

Graham and Parks
SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES
Approved on December 12, 2024

School Council Meeting: Thursday, October 24, 2024 (Library & Zoom)

Called for 5:37pm at the Graham and Parks School, 44 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

*The Co-Chair announced that this meeting will be recorded.

School Council Members Present: Kathleen Smith, Lauren Morse, Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich, Debra Gadsden-Holiday, Inbal Alon, Mason Gludemans, Gwen Savych, Mary Hermann, Lilly Havstad, Nasrin Belali, Guy Rosenzweig, Arjun Jaikumar, **Karima Cherguaoui**, Christian Henry (arrived late)

School Council Members Absent: Talia Greenberg

Also Present: Candace Bass, Robin Harris

With Kathleen Smith and Arjun Jaikumar serving as the Co-Chairs

- This meeting of the Graham and Parks School Council is called to order at 5:30 pm.
Would the Secretary please call the roll call for a vote to proceed.

A quorum of the Graham and Parks School Council being present, the Co-Chairs called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and read the call of the meeting

Inbal - secretary

Karima - tech support

Time keeper - Mason

The meeting proceeded with a roll call vote of the members present:

Kathleen Smith, Lauren Morse, Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich, Debra Gadsden-Holiday, Inbal Alon, Mason Gludemans, Gwen Savych, Mary Hermann, Lilly Havstad, Nasrin Belali, Guy Rosenzweig, Arjun Jaikumar, Karima Cherguaoui

1. Meeting Convened & Approval of Minutes (5/2024; 9/2024) 5:30 pm

- Minutes for Approval (May 2024,)

Motion made by Arjun to approve THE MINUTES OF THE GRAHAM & PARKS SCHOOL COUNCIL FOR (Date of meeting minutes)

Seconded by Debra

- ***Roll Call vote:*** Kathleen Smith yes , Lauren Morse - yes, Aboma Dirbaba - yes Jodi Rich yes , Debra Gadsden-Holiday yes , Inbal Alon - yes , Mason Gludemans - yes , Gwen Savych - yes , Mary Hermann yes , Lilly Havstad yes , Nasrin Belali yes , Guy Rosenzweig yes , Arjun Jaikumar yes , **Karima**

Cherguaoui - yes

- **Results: 14 yes (two absent - Talia and Christian (late))**

Motion made by Guy to “approve THE MINUTES OF THE GRAHAM & PARKS SCHOOL COUNCIL FOR (September 2024)

Seconded by Lilly

- ***Roll Call vote: Roll Call vote: Kathleen Smith yes , Lauren Morse - yes, Aboma Dirbaba - yes Jodi Rich yes , Debra Gadsden-Holiday yes , Inbal Alon - yes , Mason Gloudemans - yes , Gwen Savych - yes , Mary Hermann yes , Lilly Havstad yes , Nasrin Belali yes , Guy Rosenzweig yes , Arjun Jaikumar yes , Karima Cherguaoui - yes***
- ***Results: 14 yeses (2 absent - Talia and Christian)***

1. Welcome & Introductions

5:35 - 5:45 pm

a. Feedback from 9/2024

How well did we live up to our norms, there is some variability and room for improvement

What went well: transparency, openness, a welcoming environment, talked through the tri-chair role, included public comment, tone of the meeting more positive

To work on: grounding our statements in evidence, being open to other perspectives, ensuring equity of voice

53% did not want to extend the meeting
however 84% were willing to start the meeting early
Many people felt we needed a timekeeper

b. Intended Outcomes

Provide an update on and discuss the progress towards school improvement goals

c. Vote to ratify and confirm 9/19/24 election Co-chair(s) of the Graham & Parks School Council

Motion made by Debra to ratify and confirm the votes taken at the September 19, 2024 school council meeting, including the votes taken with respect to the election of co-chairs (tri-chairs) for the Graham & Parks School Council.

Second: Mary Herman

- ***Roll Call vote: Kathleen Smith yes , Lauren Morse - yes, Aboma Dirbaba - yes Jodi Rich yes , Debra Gadsden-Holiday yes , Inbal Alon - yes , Mason Gloudemans - yes , Gwen Savych - yes , Mary Hermann yes , Lilly Havstad yes , Nasrin Belali yes , Guy Rosenzweig yes , Arjun Jaikumar yes , Karima Cherguaoui - yes***

- 14 yeses, 2 absent (Talia and Christian)

d. Roles for 10/24 Meeting - Co-Chair, Tech Support, Secretary, Timekeeper

2. Review School Improvement Plan & 90 Day Goal 5:45 - 6:20 pm

- (5 Min) Review Goals
- (10 Min) Share Progress & Updated 90 Day Goals
- (10 Min) School Council Discussion: Noticings & Wonderings
- (10 Min) Community Q & A

- ELA - using I-Ready and mClass data to reach stretch goals - working towards accelerated progress
- In ELA there has been some growth from “not meeting” to “partially meeting” that is not represented in the data
- We also saw growth in the Achievement Percentile for Black/African American students at G&P (went from the 17th percentile in 2023 to the 47th percentile in 2024)
- Action plan and next steps to continue to see improvement in ELA: deliver curriculum with fidelity and scaffolding
- Math: improvement in the 2024 data - 30% of Black/African American students are meeting or exceeding expectations (compared to 19% last year)
- Increase in the Achievement Percentile of Black/African American students (from 34th percentile in 2023 to the 62nd percentile in 2024)
- Absenteeism - Met target and will continue to work to decrease absenteeism at G&P
- School Climate and Culture: we have been focused on establishing Tier 1 SEL curriculum and a restorative approach to discipline
- DESSA Data & School Climate Data will continue to inform School Climate goal areas

Noticings and Wonderings (from SC):

- How are we trying to achieve our goals?
- What does the work look like implementing the new curriculum? Want to hear from staff - what do you need?
- Parent shared CPS is not spending all our discretionary funds. Wondered how can we support this work with the SIP and building budget.
- Request for a budget sub-committee - work with teams and talk to teachers, interventionists, special educators - do the research on what we need to do the work we need to do?
- A teacher reported that resources, ideas, modifications are being shared across the district since we have consistent curriculum across the district - there is a huge learning curve in the first year
- Collaboration time - there is more time this year
- Professional development time to collaborate - we could use more time to collaborate, and time to learn the curriculum
- Is there a connection about the new math curriculum and the increased growth, and how can we have similar growth in ELA?
- How can we continue to help support to move in a positive direction?
- How does absenteeism impact learning?
- How can we help as individuals to support growth in the school?
- The size of the achievement gap between white and black/African American students gap - how do we keep focused on the gap and keep it an active part of the SIP
- Question from a parent: is there adjustment for MLs?
- Concerns about the small sample size at G&P when looking at Black/African American Students - what other assessments are we using to monitor progress?
- i-Ready to screen students in Grades 3-5

Community Comment:

- Question from a parent, Vivian Pales, via Zoom: What about our Latino students? Is the data improving for all students?
- Responses from the council: 60% of students 1st language is not English
 - we are looking at one demographic group with historical achievements gaps
 - SIP push schools to be very specific, but when we look at data as a staff, we are looking at all the data to get a sense at how all our students are doing
 - Notice that Latino scores have actually decreased a bit - so perhaps while we continued to focus on our Black students, we can also focus on students who are also struggling, perhaps future SIPs can include other student populations - use the school SIP as a public document to respond to concerned parents
- Could the school community get the slides ahead of time as well, the print is small and hard to see in the meeting - accessibility issue, can also use the time to understand slides and process before the meeting
- Overlap with the SEI program - can we look at students who are going into Gen Ed, extra support that they need, how do we support with additional resources
 - SEI program is meant for 1-2 years and for students to go into Gen Ed Classrooms with ML support - students are getting support from the ML teacher and support in the Gen Ed Classroom - there is room for improvement. Stay tuned for an update on equity work in this area. Language studio to support CKLA implementation.
 - Access to summer programs, ML after school, and after school tutoring as opportunities for students who need additional support
 - Do SEI students take MCAS in English? Do not take ELA in year 1, they do take math and science (included in general scores) - hard to compare to other schools

3. School Administration Report 6:20 - 6:25 pm
 - a. Family Engagement
 - i. International Potluck - November 7, 6:00 - 7:30pm. Everyone is invited! Let us know if you'd like to volunteer
 - b. Staffing & Professional Development Updates
 - i. Social Worker - Fen Portmann-Katz began this week
 - ii. CPP - Casey Sexton has resigned, Bianca Jossaint will be the ETS until a replacement is hired
 - c. Facilities updates
 - i. Bike Racks - there are some new bike racks for the bike bus on the walker street side. Question from parent about whether the bike racks meet City's specifications and requirements, Kathleen will look into this.
4. Community Comment 6:25 - 6:35 pm
 - a. When is the council talking about the budget? Cross district info about how schools are not spending their budget? In the November meeting. Documents available from parent representative for people to look at budget information.
5. Discussion of charges brought against the Graham & Parks School Council with respect to the October 18, 2024 open meeting law complaint filed by Anna Shin 6:35 - 7:00 pm

City Solicitor and legal counsel have been asked to attend to discuss the issue

Megan Bayer - City Solicitor
Maureen Macfarlene - Legal counsel school department

Legal Counsel asked the council to give them authority to respond with the AG office
Complaint raised about the agenda not being specific enough to inform the public
Vote was taken without being an open vote

Response:

We re-did the vote as an open vote

If agenda was not specific enough we have done the vote again, and that even though votes were initially written down, there was in the end an open vote.

Clarification: the word charges - there is not a fine or punishment, no individual on the body can be fined?

Legal counsel: We could have met in executive session, closed to the public

It is possible that open meeting law violations could be fined to individuals - not paid by the city only happens for repeating violations identified by the division of open government - there have been fines on the member for repeating violations

There are some circumstances when an individual was fined, but typically the body is fined

Part of the reason we were able to address the complaint is because members of the community let us know that we needed to remedy how the vote was taken. A parent on the Council encourage our community to keep holding us accountable and let us know when we need to follow the law.

Do we need legal counsel support in our meetings? since you have more information about open meeting laws than we do.

Legal counsel: reach out through Dr. Smith to ask for assistance - you can pause the issue until the next meeting when you have had advice

Motion to represent us: Mary
Arjun: 2nd

- **Kathleen Smith yes , Lauren Morse - yes, Aboma Dirbaba - yes Jodi Rich yes , Debra Gadsden-Holiday yes , Inbal Alon - yes , Mason Gludemans - yes , Gwen Savych - yes , Mary Hermann yes , Lilly Havstad yes , Nasrin Belali yes , Guy Rosenzweig yes , Arjun Jaikumar yes , Karima Cherguaoui - yes, Christian Henry - yes (Talia absent) 15 yeses**

6. Public Comment

- a. AS: I do not like filing complaints - there were violations in the spring, I double checked things, the notice and the agenda were revised - we need to make sure original agenda and time stands are not removed, so that we see when the revisions were made. It is the principal responsibility to know open meeting law and do it right otherwise it is a disservice.

- b. We all make mistakes and do our best - and we hope that members of the community can support us to respect the law, and that we do not need to take time away from our meetings again to address this issue.
- c. Rules of Order - a procedure in place so we know what to do every time? or some support for members to follow the law more easily
- d. We need to work as a team - no decisions made from a few emails, we need to be able to have discourse in the space, and lift up all of the voices. Some people on the Council have not had the chance to talk while some voices have taken up a lot of space. Decisions around changes we make should be lifted up and not made on the email.
- e. The change of the agenda without our consultation was problematic and the language used about a community member without our consultation was also problematic - we need to turn the temperature down and work together
- f. Appreciation that it was discussed in an open session
- g. Request to not target one person, come to the council and not write long emails about people
- h. A parent on the Council asked that we get email addresses up on the website? There is not agreement about whether or not the contact information should be on the website.
- i. There was a public records request and then the website was updated. There was a request to update the website so that it is current - it is sad that parents feel they have to go through the public records office - perhaps an agenda item about the website? How can we be available or not available?
- j. Only recent members were elected, Principal and Family Liaison do not need to be elected. It was a disservice to people who were not elected - as a public official should be available. There is a complaint with DESE about the violation of the election law. Teachers and community members have a right to an election.

7. End Meeting

7:10 pm

motion to close - Lilly

second - Debra

- **Kathleen Smith yes , Lauren Morse - yes, Aboma Dirbaba - yes Jodi Rich yes , Debra Gadsden-Holiday yes , Inbal Alon - yes , Mason Gludemans - yes , Gwen Savych - yes , Mary Hermann yes , Lilly Havstad yes , Nasrin Belali yes , Guy Rosenzweig yes , Arjun Jaikumar yes , Karima Cherguaoui - yes, Christian Henry - yes (Talia absent) 15 yeses**
- without objection the motion carries