

Green Valley Elementary School
School Site Council Agenda
November 14th, 2023
3:00-4:30 PM
Green Valley Library

Minutes submitted by Aurelia Azarmi

Attendees: Elizabeth Leftik, Donna Grim, Jenny Oh, Chris Buchanan, Adam Glimme, Mariah Brown, Jonathan Templeton, Julie Defino, Brenda Dvorak, Gina Sans, Lily Lai, Aurelia Azarmi, Lisa Rubin

Absent: Mary Roy, Lindsay Penkower, Isabel Chan, Catherine Lu

Notes

- October minutes approved by Chris B., second by Julie D.
- Feedback from Donna regarding the last meeting with parents: the presentation by Addie Lane helped reduce the parent community's anxiety about Great school rating.
- Discussion regarding attendance communication:
 - It's important to educate parents regarding the impact of attendance on test scores.
 - Consider sending out a 1-page graphic of excused vs unexcused absences.
 - Educate parents about what is excused vs unexcused, and about the benefits of being present to students even when absences are excused.
 - Show monthly attendance progress – i.e. large chart or bar graph of progress outside where parents drop off.
 - A 3-min video will be posted on the school website and broadcasted to parents after thanksgiving regarding attendance.
- Discussion regarding GVES approach to test scores:
 - We don't want the school to focus entirely on test scores because a singular focus on test scores increases children's anxiety.
 - It's important to educate about tests and why they are given to avoid increasing the pressure felt by parents and students.
 - We are in elementary school rather than an upper grade and students are still very young. We have a whole child focus. GVES places greater emphasis on the importance of teachers reaching each child where they are at, knowing each child and supporting individual needs rather than being focused on teaching to the tests for the sake of improving the school's test scores.
- Discussion regarding projects:
 - Deep learning/project-based learning are accessible on the portal for the students. Best for older kids.
 - There is a desire to bring project-based learning to the younger grades, too. Currently the priority is to fill the gaps in the older grades who suffered academic losses during distance learning during the pandemic. We are almost done with this – 1 more year of catching up.

- Discussion regarding reading program:
 - All schools are 63% proficient in reading skills which is not where we'd like to be. GVES is using the CKLA program to help improve the science of reading.
 - CKLA program has an online knowledge center for parents. Parents can learn more about the program to better understand what kind of books to read to/get for their kids.
- Discussion regarding communicating educational progress and educational resources to parents:
 - Importance during the conference with parents to be specific on students' areas of need/weakness so parents can better understand what their children's needs are and how to provide additional support.
 - Another example of ways to educate parents on helping to support their kids' education (ie. fluency and how to achieve) the school can organize a Literacy Night. After the conference (March) would be a great time. Weave in Literacy Lab to help spread the word to parents about this new resource. It could be recorded for the parents who were not able to join to watch it.
 - Other small videos available on the school website.
- Some additional parent suggestions from the October meeting re: Great Schools impact on real estate valuation and real estate agent behavior cannot be addressed by GVES because the school does not have control over these issues.
- The other points will be addressed further in future meetings.
- Discussion regarding the Fund-a-need
 - Seeking feedback from teachers, staff, and Learning Fund.
 - In previous years, funding was for outdoor furniture, library needs, MPR (screen, sounds system, ...), outdoor shade structure, computer labs.
 - Last year funds were secured for swings (installation starts during thanksgiving break)
 - It is ideal to accomplish the Fund-a-need goal in the same year the funds are donated.
 - Goal to define Fund-a-need by December 12th.
 - Brenda D. proposed funds could be used to buy more library shelves to increase storage for books.
 - Information: COVID funding was used to fund 25 hours of instructional assistant (Julie Defino position) + counselor + MTSS. This funding source is running out and will need to be replaced in order to retain these valuable services. There is no assurance that Julie D. position will be funded by the district next year. Her position could be maintained, or we could open another position for mathematics (if her position is funded by the district). Direct impact visible for the education of our students.
 - Information: GVES benefits more from multiple 25 hours positions IA than one position with more hours, which involve more costs.

- The council supported a Fund-a-need goal that was academic in nature because of the importance in retaining key positions and because of the current energy in the parent community around academic achievement.
- Goals to be presented to the next meeting:
 - 90% of second graders should be at grade levels by December. Donna would like to show results at next meeting.
- Volunteers Committee:
 - This issue is no longer a priority because we have added IAs and resources to cover lunch time supervision and made available the library, sports, and Maker's Space for lunch time.
 - The council removed this item from the agenda moving forward.

Important points

- No meeting in December
- Literacy night - organize for March
- Attendance video to educate parent community
- Dec. 12 to decide on the Fund-a-need cause