReady Math BOY Diagnostic
 - 3 out of 7 (43%) Black/African American students in grades 3-5 met their MOY stretch growth goal
 - 6 out of 7 (86%) met their MOY typical growth goal

- **Strategic Actions**

- Implemented Illustrative Math with fidelity to the culturally responsive pedagogy embedded into the curriculum
 - Focused on building a community of mathematicians
 - Provided all students experiences the high cognitive demand through the routines, activities, and games
 - Provided targeted Tier 2 instruction during the W.I.N. (What I Need) block

School Culture and Climate Goal: John Okie, Interim Assistant Principal, shared the update on this goal

- **School Culture and Climate Goal:**

- **Progress:**

- Formed Social Emotional Leadership Team - developed team culture and organized for collaborative work: (**Data Wise Practice**)
 - Successfully implemented the use of the Second Step SEL curriculum in all grade level classrooms
 - Defined areas of need for School-wide Expectations
 - Reviewed values, expectations, and visuals from our past (CARES) and other schools
 - Surveyed staff on Core Values of G&P in order to review and renew; updated staff on our work
 - Familiarized with DESSA Screener and Reviewed Data

Lauren Morse, G&P Family Liaison, shared an update on our Attendance Goal.

- **Attendance Goal:**

- **Update**

- Formed team to gather, monitor and act on absentee data
 - Developed culturally responsive protocol (phone calls and one-on-ones)
 - Planning to address chronic absenteeism with staff to develop school-wide understanding of attendance policy and G&P protocols
 - Structure of our Attendance Team response will be reviewed and improved so we address attendance issues with more consistency
 - Plan to clarify attendance goals and procedures in our family communication

- **Progress:**

- Year To Date average of chronic absenteeism is 12%. District average for elementary schools is 17.8%
 - At this point in 2021-22: 16.4%
 - At this point in 2022-23: 14.6%
 - We have made progress but still have work to do meet our goal of 10%

- Talking Circles
 - Talking Circles continue and the feedback has been great. Some caregivers have attended more than one.
- Upcoming events
 - JK/K Music Concert will be on Thursday, May 23, 2024

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- Community Comment 6:5-7:00 PM

- Anna Shin: Glad to hear that we are doing the Self Assessment. There was supposed to be a Survey that was completed back in February. It was stated in the meeting minutes and that never happened. The Handbook was not new this year. It was voted in by the School Council. Principal Smith should have been aware of this. It is stated in the past minutes that we Go over the Handbook, including the roles and purpose of the members. It is incumbent upon the School Principal to ensure that all members are trained and understand the School Council Handbook. Schools haven't always followed the handbook and I feel that this Council is and should have more than just an advisory role.
- Vivian A. Pales I am thinking about the training for Paraprofessionals. The School Climate Survey showed that students feel that teachers might not always understand how they feel and have the ability to meet their needs. There should be more support and training for how educators support students Social Emotional needs.
- Shawdee Eshghi: What have you learned from the progress that students have made? Assuming that these students are second language learners, what will you bring to the teaching of all learners.? How has the data changed your practice? What lessons have been learned?
- Owen: Would love to have a follow-up discussion after topics are brought up by the community. This format does not give space for allowing open dialogue that does not ensure and build trust within the community. Will there be time for talking about feedback and questions that were raised in other meetings? For example, the Climate Survey showed that although African-American/Black Families seem to have positive experiences at our school; Black/African-American students rated their experience less positive. When will this information be explored?

- Meeting Adjourned

Motion to conclude the meeting given by Talia Greenberg @ 7:00 pm. Seconded by Mary Herman

Approved by an Affirmative Vote