

Graham & Parks School School Council

Agenda for September 17, 2025

5:45 – 7:00 pm

Library & Zoom

Pizza served at 5:30 pm in the Library

- Meeting Convened
 - Rollcall attendance was done. Members present: Rabell Afridi; Erin Garcia; Valarie Ifill; Fen Portmann-Katz; Lauren Morse, Kathleen Smith, Nasrin Belali (on Zoom); Arjun Jaikumar; Ira Nichols-Barrer; Matt Patton; Guy Rosenzweig, Aboma Dirbaba; Jodi Rich (arrived late)
 - Absent: Lilly Havstad
- Welcome & Approval of Minutes 5:45 - 5:55 pm
 - Welcome - Members introduced themselves, roles, pronouns, and their signs
 - Intended Outcomes - Develop understanding of the purpose of the council, structure of the meetings, re-introduce the SIP template, share proposed topics for council meetings for the year
 - Approval of Minutes: 5/29/25 Council Meeting, Budget Subcommittee, Family Engagement Subcommittee
 - Rollcall for approval of minutes - all members approved
- School Administration Report 5:55 - 6:05 pm
 - Opening School - School is off to a great start at G&P! First 6 weeks are about establishing routines, building relationships, setting clear expectations, students are engaging in exciting learning, getting used to schedules.
 - Family Engagement - Welcome Back Picnic was really fun, highly attended. Had to change the location to G&P Playground due to planned construction at Raymond Park (even though it hasn't started), which turned out to be really nice. First Coffee with Principal was also highly attended. We introduced school leaders and staff who work with students and families and left time for individual questions. We also had our first Free Food Market of the year. Next up is the Back-to-School Night on September 30th. If you are interested in being a Room Parent, please sign up via the weekly updates.
 - Staffing & Professional Development Updates - We are continuing to work to re-establishing the teacher intern program here. Jocelyn Marshall has taken the lead on this, we just added a new intern in 3rd grade. Professional learning - two big emphasis this year is Family Engagement and implementing Learning Walks. Professional Development Session today was awesome! The buzz in the room was very exciting. Shifting to focus on Family Engagement in student learning additional to Family Involvement, like celebrations and potlucks. Those are important but we have room for improvement in terms of engaging families in academics.
 - Also going to focus on Learning Walks. Working to deprivatize practice, helping teachers learn from each other and reflect on their own practices. Will be revising the protocol and beginning process soon.
 - Facilities Updates - The building has never looked better! Custodial team has worked hard over the summer and into the fall to clean and prepare the building for a successful start of the year.

- Purpose of School Council & Structure of Meeting 6:05 - 6:30 pm
 - Purpose (School council handbook, see [pages 2-3](#)) Reviewed purpose of the School Council. Emphasized School Council general functions.
 - Roles for SY 25-26: Parent Co-Chair, Tech Support, Secretary, Relentless Timekeeper
 - Introduced the roles
 - Arjun shared about the Parent Co-Chair role. Helping Kathleen moderate the meetings, as well as meet ahead of time to develop the agenda for the meetings. To discuss what we need to talk about and how to manage our time as a Council effectively. It's a fun role, get to engage deeply in the work, work collaboratively with school leaders. Arjun is stepping down from the role but he recommends it to anyone who is interested!
 - Secretary - would be better for one person to fill that role, to summarize the conversation.
 - Ira volunteered to be Co-Chair. Council was asked if anyone else was interested, noone else volunteered. Guy made the motion for Ira to serve as Co-Chair. Roll call vote was done, all were in favor.
 - Nasrin and Fen volunteered to serve as Tech support
 - Secretary - Arjun and Matt volunteered for co-secretaries
 - Rabell and Jodi volunteered to be relentless time keepers
 - Open Meeting Law
 - All meetings fall under Open Meeting Law. All meetings must be in the open. Email communication falls under Open Meeting Laws.
 - Question- if a councilmember would like to add something to the agenda, how do they do that? Answer: Councilmembers can approach the co-chairs and it will be discussed at the Agenda meeting.
 - Meeting Norms
 - Council reviewed the Norms as a group. Discussion of the 4th norm, hear all voices, stick to protocol. We made improvements throughout the year last year, using a mix of doing rounds, and having a more open structure where people can "popcorn" their comments. Council agreed to continue to be mindful of being brief so all voices can be heard.
 - Draft Meeting Schedule
 - Council reviewed the draft meeting schedule (see attached). We have shifted the timelines for report cards, they will now be December, March and June, 3 marking periods. December 8th is the first one, followed by Conference Night on December 10th. Teachers will be available other times, as needed. Therefore we will not meet as a Council in December to accommodate teacher schedules. In addition to the topics listed, we have also left space for the Council to determine the topics.
 - Request from participant to post a summary of the meetings
 - Question: Are we continuing the subcommittees? Answer: Subcommittees work best when it's connected to the work we are already engaged in as a school. When it's not connected, it can be hard to build off of the work. For the Family Engagement subcommittee, they were able to work collaboratively with school leaders to help focus the team. So our first priority would be to determine our focus as a Council. Request to consider subcommittees early in the school year.
 - Discussion - A new Council member wondered what was the purpose of the subcommittees? Other new council members shared similar confusion. One returning member shared that it allowed us to dig deeper on certain topics

because our time was limited. Last year it was budget and family engagement. We voted on establishing subcommittees, then they determined their own focuses. So it created some challenging dynamics, particularly in our final meeting, with various experiences on the subcommittees.

- School Improvement Plan Template and Process

6:30 - 6:45 pm

- Apologies - we printed the wrong years School Improvement Plan (SIP) timeline. Will make sure that is corrected in the future.
- Last year, our SIP focused on making improvements in achievement in our black/african american students. We also had a goal related to attendance, math and school climate
- This year, we made significant gains in Math, we have also made gains in ELA, while implementing a new curriculum. It is worth celebrating achievements in math, particularly in growth. It can take time to see how growth leads to increases in achievement.
- We will have math, literacy, family engagement, school culture (focusing on CARES) and a goal focusing on ML students.
- The next step in the process is to share the SIP to the Council to get feedback, before it is submitted to the superintendent and School Committee for approval.
- Question - How were the goals developed last year? Answer: The district gave us a template, math, ela and family engagement and school culture. 5th goal was to be determined by the school. We were discussing that 5th goal as a council at the end of school year. At one of the last meetings, we did a brainstorm for the school specific goal, someone suggested a focus on ML students. The G&P Leadership Team met in June to help draft the goals of the SIP, working in collaboration with our departments. ELA dept and Math dept help determine the goals.
- Question: Could the council see the updated timeline and the draft goals before the next meeting? Answer: Yes!
- Question: Is the Taskforce continuing this year? Answer: We are focused on opening school, but we will be picking back up the process in the coming weeks. This will also be added as a potential topic for an upcoming Council meeting.

- Community Comment

6:45 - 6:55 pm

- Question: What about the mice? Answer: We are still implementing “Operation mouse-free” and are making progress but there is still work to be done.
- Question: What is Robin’s role this year? Answer: She will be the co-chair of the Taskforce. She led a conversation about homework on the Family Engagement subcommittee - teachers are also interested in this topic and have raised it in recent staff meetings. Request to add homework as a potential topic for the Council to discuss (it was added). Other ideas: How to know if your child is on grade level? What are the grade level expectations?

- Debrief 6:55 - 7:00 pm
 - Plus: What worked well?
 - Excited to work with you all!
 - Timing went well! We are ended on time!
 - Enjoyed hearing everyone's zodiac signs
 - As a new member, meeting went well
 - Delta: What can we do better?
 - Would be nice to have more participants
 - Tech could always be improved (Discussion about how to improve tech. Feedback from the chat was that audio and video was better today once we switched to a laptop instead of the camera so we will try to do that in the future).
- End Meeting 7:00 pm
 - Guy motioned to close the meeting, Arjun seconded the motion. All were in favor.

2025 - 2026 Graham & Parks School Council Members

Educator and Staff Representatives: Rabell Afridi; Erin Garcia; Valarie Ifill; Fen Portmann-Katz; Lauren Morse – Family Liaison; Dr. Kathleen Smith – Principal & Co-chair

Family and Caregiver Representatives: Nasrin Belali; Lilly Havstad; Arjun Jaikumar; Ira Nichols-Barrer; Matt Patton; Guy Rosenzweig;

Community Representatives: Aboma Dirbaba; Jodi Rich