

November 26, 2024

Baldwin School Council Minutes

7:45 - 8:45 a.m.

School Council Members in Attendance

Parent Members: Caitlin Dube, Kate Flaim, Matt Meyerson, Eugenia Schraa, Chunying Yue

School Staff and Community Members: Heidi Cook, Allegra Fletcher, Corianne LaBounty, Sara Oliveira, Susan Tiersch

Also present: Serena Facchinetti, Nicole Stone

Welcome and Meeting Routines

Follow Up on the Snack Sized Survey

The snack-sized survey that was a followup to the district survey for our school community had great participation and very positive results. Thinking about next steps, do we want to do another survey? Do we want to include students?

From Heidi, the students take a survey at the end of the MCAS tests about belonging and safety. Our numbers were exceptional and outperformed in all areas.

We can talk about those results of that student survey at another meeting.

Agenda

- School Improvement Plan (SIP) Budget Conversation
What needs or gaps do you see?

There is an extensive process for the CPS budget which includes a general fund and capital fund. You've seen emails about that process that is currently underway at the district level.

Unique to Cambridge is a School Improvement budget which is to be used at the principal's discretion. The funding is to be directly aligned with school improvement goals.

Last Year's SIP Funding - Where did we use it?

Last year, the total SIP funds was about \$60k plus an additional \$12k on professional development. This year, the allotted amount is \$74k.

- Last year we spent \$25k on (2) graduate interns (Goal/Objective = Effective student supports) [This year we only have one full time intern.]
- Pay paraprofessionals for morning and afternoon intervention (Goal/Objective - Supporting ELA learning)

- Paying staff to stay after to supervise Hoops with Harvard students (Goal/Objective - Promote positive school culture and climate, belonging and SEL)
- Snack for Hoops students (Goal/Objective - Promote positive school culture and climate)
- Class Creator software subscription used to help make class rosters ((Goal/Objective - Equity)
- Paying teachers for targeted tutoring of high needs students (Goal/Objective - Strategic tutoring)
- Online math fluency program (Goal/Objective - Math achievement)
- Contract with Cambridge Basketball Labs (Goal/Objective - Partnership for afterschool programming)
- Girls on the Run (called We're on the Run at Baldwin) in the spring (Goal/Objective - Belonging and attendance)
- Over the summer, teachers and staff were paid on creating the schedule for the longer school day and planning curriculum rollout.
- New projector for the ELL students. (Goal/Objective - Increase support for ELL students)

School Improvement Goals/Objectives for 2024-25

- Supporting tiered supports and ongoing learning
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) support
- Academic support and climate/culture

2024-25 School Improvement Budget Allocations (to date)

- Graduate interns (Goal/Objective = Effective student supports)
- Curriculum for SEL, *Second Step* (Goal/Objective - SEL supports)
- Pay paraprofessionals to come early to run/support morning programming (Goal/Objective - Academic support and climate/culture)

So far, this accounts for about \$40K of the \$74K SIP budget.

Heidi stated that she is a saver and it's hard to think about how to spend money. She is comfortable with how we have been spending our SIP funds over the years by having some up front spending, but holding on to some to see where the need is as the year unfolds. It's nice to have a reserve for things that come up as the school year progresses.

Questions? Are there any needs you see, gaps where you would like to spend money?

Is there anything you've heard that another school has done that we should be thinking about?

- Don't know enough about where other schools are using their funding for, but we can find out.

In the past, we talked about field trips and transportation for those trips.

- There is a good chunk of funding in the general budget for transportation as this is an issue for all schools.

Is there a way teachers can propose special projects that they may like to do?

- We are very fortunate that Friends often picks up enrichment costs for our students.

Is there demographic data for who is participating in Hoops to make sure we are including all students?

- That is something we can find out..

The school and district goals include math growth. We had two interventionists but now we have one. Is there a way to get the second interventionist restored?

Question about literacy, do we have all we need with the new curriculum?

- The general budget spent a lot of money on a new literacy curriculum and training which should be sufficient for now.

Individualized tutoring is included in the SIP budget for students who are two grade levels below target.

Cambridge Basketball Labs will be funded again this year. Hoops is Harvard undergraduate students and runs only when Harvard is in session. In order to have Hoops run the whole year (no college breaks), Cambridge Basketball Labs (run by parent Matt M.) fills in the gaps. We also have another parent volunteer this year.

Afterschool Chorus is offered on Tuesdays for grades 3 - 5. No money is needed as Ms. Liz flexes her time instead. This doesn't take away from Hoops. If a student wants to attend chorus, they are permitted to attend two days of Hoops, even if the day is not a day scheduled for their grade.

SEL - Why is this in the SIP Budget? (SEL = Social Emotional Learning) CPS talks a lot about social/emotional learning, but why is the money in the SIP funding? The money in the SIP is for a yearly subscription for the *Second Step* program. There are several programs the district endorsed. We are using *Second Step* and this funding is for the online version of the program which is more up-to-date and of a higher quality than the 'kit' curriculum. The district budget is paying for staff professional development to learn how to use *Second Step*. We are the only school using the *Second Step* online program. This is the 3rd year we've used this program at Baldwin and are finding it to be very helpful. Maybe this should be in the general funds.

Is there a way for teachers to have/submit participatory budgeting?

What about funding for a laser cutter for wood? Like a Makerspace?

We are very grateful for the three 3D printers we have, all funded by Friends of Baldwin. Having those printers is unique to Baldwin.

There have been discussions about how to create a makerspace that will help teachers have resources for project-based learning. Per Allegra, afterschool has been approached about creating a Makerspace space as well. Maybe there is a possibility to work with the afterschool to find space, possibly at Maud Morgan and collaborate with them.

The public library has a funded Makerspace that is used by the high school.

NOTE - our 5th grade had a great free field trip to that space a few weeks ago. Ms. Kugel and Mr. Beucler took the students. The kids loved the Hive at the library and the podcasting at the Media Arts Center. This is a great thing to do with your family. It is free and all the materials are provided!

Other Items

Survey about report cards. Thank you if you have taken the survey. Suggest families take the survey. The goal is to make the report cards standard across all schools and standards based.

Any interest in reading “Anxious Generation” as a community?

Caution - There is a lot of controversy around the studies used in this book. Heidi and Caitlin will discuss this more.

The School Committee had a few meetings about MCAS results. These meetings can be found online.

Our school has tons to celebrate in those results. Our teachers and students worked very hard and the results show that.

Heidi will create a slideshow to send to families to show(off) the achievements of our students and also highlight areas that we are still working on — and that is where the SIP budget is used.

Public Comment

Should we augment social skills by offering a program afterschool, like transformational SEL, around student leadership, or drama/theater?

Next School Council Meeting and Meeting Schedule for the School Year

Next meeting is *Wednesday, December 18*.

Meetings will be in the morning from 7:45 - 8:45.

Remaining Meetings

January 14

February 11

March 11

April 8

May 6

June 10

School council meetings follow the open meeting law. Meetings are open to all. Students are always welcome to come to the library and may go to the cafeteria for breakfast at 8:00 or they may stay in the library until the bell rings at 8:30 and then go to their classroom.