

Graham & Parks School Council - Budget Subcommittee-Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2025

4:00pm - 5:30pm

Remote via Zoom ~~4/25-meeting-notes~~

Members present: Robin Harris, Lilly Havstad (Chair), Jen Mason Stott, Guy Rosenzweig, Anna Shin, Ben Smith

Members absent: Inbal Alon, Anita Hurwitz, Arjun Jaikumar

Purpose of this first meeting is to begin discussing our goals as a subcommittee this spring and looking ahead to next fall. We also want to begin exploring ways to structure our work to be inclusive and responsive to staff and community input on budget related issues.

Budget and funding request process:

We're hearing from staff members and caregivers that the process of setting budget priorities and requesting discretionary funds at the school level (from both the School Improvement Plan (SIP) budget which includes Professional Development (PD) and from the General Fund) is opaque and so we're beginning with this problem and how we might address it.

How do parent and teacher requests work re: budget ideas? What's the process?
— looking for that info from Principal Smith and district

Last year as parents in the district were advocating for clarity on why discretionary funds routinely go unspent across schools (not just at G&P) they learned that CFO Ivy Washington was going to implement some budget training for school principals— this is something to follow up on.

Key questions raised by subcommittee members:

How can we create a participatory budget process at the school?

How are we judging if an expenditure is money well spent? How do we evaluate spending ? Especially on PD?

*Staff would also like to see the existing feedback on PD and on staff community circles

Professional Development:

We are also hearing from staff that there has been too much PD for it to be effective, leaving no time to reflect and put into practice. This is related to documents shared (see folder [here](#)) regarding Henry Turner's ~\$1000/hr fees for his antiracism trainings and consulting with G&P leadership.

Why isn't OEIB running antiracism trainings? They did LGBTQ programming this week and it went well according to staff.

The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) is supposed to discuss PD for the following year (in CEA contract) but it's not happening there right now or in recent years. It should be where staff has a voice to talk to about and help set the PD calendar

Miscellaneous:

Library budget is separate, variable, and decided by principals (no per pupil formula). School admin just recently approved a library budget increase so the library budget is healthy. It had been static for some years.

We've heard that the school needs better equipment for family movie nights and so will explore if that's something that could come out of the unspent SIP funds for this year, or if it will need to come from a separate facilities budget (district level). This raised the question of how to handle parent/community requests/ideas for how to spend discretionary funds transparently and equitably, while also ensuring that we actually spend all of our available discretionary funds by the end of the fiscal year.

Next steps:

As a subcommittee we'd like to start creating some new process documents covering the following:

1. Delineating the process for the community (staff and caregivers) to get involved in identifying and setting discretionary budget priorities on an annual basis, with a participatory budgeting framework.

2. Timeline for requesting and sharing budget information between relevant district officials, school administration, Friends of G&P, FAC, Vision & Community Task Force, and the School Council.

For example: how can we support the FAC in determining budget priorities and setting the PD calendar (by April?) for the next school year?

Towards these goals, in the next week the subcommittee will draft a process/timeline to share with school leadership for further collaboration.

We'll also plan to communicate with school leadership about 1) spending /process for requesting unspent funds for the current school year and 2) supporting the FAC in setting the PD calendar for next school year with staff input and by evaluating current AY PD expenditures (*staff would like for such evaluations to be anonymous in order to speak more freely about their PD experiences and how to improve them)

As we close this meeting we plan to meet again in two weeks. We'll plan to continue the discussion regarding Henry Turner's contracts (some would like to know, is he charging more at our school?) in addition to following up on responses from school leadership to our questions and draft process document/s.

Meeting closed at 5:30pm