

10/23/24

Chilmark School Advisory Meeting

October 23, 2024

Present:

Robyn Dori

Jessica Mason

Jessica Seeman

Jackie Guzalak

Kate Squire

Nelia Decker

No Zoom attendants

Absent:

Anne Mayhew

Noli Taylor

1. Minutes of October 10 approved 5.0.0. No absentions. Robyn Dori had to step out.
2. Kate wanted to bring us up to speed re: the budget, the School Improvement Plan and future discussions re: schedule, class configurations, programs and staffing.
3. SIP is in a good place, though the School Committee may not have time to address it at their next meeting. Kate is confident to present it when the time is right and Ritchie is supportive.
4. Schedule discussion. The number one priority is to stabilize class configurations: staying true to our multi-age program, to prioritize teacher development, and begin to work on project based learning. The current schedule doesn't work for anyone, and it needs to be built to support the program. Kate's goal is to have 6 sections for September 2025. With the following caveats: everyone will have to be flexible, there will be give and take. The need for space for this goal is driven by student needs and student achievement. One piece of managing to achieve this goal are the specials; 7 specials is one too many to fold into the schedule, The arts integration special will be dropped for next year in order to work towards providing the state standard of 90 minutes of literacy and 60 minutes of math everyday. Music will still be offered. The specials will be arranged in order to provide more effective staff planning time. Kate feels that the schedule is the problem with delivering services to students, not necessarily the number of staff. The resources are there. We need sustainable structures not a lot of money, as we give and take with current positions, adding another full time teacher will make financial sense. We need 6 FTE for 6 classes. Bubbles of populations and student support needs come and go, but the structure should remain the same.
5. Kate received the official notice from the Preschool Board that their building will not be ready in September 2025. Now conversations are starting about how to accommodate their needs as well as the school's needs. We need to strategize now and work with other members of the community to come to a solution that works for everybody. Both programs need to be able to function while working towards the common goal of a

separate preschool building. There was a discussion about stakeholders and facilities in the community that may be able to help.

6. Discussion about staffing with regard to ESPs (assistant teachers). The point that Kate made is that rather than having an assistant in each classroom, the assistant teachers may follow the kids who need their support. Kate will look into the use of ESPs island wide.
7. The State Standard for a counselor is 250 students per 1 full time position.
8. Stone Soup discussion: It is an important tradition at the school but it is not an outgrowth of Thanksgiving. This year it will be held on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, along with the annual run, but proposed as a community lunch. There will not be an image of a turkey on the race medals nor will the run be called the Turkey Trot. Next year Stone Soup will be held in October along with the fun run, as one of three community lunches proposed for the school year. The conversation about a day of celebration traditionally called Thanksgiving and a day honored by Native Americans and others as a National Day of Mourning is at the heart of this change. We are striving to be sensitive to everyone in our community.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15.