

***May 20, 2025***

**Baldwin School Council Minutes**

**8:00 - 9:00 a.m.**

**School Council Members in Attendance**

Parent Members: Caitlin Dube, Kate Flaim, Matt Meyersohn, Eugenia Schraa, Chunying Yun

School Staff and Community Members: Heidi Cook, Sara Oliveira, Susan Tiersch

Also present: Jen Nigro

**Agenda**

School Council Election Review

Snack vs. Community Snack

**School Council Election Review**

Friends of Baldwin is running the School Council election as mandated by the district. Lindsey Dollard, co-president of Friends, collected the bios of the candidates and created a ballot, both online and paper with little direction from the district. Huge thanks to Lindsey. The election is open for a two week period, ending on June 2. There are up to 6 caregiver seats and a parent/caregiver co-chair seat on the council. There must be parity meaning there is an equal number of staff and caregivers on the council. Ms. Heidi is the staff co-chair.

In order to meet the required parity, there needs to be an equal number of staff. Baldwin staff has a Faculty Advisory Committee that meets with Ms. Heidi about school/staff issues. At their next meeting on June 4, Ms. Heidi will encourage staff to participate in School Council.

There was discussion about staggering the seats as a council member for a two-year term.

There will be training for all new school council members in the fall.

The school council election is running at the same time as the district culture survey which may be an issue with parent participation overload.

**District Culture Survey**

The district culture survey is taking place that ends on May 30. Last year, Baldwin had a high participation percentage rate. At this point this year, we do not have a great participation rate. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey. We use the data collected in that survey as feedback as to where we need to do better.

**Snack Discussion**

Currently, classroom teachers determine if they would like to have community snack or if students are to bring their own snack from home. Post-Covid, classrooms have moved away from community snack. Older grades bring their own snack. Students are allowed to take items from school breakfast to have for their snack later in the day if needed. For the lower grades, preschool through grade 1, community snack allows for all students to have the same snack,

however, issues have been raised this year. Providing snack for an entire classroom for a week, multiple times a year is costly. This can be a hardship for families. There is an equity issue around providing community snack. And a logistic issue if the child rides the bus. However, there are some families that enjoy bringing snack.

There is the possibility of ordering snack items from the Food Services Department, however, the items are very basic and it may not be cost effective (like Costco). Concern about waste if the school purchases snack.

Allergy aware classrooms are always mindful of what foods are in the classroom.

Question raised about birthday celebrations. At Baldwin, the child is celebrated. Families want this to be made clear.

### **Other Topics Raised**

Caitlin wanted to know what came of the results from the Equity Self Assessment done in 2021.

The Building Equity Bridges project, funded by the Nellie Mae Foundation, was created in 2019 to facilitate a comprehensive, and transparent process to better understand and elevate root causes of inequity in the Cambridge Public Schools. From there, each school worked for a few months on an equity self-assessment. From that self-assessment, faculty trainings began based on the School Improvement Goals.

Baldwin Equity teams were created and chaired by teacher Arkie Tasew who led powerful sessions about students on the margins.

There were circle trainings and restorative practice sessions with Chandra Banks who was the district mediator.

Several staff members attended an expensive training session on circles.

Betsy Bowman, Restorative Practices Specialist for the district has come to speak with our staff a few times.

One of our staff members attended an Internal CPS course on Restorative Practices.

Two staff members are trained equity advocates (Elena Haro and Jeff Durney). They attended training all year. Elena is working on translation of math materials and Jeff is working on inclusive technology “Read & Write”, a literacy support tool that helps with reading and literacy development. Jeff ran a staff meeting this spring on this subject.

Monthly, a member of the Office of Equity Inclusion and Belonging comes to meet with Ms. Heidi and Mr. Roderick. Leslie Jimizez is coaching them on thinking about balancing individual care of students with high expectations in the classroom.

Betsy Bowman and Alice Cohen, Social and Emotional Learning experts for the district, have come to staff meetings to run circles.

The principals and district leadership are reading the book, “Fix Injustice Not Kids”. They are looking at systems and structures. Heidi was in a two hour meeting yesterday talking about this.

The fifth grade teams run circles frequently in the classrooms.

This year, the focus of staff professional development was one the new curriculum for both Math and ELA.

Request by Caitlin that Betsy Bowman run a training session for parents about restorative justice.

**Next Meeting**

Snack update

Finalize School Council membership

*Final Meeting of the year:*

- *June 10, 7:45 a.m. in the Library with remote access as well (hybrid meeting)*

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.