

Graham and Parks School

Cambridge Public Schools JK-5

Steering Committee

18 November 2021

7:00 – 8:00 pm

Steering Committee Meeting Norms

- Be punctual & prepared
- Avoid side bar conversations
- Be mindful of air time
- Assume positive intentions

Committee members in attendance:

Administrative Appointees:

Claudie Jean-Baptiste - Interim Principal (not reviewed)

Jennifer Lavalle - Interim Assistant Principal (not reviewed)

Lauren Morse - Family Liaison

Teacher Representatives:

Karima Cherguauoui - Co-Chair (not reviewed)

Erin Garcia

Katie Lynch (not reviewed)

Melissa Mihos

Parent Representatives (bios here):

Kris Dickson - Co-Chair

Christian Henry

Vivian Pales - Hiring Committee Rep

Meeting Convened, Introductions & Greetings | 7:01 pm

1. Introductions
2. Icebreaker activity in small groups | 7:08 pm
3. Principal's Report | 7:15 pm

a. Staffing/Professional Development Updates

Lauren Daly, former Physical Education teacher is filling in at the moment for Alex Elia who has left the post of PE & Health teacher, which is currently posted. Health classes are on pause until someone is hired for that role.

Interim Principal Claudie and Interim Vice-Principal Jen attended an equity training and have met twice with Cambridge Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging which is headed by Manuel Fernandez, former principal of Cambridge St. Upper School. Staff are reading Tiffany Jewell's *This Book is Anti-Racist*, and meeting once per month to discuss. Heritage month celebrations continue with daily 5th grader morning announcements to the school.

b. COVID update

According to district requirements, system upgrades and mitigation equipment must be in place to ensure all rooms achieve 4+ air changes per hour. The district has conducted a ventilation assessment, with the report findings recently released [here](#).

Other Attendees:

Arrin & Ela Katz

Ena Valenzuela

Mildrid Gedeon - G&P family liaison

Laura Pirani

Tom Burke

Debbie Sullivan

Christopher Sokolowski

Not in attendance:

Jessica Britton (not reviewed)

Shawdee Eshghi - Secretary (not reviewed)

Mary Gallagher (not reviewed)

Jodi Rich - Community Representative

Going forward, the G&P gym can be used provided that the doors are open and HEPA filters are in place.

95% of students participate in pooled COVID testing. There is no pooled testing next week for staff or students because of the school break, but those students deemed close contacts for the test-and-stay program will continue being tested daily. The travel restrictions have been modified.

b. Student Council update

The process for student council nominations continues to evolve. Speeches from students seeking to persuade others to vote for them to represent their classes happened in an anonymized way -with teachers reading speeches assigned to numbers only- to avoid appearances of popularity contest. Two representatives from each of the 3 5th grade classes were selected for a 3 month-term. The first meeting with representatives and teachers only happened last week to establish guidelines. Future student council sessions, which happen over lunch, will welcome other peer students to join the meetings.

4. Family Engagement Update | 7:25pm

Themes and ideas from the last Steering Committee meeting on family engagement are meant to inform School Improvement Plan, including:

- Starting the year with listening conferences with teachers via video
- Prepare families for family conferences (with suggested questions)
- Coffee talks and workshops interest around SEL, anxiety, hearing from coaches and teachers on these initiatives
- Online poetry and math and story nights to engage staff evenings
- Families like weekly and bi-weekly updates and classroom newsletters

For the SIP, the current focus is on supporting individual students and families with chronic absences and tardies in order to make sure students arrive on time, ready to learn. As a general approach targeted individual outreach is ongoing via calls, emails, and letters to help families understand, get oriented, and understand the support the school is offering. That targeted, focused approach has been effective when, for example, families need help deciding whether coming back to school makes sense as a COVID management practice, given the varied and changing guidance and context around travel, close contacts, family member exposure, etc. As another example of the school supporting families in a targeted way, the "Market" of a pre-made box of food has restarted - but instead of being open to all as a way to de-stigmatize taking free food- the service and outreach around the food market is going to a limited group of targeted families that corresponds with those families participating in the "weekend backpack" supplemental food program.

The engagement approach is being refined through technology. Remind is a tool - an app parents can use on their phone to stay connected to teachers - that was implemented over the last year to increase communications. Email seemed to work at first, but the volume people were getting was overwhelming - so texting and robocalls work better to cut through the noise to reach those who don't use email. The teachers are aware of expectations for going beyond the email to a call when it comes to making sure families are aware of the school's resources that are available to them particularly.

5. Student Performance Data on Standardized State tests | 7:34pm

School has 352 students enrolled across all 4 of the programs within the building:

1. General Education JK-5
2. Sheltered English Immersion Programs
3. Language Based Learning Difference Classroom (Grade 4 & 5)
4. Special Start

The distribution of Home Languages spoken among students: English is 54%, Amharic is 7%, Creole is 3%, and the remainder are a variety of different other languages.

Notes on context and what's not included in these data: While Grades 3-5 took the iReady assessment and the state standardized tests (the 'MCAS'), and that's what the reporting discussed in this meeting reflects, K-2 students are also formally benchmarked for reading level and screened in literacy and math through 1:1 teacher interviews.]

The 2020 MCAS was canceled during the pandemic, but a shortened version (half length) of the MCAS was administered in 2021. Remote learners had the option to take the MCAS remotely. It was issued for diagnostic purposes, but not district accountability purposes. Math scores were considerably impacted across the state and country as well as our school: roughly 20% or more of students are now not meeting expectations.

MCAS results are intended to help teachers and schools understand which students are most in need of support, as a measure of effectiveness of curriculum. It does not affect student grades.

MCAS Data and Results:

60% of grade 3-5 students at Graham & Parks were meeting or exceeding expectations in English Language Arts, up from 53% in 2018 and 59% in 2019.

44% of grade 3-5 students at Graham & Parks were meeting or exceeding expectations in Math, compared with 40% in 2019 and 49% in 2018.

Use of diagnostic tool "iReady": iReady is an adaptive diagnostic assessment used district-wide that helps identify individual student strengths or areas for support in both Math and Reading, being used at G&P (and also across Cambridge Schools) newly in Fall 2021. There is a winter and spring data set planned so individual student growth can be assessed roughly every 10 weeks. When skills are missing, a scope and sequence is provided by iReady on how to provide support to individual students and to also address any grade level trends. Because the tool provides real-time feedback, iReady is more useful than MCAS which only offers feedback at the aggregate level and after a school year transition is complete (when all 5th graders have moved on to a new school).

So far in Fall 2021, strengths and areas of growth across whole grades were identified, along with Tier 1 interventions were identified. Powerful applied instructions and educator guidance are available as part of iReady.

Meeting Adjourned | 8:11 pm

This meeting is an open public meeting. Please join us at 7pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month September-June, exclusively by zoom until further notice.