

Chilmark School Advisory Council
Minutes 11/7/23

Present:

Noli Taylor: Parent Rep
Jessica Mason: Co-Chair and Parent Rep
Robyn Dori: Teacher Rep
Jessica Seeman: Parent Rep
Nelia Decker: Community Rep
Jackie Guzalack: Teacher Rep
Susan Stevens: Head of School

Absent:

Anne Mayhew: Community Rep

Guest:

Richie Smith: Superintendent MVYPS

1. Minutes of 11.1 approved 6.0.0.
2. Review agenda:
 - a. Review School Improvement Plan (SIP)
 - b. Review community engagement plan for Principal hiring process
 - c. Review issue of class size/space for next year
 - d. Where can the SAC meet regularly? Space is an issue (see c.)
3. Review of SIP: Because of time constraints of this meeting, we decided to share a few thoughts re: SIP but that the realization that the document we had before us, which Noli and Jessica Seeman worked on, is a DRAFT and will be used as a discussion starter.
Please review this document and make suggestions by Sunday, November 12th, 2023. A few thoughts emerged:
 - a. Responsive Classroom Management is a system that is widely used at the Chilmark School. It is highlighted in the SIP as an acknowledgement that not all teachers use it all the time, and that more kids with more challenges means other behavior management techniques may be used. The SAC would like to support the use of this system with teacher support, training and increased SPED support.
 - b. There is a district wide initiative to offer universal pre-K. We need more research and understanding of the foundations needed to support it. How to bring each school along to support such an island wide initiative...vouchers, etc. How does the Chilmark preschool fit into this? And what does that mean for space needs at the Chilmark School? A portable classroom that may or may not be available from the Tisbury School project will be looked into to support the Chilmark School space needs.
There was discussion about how to use the CCC for additional space/teaching needs. Taking a pause on school choice was mentioned, but the School still welcomes siblings and teacher's children who may not live in Chilmark.
Acknowledgement that the Chilmark preschool is moving ahead with creating their own space, but how do we manage in the short term?

- c. Multi-age classrooms require smaller class sizes by virtue of the range of ages and abilities. Discussion of having two teachers in one class, or breaking up larger classes into two separate classes—we have 6 classrooms, which include the preschool. There was discussion about the possibility of K being one class, and 1st grade being another class, then going multi-age after that or going with 2 K/1 classes. Richie reminded us that if it is important that the Chilmark School continues to make a commitment to teach multi-age groups, we need to plan accordingly to have the space and staff necessary. Jackie pointed to two different models: co teachers with two educators in a room, or co teachers with one regular educator and another SPED educator. Numbers of students now who may be attending the school next year: 18 K/1, 31 2/3 and 22 4/5. There will be more. We need to be thoughtful about moving forward and realize that growth is the future, not just a blip and that small class size is crucial for multi-age learning. We realize the need to address behavioral needs, academic needs and social/emotional needs.
 - d. Is calling ourselves a project based educational model misleading? Is it aspirational? If so, how do we get there?
 - e. Importance of fostering more crossover with WT School, with purchasing power and collaborative work. Build into the job description the importance of working with WT.
 - f. How can we support the new Principal as a SAC? Building into the SIP explicit expectations and goals is a good place to start. Susan mentioned that she has a notebook outlining the traditions of the school and how to manage and run them. It was suggested that it be turned into a digital document as well.
 - g. The suggestion in the SIP to research a world language offering was discussed. All research suggests starting early is key, but the obstacles are: scheduled time, budget and space. Currently, the WT teaches Spanish at the junior high level, as do other Island schools. There is concern that with a small school like ours, we are missing an opportunity to offer another language.
4. Community engagement for Principal search:
- a. Our plan set up at the last meeting was ambitious and there is the feeling that we can accomplish much with sending a survey out to all the stakeholders, and hold a student meeting to gather input from students.
 - b. When the candidates are narrowed down to 3, we can invite more input: allowing for parent questions and more involvement from the community.
5. Next steps:
- a. Inform the UIRSD budget of our staffing needs, as well as our space needs. Robert Lionetti will be informed about our interest in a portable classroom from Tisbury.
 - b. Robyn will give Richie a written statement re: her classroom composition next year: 22 students of whom a third are on an educational plan.
 - c. Richie will send out a boilerplate draft of a job ad for the Principal. Please send in your suggestions to personalize it, maybe using Virginia's compilation of traits and skills, to Richie in the next few days.
 - d. Richie will look into the class size policy re caps, and Robyn will bring info re: multi-age learning.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted,
Nelia Decker