

DRAFT MINUTES

Graham and Parks
SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, January 30, 2025

School Council Meeting: Thursday, January 30, 2025 5:45 PM, Graham & Parks School, 44 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA (Library and Zoom)

Present

- **School Council Members:** Kathleen Smith, Lauren Morse, Debra Gadsden-Holiday, Inbal Alon (remote), Mason Gloudemans, Talia Greenberg, Gwen Savych, Lilly Havstad, Nasrin Belali, Mary Hermann, Karima Cherguaoui, Arjun Jaikumar, Christian Henry (remote), Guy Rosenzweig (arrived at 6:00 PM)

Absent

- **School Council Members:** Aboma Dirbaba, Jodi Rich

Also Present

- Robin Harris, Fen Portmann-Katz

Meeting Roles

- Co-Chairs: Kathleen Smith and Arjun Jaikumar
- Secretary: Mary Hermann
- Tech Support: Fen Portmann Katz

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:50 PM by co-chair Arjun Jaikumar. A quorum was present. The meeting was recorded by a member of the public. The meeting proceeded with a roll call

Previous Minutes

Minutes from October 24 School Council Meeting approved.

- Motion: Debra Gadsden-Holiday
- Second: Lilly Havstad
- Roll Call Vote: Unanimous approval

*Guy Rosenzweig absent for vote, arrived around 6:00 pm.

1. Intros/Norms/Feedback on Last Meeting

Review of feedback from previous meeting (only 6 submissions - council members are encouraged team to share feedback every meeting):

- Budget presentation was well-received
- Noticing and wonderings generated valuable discussion
- Need for improved protocols to ensure equitable participation
- Need for more positive, collaborative approach
- Teachers noted progress on fundraising initiatives

Intended outcomes for today's meeting

- Review the G&P teaming structure as a way of answering questions posed in last meeting
- Share information and next steps from budget discussion since our last meeting
- Hear ideas about the process for determining how to create subcommittees and come to agreements about process.

2. School Administration Report

Family Engagement

- Successful Grade 3-4 student concert
- 40 families participated in community circles; next round scheduled for February, all are welcome to attend
- Math night held with new format focusing on students teaching their families math games
- Free food market continuing with openings for new volunteers

Discussion Points

- Interest expressed in expanding concert attendance to other grades
- Clarification provided on restorative framework for community circles:
 - Primary focus on building community and fostering connections
 - Suggestion made for separate conflict resolution forum

Professional Development Update

- Henry Turner providing coaching and professional development
- Staff feedback highly positive
- Teachers made reflective commitments

- Focus on addressing dependent learners and teacher contributions to creating dependencies

Question from the public on how staff development is determined

3. Graham & Parks School Teams & Budget Follow up

Teaming Structure

- G&P believes in a distributive leadership model
- Focus on informed, student-centered decision making
- Collaborative approach reinforced by Henry Turner professional development
- Teams include:
 - Faculty Advisory Council (FAC)
 - Instructional Team (9 members)
 - Social Emotional Learning Team (9 members)
 - Equity Team (11 members)

Budget Updates

- FAC reviewed instructional materials and ordering processes
- Clear processes established for supply management
- Budget allocations confirmed for staff access to supplies

Discussion Points

- Request for team membership transparency
- Suggestion to implement team email addresses for members of the public to contact teams directly
- Discussion of creation of student council. This is a priority but was delayed due to the implementation of a new curriculum and onboarding of a new teacher. Potential to start in the near future
- Explanation of FAC stipend differential (\$1,000 vs. \$500) based on time spent out of school / contract hours
- Professional Development budget allocation is determined collaboratively with team members, district level input, and multilingual learner specialists input
- Request for update from the family engagement team in the next meeting

4. Process for Creating Subcommittees

Framework Presented

- Process for establishing subcommittees outlined

- Recommendation for maximum of 3 subcommittees annually
- Discussion of budget subcommittee proposal
- Focus on inclusive community representation
- There are 3 schools in Cambridge that have subcommittees

Clarifying Questions: Committee Members

- Need for member email addresses shared to the public raised
- Importance of widening community input on subcommittee focus areas
- Concern raised about inclusion of non-English speaking families and diverse cultural communities in Friends group
- Emphasis on diverse subcommittee membership

Clarifying Questions: Community Members

- Discussion of subcommittee champion on the council
- CRLS subcommittee experience shared:
 - Community survey used to gather input
 - Timeline: Formation in December, recommendations by January
 - Success attributed to strong community engagement
- Suggestion to refocus Friends group on community building rather than fundraising work
- Support expressed for budget subcommittee as initial focus

Safety Update

- No policy changes in Cambridge Public Schools
- Security protocols in place
- Request for help from the community in enforcing safety protocols
- Staff training provided for supporting families
- Emphasis on student support resources

Motion to Enable Creation of Subcommittees

- Motion: Lilly Havstad
- Second: Guy Rosenzweig
- Roll Call Vote: Unanimous approval (14 YES votes)

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn: Talia Greenberg
- Second: Arjun Jaikumar
- Meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM

Next Steps

- Next meeting to begin with subcommittee focus brainstorming and voting

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Hermann, Secretary