

Baldwin School Council Meeting

March 24, 2021

Attendees

Parents and Caregivers - Nina Farouk, Andrey Federov, Kate Flaim, Michele Fry, Liluye Jhala, Marie Lespinasse, Melissa Maldonado, Scot Martin, Michelle Morphew, Leslie Nielsen, Andrea Normoyle, Jonah Safar, Gail Sarni, Kate Soloway, C.A. Webb,

Community Member - Bernette Dawson

Staff - Jake Ban, Heidi Cook, Jayne Lynch, Susan Tiersch

Agenda

The theme of the meeting is "*How are the Children?*"

We will focus on the ways we systematically review and monitor student progress and wellness, and how we provide support.

We will learn about two new groups at Baldwin for parents, caregivers and community members.

Meeting Norms and Guidelines

- Follow the circle order; Feel free to pass or use the chat to share
- Speak and listen with respect and from the heart
- Be mindful of personal stories (honor confidentiality)
- Be as present as you can (cameras off is ok, passing is ok, *just* listening is ok)

Check in: How you are feeling?

- Grateful for Baldwin and the district for the remote instruction and now back in-person. Child is very happy although the parent has worries for a lot of reasons as a lot of big things have happened this past year.
- Feeling hopeful and interested in the topics being presented this evening.
- Grateful there is a community working hard to make sure the children are taken care of.
- Although their children are thriving at school and are happy and loving it, adult is having a hard time holding it all together. Enjoy the meetings to spend time with other parents.
- Roller coaster year, grateful but concerned about the growing size of the classes, but trust and appreciate the staff.
- Exciting to see the spark return to their child when they returned to the building. Eager for community recovery to make sure we carry all members into recovery.
- Remote family feels like they are in their own world, misses the school community, but instruction is going well.
- Remote family is having a successful experience and is grateful for the excellent individual attention and smaller group learning.
- Feel more part of the broader Cambridge community with the ability to attend meetings virtually.

Opening [Video](#) - How are the Children?

The video is about the traditional greeting of the Maasai people in Africa that asks about the well-being of the children. "The meaning behind the response, 'All the children are well,' highlights the importance of efforts to improve children's well-being."

The big question: *How are the children?*

How is my child doing? Is there anything I should be worried about?

This year, parents have had an opportunity to see what happens in the classroom and they get to see if their child is getting frustrated, having trouble getting started, etc.

How do we know?

We use universal screeners, universal meaning everybody. The screeners are a quick, standardized assessment for math, literacy, and social/emotional. It is a 'quick dip' assessment, like checking the oil. This is done at least a couple of times a year for every grade, starting in JK. We then have data review cycles by grade level where we go through that data, student by student. We can sort the data many ways. We look to see who has made progress. We flag the students who might need something else. Once flagged, we will do a deeper dive. That may include a 'math interview' to get a better understanding of their math. Same with literacy, do a more in-depth reading assessment to see what is going on. For social/emotional learning, that may include an observation or interview.

We then determine what the student needs. That may include an intervention designed to be 6 - 12 week cycles. It can be something the teacher does in the classroom or it could be an interventionist or an intern trained in a particular intervention. We then use progress monitoring tools to keep track of their progress. After doing these interventions, we then look to see how the child is doing. If they don't make progress, another intervention approach will be taken.

You may have heard about tiered intervention. It is a systematic way to determine what students need.

Tier 1 - excellent instruction - everyone gets

Tier 2 - specialized instruction that some get

Tier 3 - specialized instruction that a few may get

If a student has a particular need, then there is further review to see if testing may be needed.

We have an *Instructional Leadership Team* that meets weekly to define and review the interventions.

We also have a *Critical Support Team* that meets weekly to talk about individual students and families who may need support. This is a quick acting team that includes administration, clinical team, nurse and family liaison. The support could be mental health or family support.

Note: School Committee talking about investing in screeners that are parent friendly.

What are the most valuable ways you learn about how your child is doing now?

How are you finding out about how your child is doing?

- Report cards

- Conferences
- Drop off/pick up time
- Emails from the teachers
- Newsletters
- IEP has more frequent communication
- Listening in on the remote classes
- child on iep - have a person who gets in touch on a regular basis
- From the child
- See Saw

We are just scratching the surface and we will continue this conversation. One of the things we can work on is how we can better communicate with parents. Appreciate that parents are being mindful of teachers' time. Thank you. We need to look for ways to get/receive information that is not one-on-one. Some students take the bus so speaking with the teacher at pick-up and drop and drop-off is a place of privilege. Not all parents have that access.

What are some of things you would like to hear more about?

- Is there a way to know what are 'age appropriate' behaviors?
- Having a secondary point person to reach out to so that I don't feel like I'm over-taxing the teacher.
- Would like to have more frequent information on how the child is doing more generally so that I don't worry. Are they doing okay? Trust that I will be notified if something is not going well.
- Does the current system support differentiation in addressing child needs, does it support advanced learners?
- Would like a mid-year update on grade level expectations; are they on track?
- Is there a mechanism for parents to learn about the outcome of the screeners?
- Are the screeners part of the school record?

New Groups at Baldwin

Parent Kate Flaim spoke about a parent-led and organized book group circle geared towards parents committed to learning more about white supremacist culture and how to be an anti-racist community member. They look at white supremacy in our society. They are reading the book: Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor. This is for those who hold white privilege. They are hoping to do an information fair soon so families can learn about their upcoming five 1.5 hour sessions throughout the spring. More information about this will be coming soon.

Parent Melissa Maldonado spoke about the circle group she did with her son's independent school that started with several caregivers and ended up with over 90 adults participating. Families who have been through the work of understanding privilege say it is life-changing. It is hard work. And there is still a lot of learning to do.

Former Baldwin parent Bernette Dawson spoke about an affinity space for caregivers of color to celebrate and share in the joy of their identity. They will continue with the discussion of tonight's school council meeting, 'how are the children' from the lens of not their child but ALL children.

There is an upcoming Courageous Conversations workshop on March 31 about Opportunity Hoarding, "The Squeaky Wheel Gets the Grease". Please sign up to participate. Families have been hearing about this workshop for quite some time. Register at www.nocacc.org to receive the Zoom link.

Meeting Feedback

- Lots of appreciation of the space and hearing perspectives
- Format is good however should have time guidelines for speaking

Closing Quote

“Wholeness. All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is part of a single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is therefore possible to understand something only if we can understand how it is connected to everything else.”

-Bopp, Bopp, Brown and Lane, Jr., *The Sacred Tree*, 26,
Co-Founders of the Four Worlds International Institute,
A native and First Nation Group