TEACHERS/STAFF: Cheryl Graham, Tyrone McDonald, David Thygeson, Sarah Lemon, Breahna Kerth

PARENTS: Mayra Duran, Michelle Lozano, Martha Regalado

PRINCIPAL: Lindsay Ochs

Nov. 9, 2023

Time: 5:45-6:30 p.m.

Location: Medford PreK building

Families had the chance to weigh in on Kids Unlimited Academy's Parent Involvement Plan and got a taste of new classrooms — and classroom instruction — at November's Site Council.

Required by KUA's status as a Title I-A school, the Parent Involvement Plan describes standards and methods for distributing school information, parent participation at the school and meetings between parents and school administrators. Federal funds are provided to Title I-A schools with the purpose of increasing student learning and achieving the state learning standards in reading and math.

Middle school math has been a recent KUA focus, said David Thygeson and Cheryl Graham. KUA was testing students to determine what they needed with lessons adjusted during the month of November to bring students up to grade level, said Graham, the school's mathematics instructional coach. Parents likely will see more homework, she said.

"The problems they skip are the ones that are slightly challenging," said Graham. "We're challenging them, and they're kind of pushing back a little bit."

Graham said KUA parents need to check their kids' agenda books for homework assignments, which teaches organization for high school. Graham also encouraged parents to enroll their kids in KU's afterschool enrichment for math tutoring, even if they ordinarily wouldn't stay for those extra 90 minutes. She and MTSS coordinator Thygeson recommended the online resource iReady and the rates at which students catch up to grade level if they spend 45 minutes a week on it. Graham's explanation followed a question from KUA parent Marta Regalado about why KUA grades 6-8 are behind, which she said she heard at parent-teacher conferences.

"We have lots of time left," said Graham of preparing eighth graders for high school.

Graham took parents back to third grade math with a lesson about calculating area. Using worksheets and diagrams, Graham led parents through exercises in dividing rectangles into columns and rows, skip-counting, adding and subtracting dimensions and finally calculating area using the formula length times width and specifying the unit. Parents were reminded to

check their answers, which can be done by skip-counting. Graham concluded by sharing her plan for pulling kids in small groups from KUA classrooms after the first of the year with the goal of increasing state assessment scores by 10 percent.

A new testing center is a feature of KUA's recently opened classroom complex. Fifth grade classes have moved into the new building's first floor, which also has a meeting room, space for staff training and a place where Department of Human Services workers can meet with kids. Principal Lindsay Ochs said school officials hope the public will be able to access school board meetings in the new building.

Training for KUA teachers also is open to parents Jan. 4-5, when the schools' "science of reading" curriculum will be presented at the White City campus. Citing KUA kindergartners reading complex sentences, Ochs said progress has been really impressive, and teacher testimonials have "lit a fire" for adopting new methods. Some teachers are so proud that they can't wait for anyone and everyone to hear their students read.

"Times are changing, and the ways we are teaching kids are changing," said Ochs.

Previewing the next couple of months' school events, the Principal also announced that KUA has a student council, comprising grades 6-8. There were high standards this year — students had to apply, said advisor Tyrone McDonald. The structure will look different next year, but KUA still will have a student council.