

MLK School Advisory Council  
February 28, 2023

Participants

Gerald Yung, Principal  
Martha Schloming, Parent Co-Chair  
Carmen Corbie, School Administration Manager  
Sara Engel, Art Teacher  
Sarah Carpenter, JK/K Teacher  
Alexandria Grant, JK/K Teacher  
Marguerite Hicks-Gyewu, Family Liaison  
Teresa Walker, Paraeducator  
Gina Gerard, parent of 3rd  
Kim Mott, parent of K  
Piotr Mitros, parent of 4th  
Marzyeh Ghassemi, parent of 3rd & K  
Nani Teklu, parent of 5th and 2nd

Minutes

Meeting started at 8AM  
Icebreaker: Introductions, Favorite Dessert  
Discussion on revising January minutes to remove child's name.

Presentation from CPSD Family Engagement Team: Raymond Porch, Director of Family and Community Engagement, and Debbie Bonilla, District Family Engagement Specialist

Opportunity to learn about goals & initiatives about family engagement  
RP: working with schools, families, and liaisons, focus on strategic objective #4 (safe and welcoming schools in a physical plant sense)

Focus on equitable access for families to resources (not just at school), focus on student management and discipline, likes to visit schools, wants to host financial literacy opportunities, make sure young people are numerically literate, families are a resource and asset to community

DB: team of supports for caregivers that includes bilingual liaisons (3 currently speaking Ethiopian languages, Haitian-Creole and French, Spanish), works closely with with Community Engagement Team (CET), sees caregivers as partners, monthly meetings with planning team, building trust by going into communities, worked with Baby U for 10 years; Three main questions: what are barriers? What do you need? Any ideas?

DB: family engagement is in everything just like equity, team is asked to be present in many meetings

RP: next year, will build in transportation and childcare in budget; make sure conversations are two-way; family engagement can't be "after"; consider families in everything that team does;

GY: What changes do you see before and after the pandemic?

DB: lots of families are struggling; especially those that are furthest from the center; even privileged families may be struggling with mental health; families are not reaching out; listen first then make suggestions; connect families with other people that they know; scholars have developed social anxiety and aren't doing their work; some are losing their housing

RP: 9 out of 10 emails & calls are from families that are not English speaking, are black/brown, are immigrants, are poor (i.e., furthest from the center); still some divide in Cambridge; how to bridge the divide; every child should have a trusted adult (which has been added after the pandemic); community needs to invest in itself as a whole; team can't solve all the problems and needs everyone's help

SC: What is the process?

DB: talk with family liaison first, then send to Family Engagement Team

RP: school-based need goes to family liaison; if families reach out to Team, then they will probably call school family liaison first

MS: Status of DRAFT School Council Handbook?

RP: Handbook is still a draft; follow existing draft that on the website; Legal Counsel is working on some language; handbook needs to be approved by School Committee; make sure Open Meeting Law at state level is in compliance; then training will follow in June

GY: "trust is a slow flame"

MS: thanks to Debbie and Ray for coming

MHG: how to address attendance issues with targeted folks (liaison, social worker) meeting with families weekly

Open Comment: None

Meeting adjourned: 9AM