

Chilmark School  
School Advisory Council  
Meeting notes  
10/18/2023  
8:00AM

Committee Members in attendance

- Susan Stevens - Head of School
- Jessica Mason - Co-chair, Parent rep (joined at 8:30AM)
- Jackie Guzalack - teacher rep
- Nelia Decker - Community rep
- Jessica Seeman - Parent rep
- Anne Mayhew - Pommunity rep (joined by phone)

Non-committee members in attendance

- Richie Smith - Superintendent
- Roxanne Ackerman - School Committee member
- Lisa Brown - Parent
- Noli Taylor - Parent

Meeting initiated at 8:15AM

Review of minutes from 10/11/2023

- Nelia requested the announcement of Susan's retirement to be added to the minutes.
  - Jessica S mentioned for the minutes to be approved with Nelia's addition.
  - Susan seconded the motion
  - All members voted to approve
- 1. Discussion of Chilmark Head of School position: There was a discussion of the Monday night UIRSD meeting and the various models for running the two schools in the region that were put forth during that meeting. Jessica S reviewed the proposed agenda of the next UIRSD meeting and shared a summary of the email the PTO sent out the previous day asking for parents to support the SAC in their stance that the school should continue to have an executive in the building. The SAC feels that sharing the role of principal or assistant principal with the West Tisbury School would not benefit the Chilmark School. With 2 buildings there should be 2 separate executives. The model is already in place and it works.
- 2. Richie made several points regarding the hiring process and some of the things to consider when hiring for this position.
  - a. Leadership vs management: hiring an inspiring school leader is crucial when considering school culture and the educational model that is distinctly Chilmark.
  - b. Explanation of PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) and Communities of Practice-and using these models for furthering coherence and collaboration between the Chilmark School and the West Tisbury School.
  - c. Richie's intention is to support an executive at the Chilmark School and to listen to the community and have the hiring process be transparent.
  - d. This model of having an executive in the building works well: the Chilmark school students performed well on the MCAS, though there is traditionally a

performance blip as the fifth graders transition to WT Junior High. This blip is seen in other schools as students often are transitioning from one classroom base to switching classrooms for different subjects. There was the observation that Chilmark students, having learned how to transition from their school to West Tisbury, often have less trouble transitioning to the High School.

3. Head of School vs Principal: not just semantics. In our discussions, the head of school position is 85% of full time, and is paid for that time with additional contractual monies added if additional services are provided. A principal position is considered full time, working through the summer. There was a discussion of the SAC supporting the hiring of a Principal, rather than Head of School, as it was pointed out many times that Susan has basically worked full time and not necessarily been fully compensated. The job requires a full time executive. Brief discussion of the higher costs associated with a principal vs head of school.
4. Hiring process discussion: Richie discussed the process and how to involve the community.
  - a. Identify stakeholders: including a Tribal member, a NAACP member, SAC member(s), etc.
  - b. Solicit input from community, survey, etc.
  - c. With input from the community, SAC will draft skill sets and characteristics needed for the new hire...representing the values of the Chilmark community
  - d. Timeline: Richie would like to have an ad placed with MASC (Mass Association of School Committees) and NESDEC (New England School Development Council) in early December. The timing of creating a job description and placing an ad needs to be in sync with budget preparations.
  - e. It would be helpful to review with Susan the aspects of her job most needed in a new hire.
5. The UIRSD committee will be meeting Thursday Oct. 19 at 6 to discuss this with community input. At our next SAC meeting, Wednesday Oct 26 we will discuss this hiring process and how to proceed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20.