School council meeting 10/21

Wed, 21 Oct 26

Attendees and Check-In

- Principal Darrell Williams, Assistant Principal May Petrov, Family Liaison Neusa DaCosta, parents including Kate, Isabella Brout, Dillon Brout, Allison Monroe, Kristen, Marzieh, Beatrice, Mekonnen, and others in person and virtually
- Check-in used a pumpkin scale (1-10); range of responses from 2 to 8

School Council Format Proposal

- Proposal to shift some meetings to virtual during winter months
    - September, October, March, May, June: hybrid (in-person + virtual)
    - November, January, February, April: virtual only
- Parent feedback raised two concerns:
    - Virtual meetings are harder for parents without childcare at that time of day
    - Single parents especially can't attend virtually with kids at home
- Outcome: March hybrid touchpoint added based on feedback; final format TBD after admin reflection
- Teacher perspective: Wednesdays already long (professional development until ~4:25); virtual would help staff too

Cambridge Public Schools Technology Guidelines (Overview)

- New district-wide policy this year; King Open teachers expected to follow
- District audited classrooms across all schools to assess baseline technology use before setting guidelines
- COVID-era screen habits identified as a contributing factor to the audit; policy is a deliberate pullback
- "Anxious Generation" cited as a possible influence on district and school committee thinking

Grade-by-Grade Technology Rules

- Pre-K to K: minimal, no individual devices
    - No Chromebooks or iPads for instruction, centers, assessments, rewards, or behavior management
    - Teacher-directed projector/smartboard use only; hands-on, play-based learning prioritized
    - Exception: students with IEPs/504s or communication devices (e.g., iPads as AAC tools)

- Grades 1-2: limited and specifically authorized
    - Approved platforms only: Boost Reading, ST Math
    - Keyboarding begins in grade 2 (Typing Club)
    - Permitted: ACCESS (ELL testing), STAMP (OLAW dual-language assessment), IEP/504 supports
    - Not permitted: centers, rewards, entertainment, open browsing, digital worksheets
    - Grade 1: 12 Chromebooks per classroom; Grade 2: class set on a cart
    - ST Math sessions: ~10 minutes, up to 3x/week, targeted students only
    - OLAW classrooms: ST Math not used (too much alongside Portuguese/English balance)
- Grades 3-5: short, bounded, purposeful
    - Appropriate: creation, curated research, typing, coding, data, targeted practice, assessments
    - Not permitted: consecutive screen-heavy blocks, digital substitution for core subjects, long-form video, autoplay
    - Digital homework must not have deadlines outside school hours (effectively means paper homework)
    - Class set on a cart for all 3-5 classrooms
- Clarification on gray areas:
    - Curriculum slide decks projected on smartboard: still permitted (CKLA, math curriculum)
    - Guided movement break videos: technically phasing out, some teachers still using; expectation is to fade
    - Background music (not on screen): acceptable
    - Indoor recess Chromebooks: no longer permitted (confirmed change from last year)

AI Policy and Digital Citizenship

- District released AI expectations; reviewed with staff the day of this meeting
- AI not seen as a problem at elementary level currently, but acknowledged as likely present
- High school data shared: 90%+ of students have used ChatGPT; most common use was idea generation; small % distrusted it
- District position: AI is inevitable, focus is on teaching responsible navigation, not banning
    - Parents encouraged to email school committee or district directly with AI concerns
- No current district policy on AI-generated content in vendor platforms; audit of vendors not confirmed
- Digital citizenship curriculum (grades 3-5, taught by Jackie):
    - Covers algorithms, data privacy, online identity, social media mechanics, screen addiction

    - Age-appropriate framing of how technology shapes behavior and attention
- Technology class formally designed for grades 3-5; typing instruction begins grade 2
- Parent tip shared: Google Docs version history lets parents view earlier drafts of student writing
- School exploring non-screen indoor recess resources: outdoor activity bags, board games per classroom (Cornell's cart model cited as example)

Next Steps

- **Finalize and communicate revised meeting format;** Admin to reflect on parent feedback and confirm hybrid vs. virtual schedule for the year.
- **Follow up with the district on AI vendor audit and content policies;** Parents encouraged to email school committee or district directly; admin will also raise as a priority.
- **Source board games and outdoor activity bags for classrooms;** To replace indoor recess screen time; Cornell's cart model cited as a working example to replicate.