

Graham & Parks _____ SCHOOL COUNCIL
Name of School

(Official Minutes)

School Council Meeting - May 14, 2026

Called for 5:45pm at the _____ Graham & Parks School, 44 Linnaean Street
Time Name of School Address

School Council Members Present: Rabell Afridi, Karima Cherguaoui, Fen Portmann-Katz, Erin Garcia, Valarie Ifill (on Zoom), Kathleen Smith, Nasrin Belali (on Zoom), Ira Nichols-Barrer, Matthew Patton, Guy Rosenzweig
Names

School Council Members Absent: Jodi Rich, Lilly Havstad, Arjun Jaikumar, Aboma Dirbaba

Also Present: Paul McKnight, Lauren Morse
Names

Kathleen Smith in the Chair.
Name

A quorum of the Graham & Parks School Council being present, Karima called the meeting to order at 5:45 and read the call of the meeting

The meeting proceeded with a role call vote:
Unanimous by those present.

Approval of minutes from 5/1 meeting. Unanimous by those present.

Roles: Ira and Kathleen serve as chairs, Matt as secretary.

Review & Discussion Staff Mini-Grant Proposal for SIP Funds for SY 26-27

- This year was pilot in January, so we allocated smaller portion of funds. How should we approach next year?
- One proposal to have tiers of funding based on how many students/staff are involved. It's noted that 5th grade book club went over budget this year and was still funded. Another idea is to include amounts from this year as a guide.
- Staff perspective on this year's process: opened up ideas and creativity while being low barrier to entry. But when should we launch next year's program? One proposal to make decision around mini-grants at this meeting so we can move faster in the fall.
- If we have grant applications open from fall until April, even with increased allocation we may run out. One proposal is to wait until October or November to give staff time to get to know kids and what their needs are. It's suggested a later start could also encourage more staff collaboration instead of starting right away.
- For funding, it's suggested to do 10 grants and work backwards for amount. Staff mention \$500 amount was enough to encourage ideas/collaboration, but especially for more involved events, increased amount could help with childcare/staffing. Staff mention that for a lot, collaboration beyond what is funded was necessary.
- Suggested we do single application with one or two tiers. One idea is to separate planning/materials/staffing as a way to unlock larger tiers since books for 5th grade drove that project cost.
- Proposed to open applications 10/1 (close 4/1) with tiers of \$500 and \$1,000. Council should evaluate how much of budget has been spent in February and could increase funding (or reach back out to grant applicants).

Grade 5 Field Trips: Update and Discussion

- See attached information.
- All elementary schools used to have 5th grade trips before Covid. Details of document have mostly come from parents and Friends of other schools.
- Community comment noted that there is large difference between how much is allocated by Friends between Baldwin and Haggerty (Baldwin Friends put \$1500 and 5th graders raised \$2000 where Haggerty Friends funded \$11,000).
- It's believed that teachers/staff are not compensated.
- G&P used to go to Nature's Classroom and then switched to Harbor Islands, but challenge is harbor islands don't open until 6/1.
- With Farm School and Nature's Classroom, most of planning is logistics/funding/dates, as the locations are well-equipped to plan trips. Farm School does not have capacity for full grade at once.
- Next steps are working with 5th grade team and finding more chaperone volunteers. All chaperones do not have to be from 5th grade team. It's suggested that parents could be considered, but no other school reported having parent chaperones.
- Baldwin chose closest Outdoor Classroom (Groton) since it allowed parents to pick children up or provide alternate transportation.
- Also important to gauge interest with 4th grade families and students. How many students attending would we consider successful?
- It's noted that in addition to logistics, school should understand security and rules around behavior to make sure kids are safe. Should make sure this isn't scary for kids or parents.

- Community comment that safety is important and parents should be able to make the right choice for their families.
- SIDE NOTE: Save The Harbor offers free harbor cruises for groups up to 300 kids.

School Administration Report

Professional learning:

- Starting to wrap up and wind down. Spent many meetings reflecting on the year. Staff came together to discuss different scaffolds they used this year and successes/challenges with them. Scaffolds are anything you do to provide access or supports to students. Staff has started to speak the same shared language around professional development. Seconded by another staff member.

Staffing:

- Announcement will be coming because CPP at G&P will be changing due to enrollment. CPP class at school has been under-enrolled and will transition to Special Start classroom (from Baldwin). This will lead to some staffing shifts that will be announced.

Facilities update: new library carpet is in.

Community Comment

Note from council member that as we speak about safety we think holistically, not just physical. Specifically cites availability of gender neutral restrooms as example. Seconded by another member.

Debrief

Plus: Started on time, and mostly ended on time. Good conversations when people had different opinions. Seconded that it was good people felt able to speak and share concerns. Comment that the meetings have felt less structured and with more productive discussion which is appreciated.

Delta: Parent representative mentions we're missing several representativess, which isn't fair to the school. Seconded by another parent rep.

Karima motions to end meeting; Matt seconds. Approved unanimously.