

The Compass School

January 10, 2017 Meeting of the School Council Minutes

Meeting Location: The Compass School, 537 Old North Road, Kingston,
RI 02881

Date and Time of Meeting: January 10, 2017 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Marisa Gallagher (MG), Rachel Axelson (RA), Nicole Gardner (NG), Polly Cuddy (PC), Linsey Trombino (LT), Nicole Saulan (NS), Susannah Strong (SS)

Others Present: Brandee Lapiskey (BL), Mike Commendatore (MC), Kristen Kardos (KK), Christine Heart Skeggs (CS), Elisa Lucia (EL), Hilary Downes Fortune (HF),

Presiding Officer: RA

1. Call to Order Rachel Axelson, Council President, calls the meeting to order at 6:03 PM
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Consent Agenda (2 minutes)
 - a. Discussion/vote to approve Consent Agenda (including agenda of this meeting)

RA entertains a motions to adopt the consent agenda.

NG so moved

NS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve consent agenda

In favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

4. Approval of minutes (2 minutes)
 - a. Discussion/vote to approve minutes from 12.13.16

RA entertains a motion to approve the open session minutes for December 13, 2016

NS so moved

NG seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve the open session minutes for December 13, 2016
In favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0
Motion passes. Yes

5. Director's Report (10 minutes)

- a. Discussion/vote to approve the Director's Report

BL reviewed the Director's report and invited questions. There were no questions.

RA entertains a motion to approve the Director's Report

NS so moved

SS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve the Director's Report

In favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

6. Blended Learning Presentation Update (15 minutes)

- a. Discussion regarding FUSE program purpose and structure
- b. Presentation of sample blended learning program use

This presentation is focused on the FUSE portion of the work with blended learning. BL gave a reminder of the background of what has happened since the fall and how Compass is using this great resource with the support of teachers outside of the Compass community. NG presented what she has developed in Blended learning for her classroom with guidance from the fellows of the FUSE program. She presented grammarflip to help with grammar in her classroom of 5 and 6 graders. The next steps are to continue to work with the coaches and also to do best practice shares at staff meetings to cross pollinate.

7. Farm Update (15 minutes)

- a. Program details overview presentation
- b. Discussion/vote to approve [updated fencing plan](#) and [fence design](#)

BL started the presentation talking about Rocky Hill and the Land of Fires that they have and what they are doing to advertise for other school communities to come and visit. Suggestions to use this idea to help guide the idea of expanding the opportunity for others to come and visit not only the Farm but also the other interests on Compass campus. The other things that are being considered for Compass students such as a summer program and farm stand to name two ideas that were presented. Concluded presentation stating that all things are to keep in mind of the Compass mission of being involved in the outside world around.

BL moved into presenting information on dead spaces on campus that might have health concerns linked to it. ServPro was called in to clean the farmhouse basement but after cleaning out the middle building which is to be farm headquarters needed to be cleaned out thoroughly as well.

RA entertains a motion to approve \$15,000 to fund materials and construction of the fence contingent upon town zoning approval.

NS so moved

SS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve \$15,000 to fund materials and construction of the fence contingent upon town zoning approval.

In favor: 8 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

8. Learning Committee Presentation on [Elective Pilot](#) - Nikki Gardiner (20 minutes)

NG gave a past review of how the elective pilot was developed to fruition this year, then moved into how it is looking now. It is focused on the 5th and 6th graders for the pilot program this year. The first trimester went well and the students were excited about what they learned and the idea of having choice. Parents were also surveyed on how they felt the first trimester elective pilot went. BL finalized the presentation to by sharing the idea for the future plans moving into planning for next year. NG is asking if there is more information that could be presented for the program to have the potential of continuing.

SS is there a system that is being used for assessment in the elective?

NG part of the syllabus that is presented to BL has to include a form of assessment for the program. The electives are on the current progress report and also in the new one as well. The contemplation is will it be a pass or fail instead of on the scale assessment for other curriculum.

RA Do you feel that the students have enough? NG with the idea of moving into second trimester there is more choice than there was for the first. BL another thought is going forward that student voice can also be put through with suggestions of potential options.

NS is the plan when you represent in March for the Navigation to also be part of the elective options? That will be determined through study of configuration of the staff at the Navigation step. This also could help with presentation of different options for all the students from grades 5-8.

9. STEAM Pilot Presentation - Hilary Downes Fortune (15 min)

BL gave a reminder of how the STEAM pilot was brought to start this year. HF gave a presentation that started off with explaining how STEM/STEAM are not only in middle school ages but also moving into the colleges are well in RI. The rest of the presentation was informing council on the steps that were taken in first trimester working specifically with the investigators (5th and 6th graders). HF then went into the plan for the rest of the year working with 3rd and 4th graders in second trimester and moving to the 7th and 8th graders in third trimester.

RA Do you think that the 3-8 graders are the right match for STEAM? HF yes they are all enthusiastic with the activities as well with the conversations that I have had with them. This is really good for collaborating for kids that do understand are supporting those that need a little more support.

10. Teacher Leave of Absence consideration - Polly Cuddy (5 minutes)

- a. Leave Policy Excerpt: **Sabbatical or Leave to Pursue Advanced Degree:**
Employees granted permission by the Council for planning an extended leave will

make efforts to have their exit and return dates coincide with the beginning of a new semester, when possible. Compass may agree to hold the employee's position until the beginning of the following school year. Exceptions may be made for a longer leave with approval of the Council. Sabbaticals (this may include, but is not limited to, Peace Corps, AmeriCorps or other personal planned activities) and leaves for Higher Education purposes shall require approval of the Council at least 30 days in advance. A proposal for planned activities during the leave as well as an explanation of how the knowledge and experience gained will benefit both the employee and the Compass Community must be submitted at least one semester in advance of the requested Leave.

BL is endorsing the idea with the expectation that it aligns with the school year. With the freedom to have a one year only contract option.

SS supports the endorsement. What is the language that needs to be stated if we are to approve this? How would this affect future staff asking for the same thing?

MS and SS has stated that council has made individualized decisions like this in the past.

BL is going to consult with Matt Plain about verbiage in the policy and then bring back to council in February.

11. Holiday Policy (5 minutes)

a. Charge Policy Committee with reexamining the Holiday Policy

NS we discussed streamlining student handbook and hand it out to at the beginning of the year at the ice cream social. The Holiday Policy is in the handbook. We discussed that the holiday policy is very important and BL is also going to add this to her weekly newsletters to give parents more information. The thought behind this is that each teacher has different thoughts and execution on the presentation of education portion of the holiday. The current policy reflects the suggestions in research that has been done.

RA charges the Policy committee with reviews the holiday policy.

12. [Compass FY16 Audit Report](#) (5 minutes)

a. Vote to accept the [Compass FY16 Audit Report](#) prepared by Jason Smith

BL turned the floor to MC to give council info on the report.

MC stated that it is an excellent report and there is no concerns with the report.

RA entertains a motion to approve the Compass FY16 Audit Report

NSso moved

SS seconds

Discussion: none

Vote to approve the Compass FY16 Audit Report

In favor: 8

Opposed: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion passes. Yes

13. New Business

14. Public Comment

15. Adjourn at 8:26 pm

The public is welcome to any meeting of the School Council or its subcommittees. If communication assistance (readers/interpreters/captions) or any other accommodations are needed to ensure equal participation, please contact the Student Service Coordinator, Julie Wynsen at (401) 788-8322 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting.

Any changes in the agenda will be posted on The Compass School's website and place of business, and will be electronically filed with the secretary of state at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

Director's Report

Provided By: Brandee Lapisky, M.Ed.

Submitted on: 1/4/17

Council meeting date: 1/10/17

Enrollment

The enrollment tallies below are updated as of 1/4/17 .

Step Levels	Grade	Enrollment (Actual by grade)	Enrollment (Actual by step)
Explorers	K	18	36
	1	18	
Adventurers	2	19	19
Discoverers	3	19	38
	4	19	
Investigators	5	19	38
	6	19	
Navigators	7	19	37
	8	18	

Total Enrollment	K-8	168	168
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*Note that The Compass School is fully enrolled and our population has stayed stable with no transfer students in or out since the last reporting period.

Strategic Plan Updates

Charter Renewal: Given that a 5-year unconditional renewal was granted by the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education, this initiative has been achieved and will no longer have a monthly update section.

Development:

- The Annual Fund was launched on 12/9/2016.
- To date, we have the following statistics to report:
 - 8% of students and families have contributed.
 - The total amount secured to date is \$3,845.00.
 - We have reached 19% of our \$20,000 goal.

Blended Learning

- On 1/4/17 the FUSE fellows were present on campus for classroom observations, debriefs with staff members, and also staff meeting.
- Both fellows are an excellent match for the school; our early adopters are already reporting appreciation for the coaching work and enthusiasm about the experience.
- We are in year 1 of a 2-year experience with FUSE and the FUSE fellows that we have will remain matched with us for both years.
- Heidi Vazquez has been an amazing support as a liaison with the fellows and the early adopters. From her work on learning committee to supporting scheduling logistics and communication with FUSE, the program would not be running as smoothly if it were not for her efforts.

Facilities Life Cycle: Current Campus

- Due to the farm headquarters project, items within the former middle building have been relocated.
 - The former Discoverer storage shed has been cleared in order to be repurposed as the maintenance and facilities shed. Ben Brouillard of Vision Landscaping has offered to move the shed to the area near the farmhouse for free. This is valuable as quotes for the relocation were \$500.
 - Teacher storage has been moved primarily to the farmhouse basement. It is organized on storage racks and lifted up off of the basement with pallets, in the event of future flooding.

- We contracted with ServPro for the cleaning (vacuuming, mopping, etc) of the farmhouse basement. We plan to contract with them for the cleaning of farm headquarters as well.
- To date, we have filled one and a half 10-yard dumpsters with items that had been stored, but could not be used or donated.
- Many of the items (old filing cabinets, tables, chairs) in the future farm headquarters were able to be donated thanks to Arthur Smith's outreach.
- Kevin Barden (Compass parent), Mike Commendatore, Arthur Smith, Monique Bosch, Melissa Dussault, and Diane Barzagli's efforts were vital to the success of these changes.

Facilities Life Cycle: Future Campus

- The feasibility study is now posted on our website after being vetted by Matt Plain. We are currently accepting proposals.

Facilities Life Cycle: Compass Farm

- At the December Council meeting, the Council inquired about the fencing design. Those details are provided here and will be voted upon at the January meeting.
 - [updated fencing plan](#)
 - [fence design](#)
- The Student Voice and Leadership team interviewed Max Hence of Hillandale Farm in Westerly about the SVL farmstand proposal. The students came prepared with questions and Max was able to offer incredible expertise and offerings of resources.
- As noted above, the cleanout of farm headquarters is nearly complete.

Staff Configuration: I reached out to our 6 primary sending districts with a request for 3 sample student schedules and the corresponding bell schedules. This information will lend itself to a schedule analysis about other middle school course offerings and times allotted.

STEAM Pilot

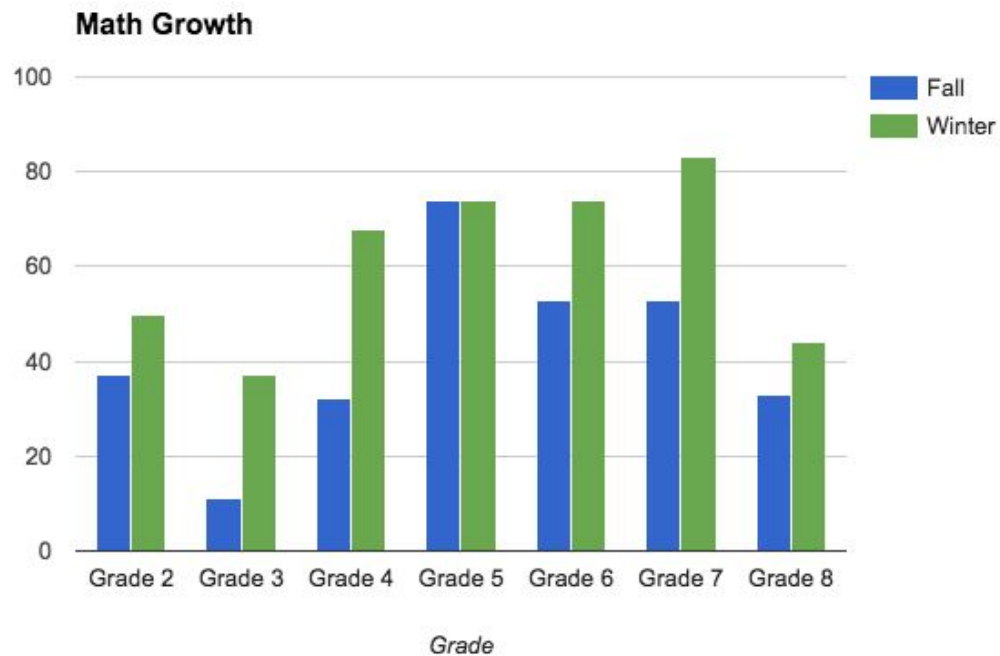
- The Investigator step presented their STEAM-based projects to the Discoverer step in December. The Investigator STEAM pilot has concluded.
- Discoverers are beginning their work. STEAM will be the primary focus of the parent project share this trimester.
- Hilary will present project updates at the January council meeting.

Elective Pilot

- The first trimester elective pilot has concluded with very positive student feedback. An [elective status report](#) will be presented to Council in January.

Math

- We have been utilizing a new in house assessment tool called iReady. Below are the midyear results in comparison with the beginning of year information:



Other Topics

Financial Update: Mike Commendatore and I will begin work on the FY18 budget now that we've entered the new year.

RI Legislative Updates:

- Representative Amore will propose bill [H 8308](#) this year.

National Education Updates:

- RI NPR broadcasted [5 Education Stories to watch in 2017](#).

League of Charter Schools: No new updates at this time.

Community Outreach:

- We have two upcoming open houses scheduled for January 17, 2017 and February 1, 2017.
- I have been in communication with RIDE on two occasions to discuss plans to increase the Compass free and reduced lunch population.

Safety:

- The South Kingstown police presented about Lockdown procedures at a December staff meeting.
- All staff now have photo ID Badges that are worn with their lanyards. This was a recommendation by the SK police in the event of an emergency.

Learning Committee December Report

The Learning Committee met on December 15, 2016. Data that was gathered from parents and Investigator students about their elective experience thus far was shared out. This data will be available for the council to view during the presentation about electives. Overall, the data received was positive and informational. The committee is working in 2 smaller groups. One group is working on crafting a definition about personalized/blended learning specific to The Compass School. The other group vetted a survey about classroom technology tools that would be completed by Compass staff.

Health/Safety/Farm Launch December Report

The committee met on November 29, 2016 and December 13, 2016. Update on grant progress was shared (many upcoming dates) was given. Rick Esner presented his concept for a pollinator garden at Compass School. He has proposed to grow organic native plants, augmented with seeds sourced from 'Rhody Natives'. Rick plans to have the pollinator garden become a data collecting source with students getting involved in photographing any pollinators they see visiting the plants. Rhode Island Wild Plant Society (RIWPG) members would help fund the project and work with students to add their photos to the database. The barn and shed clean-out continued to move along, with the completion date set at December 22, 2016. An arborist visited campus to suggest trees to be pruned/removed. New dates were set for meetings to be held after the new year

Policy Committee December Report

Discussion and review of Policy Development Guidance:

- We decided to not make any amendments to the Policy Development Guidance policy
- We will be adding another member from council for a balance of members: Marissa (who accepted and is now part of the committee)

Discussion of Public Comment Policy: agreement to add public comment to beginning of Council meetings.

Discussion of Staff Communication-Complaint policy:

- Led to a discussion of communication with The Compass School community
- Use of social media to voice problems/issues that should be addressed through the proper channels within the school as stated in the Student-Parent Handbook

- Adding a reminder of these channels through Ms. Brandee's update
- Upcoming agenda items: reviewing the Student-Parent Handbook

Development Committee December Report

Vision Event Update

- Elisa contacted the South Kingstown Land Trust Barn regarding possible use for next year's event on either Friday, 10/13/17 or Friday, 10/20/17. The Barn is available for \$350 to non-profits for non-fundraising events. It provides enough space for a full sit down dinner for 90 people.

Annual Fund Update

- This year's Annual Fund goal is \$20,000. Our major push will be during the holiday season with wrap up at the end of January 2017. We will continue to message the importance of 100 percent participation from stakeholders to show commitment for potential funders (only 75 percent of families and staff participated last year). Drew offered to contact fellow teachers who have yet to participate, need be. We also are messaging the community to check with their employers (human resources department) about possible matching donations. To date, we have received \$1,000 in employer match gifts. Brandee mentioned having a list of Compass family employers, which may be used for outreach efforts.

Eco Fair Update

- Finalizing business/vendor solicitation letters and offers
- This year's Eco Fair will be on May 20th. It is being chaired by Crystal Broulliard and Kristin Kardos. We will also use this opportunity to promote our Farm launch, including inviting VIPs and potential funders. It was suggested (2) students from each step be assigned as ambassadors, giving tours to VIPs, etc. We want to be mindful of the initial \$7,000 raised through this event will be put into school operating budget, with all remaining funds going into the Co-Op's budget. It could get dicey when it comes to sponsorships and ticket sales. To ensure we don't duplicate efforts, Elisa will be the Development Committee's liaison as she is already on the EcoFair event committee.

Grant Opportunities

- Abby is currently working on an application for a Farm to School grant from the USDA.

Finance Committee December Report

- No updates.