

Cabot School Sustainability Committee

Approved Minutes of August 5, 2024 Meeting

Cabot School Library

Meeting began at 6:00 PM

In attendance: Stef Burt, Theresa Lay-Sleeper, Amy Richardson, Johanna Thibault, Melissa Pratt, Jason Monaco, Rebecca Nally, Jennifer Blake and Chris Tormey

1. **Introductions** of committee members and new Cabot School Principal Dr. Jennifer Blake
2. **Draft minutes** of the committee's June 26 meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. **Agenda** for tonight's meeting was approved
4. **Discussion:**
 - A. Focus and format for our next community forum was broadly discussed. After review of input from the June forum, committee members at the 6/26 meeting had identified 3 topics within the "Ways that Cabot School could be improved" subset to focus on at the next community forum:
 - Cabot's curriculum and Project-based Learning;
 - Cabot's grading system and report cards;
 - Student-led conferences/parent-teacher communicationCabot's new principal Dr. Jenn Blake indicated that there are likely to be changes made to both the school's report card/grading system (aligning with other schools in the SU) as well as the parent-teacher conferences (modified to allow in-person communication between parents and teachers). Therefore, committee members agreed to limit the focus of the next community forum to an in-depth presentation and dialogue on the PBL system at Cabot and how it ties in with students' learning of math, literacy, etc.
Discussion turned next to how the format of the next forum could both clearly present how PBL works at the various grade levels at Cabot and also provide opportunity for community input and dialogue (was noted again that many community members are still unclear on how PBL works). Committee members agreed to the following format for the next forum:
 1. Welcome and introductions: Jeannie Johnson and committee members (10-15 minutes)
 2. Presentation by elementary teacher (Rebecca Nally?) of how PBL projects work in the elementary grades at Cabot. After 10-15 minute presentation to entire audience, allow 10 minutes for attendees at

each table to discuss/jot down their positive take-aways as well as questions and concerns. Next, use 10-15 minutes for a representative from each table to summarize table's input as well as have an opportunity to ask the presenter direct questions about PBL at that grade level. (25-30 minutes total)

3. Same format as in #2, but this time have MS teacher(s) present how PBL works in middle school. (25-30 min.)
4. Same format as in #3, but this time have HS teacher(s) present how PBL works at high school level (25-30 min.)
5. Wrap-up by facilitator : "Was this useful?/Ways to improve?") (5-10 minutes)
6. Total forum time frame: 6:00 PM to 7:45 PM

B. Other thoughts on forum:

- Work hard to get both Cabot School families and home-school families and "other school" families to attend.
- Have Jenn communicate with "choice town" principals (Walden, etc.) in SU to try to get families from those towns to also attend
- Record input from individual tables as before (Amy R.)
- Research videotaping the event to use for future outreach
- Include refreshments (but scale back volume)
- Forum's goal: clarify for the audience/community how PBL works to build lifelong skills in research, collaboration and communication along with more immediate learning in literacy and math, while allowing school staff to hear input/questions about the approach.

C. Potential Date for Forum: Monday Sept. 16th

- Will give time for teachers/presenters to get started w/ school year and prepare their presentations.
- Jeannie Johnson has agreed to act as Moderator again for the forum.

D. School climate/behavior intervention system: School staff present agreed the system needs improvement. A survey will go out to school staff to get their input on the current system and how it might be improved. Jenn will work with staff to make improvements to the system this school year- she cautioned it will take time to institute a new system (training for staff, communication with students and families, etc.) and to gather the data over time to gauge its effectiveness.

E. "Welcome Back to School" event: Discussion of how to start the school year on a positive note. Group agreed that something informal during the first week or two of

school would be ideal (not an open house, but instead a BBQ on the Common for both Cabot School families as well as community members and families w/ kids not attending the school.) Include: introductions of school staff, free food, information from Recreation Committee on soccer teams/schedules, other(?) Potential dates (Jenn will look into and get back on them): Thursday 8/29 or Thursday 9/5; More planning to do at our next meeting-

5. Next meeting date: Tuesday August 20, 6:30 PM

(Brief meeting: main goal will be planning specifics for both Welcome Back event and next Community Forum)

6. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM

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