



What's Up @ G&P

October 2014

Visit our website:

<http://grahamandparks.cpsd.us>

Main Office
617-349-6577

School Cancellation Line:
617-349-6513

Tardy or Late Line:
617 349-6577 x125

Contacting G&P Staff

For time sensitive messages,
call the main office at
617-349-6577.

While staff cannot take phone
calls during the day, you can
leave a voice message by
calling 617-349-6577 and
using the classroom number
as the extension.

Staff members have email
addresses as follows:
First initial and last name as
one word, followed by
@cpsd.us

For example, Jane Smith
would be jsmith@cpsd.us

Staff members also have
mailboxes in the front office
where you may leave a note.

Communicate with the G&P Community

Email lists:

ParentLink for official school
announcements, sent to email
addresses on emergency
cards.

gp21 is a parent-run Yahoo
group with discussions of
school matters as well as
sharing of information and
resources. Visit
groups.yahoo.com/group/gp21

Steering Committee

Minutes can be viewed on the
school website

If you would like this document translated, please contact the Bilingual/World Languages Department at 617-349-6468. Announcements are authored and proofread by each individual contributor. If you have a question or comment, please contact the contributor directly using the contact information listed in the announcement. The parent volunteer editor(s) may be contacted at graham.parks.newsletter@gmail.com.

A Note from Principal Tony Byers

October 1, 2014

Dear Families,

There's nothing quite like wandering through an empty school the day before students arrive. And I confess that I've never been in a position do it before. So, the night before school began, I took a stroll down every corridor and through every classroom. It turns out that empty schools aren't quiet. Intercoms hiss, pipes clang, the wind blows in from half-open windows, and sensors click disapprovingly as a possible intruder passes beneath them. To me, these sounds felt like place holders, as if a completely quiet school would be sacrilegious. Because of course, schools are supposed to be filled with the sounds of learning, that productive hum that's punctuated every now again by bursts of unconstrained excitement and joy. As I walked from classroom to classroom, past piles of nametags, neatly laid out morning work, easels with morning messages, and blank bulletin boards hungry for student work, I could feel the potential for such excitement. And I kept thinking, "I hope my daughter can go to this school someday." In every classroom, I saw signs of a deep respect for children and faith in their ability to do amazing things.

As of September 26th, Graham and Parks has enrolled 394 students from 314 families. On the first day of school, our whispering building sprang to life with the sound of children speaking 34 different languages as they streamed in through the front door. Over 80 fulltime and part-time faculty and staff were waiting for them. Over the last three weeks, I've taken great pleasure in watching our community roll up its sleeves and get back to work. In classrooms, teachers and students have been launching workshops and expeditions while establishing the classroom rules, routines, and relationships that promote learning all year long. And families have been generously donating their time and energy to support our school in dozens of large and small ways, from bringing a dish to our Back-to-School Potluck to serving as room parents or on one of our many committees. It takes a collective effort to make a great school, and I've been thrilled to find such a high level of community support for Graham and Parks.

Thank you all for such a great start to the school year. Happy fall!

Best,

G&P Calendar and Highlights

School Calendar for 2014-15 is always available online at www.cpsd.us

October

OCTOBER

- Friday, October 3, 8:30 - 8:45 AM: FCEP Monthly Coffee, G&P Lobby, then off to Bourbon Café at the Porter Square Exchange Building
- **Monday, October 6: NO SCHOOL – in observance of Eid AL-Adha**
- Thursday, October 9, 5:30 – 7:30 PM: Steering Committee Meeting in the first floor conference room.
- **Monday, October 13: NO SCHOOL – in observance of Columbus Day**
- Saturday, October 18, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM: Friends of Graham & Parks Fundraiser—Rummage Sale
- **Wednesday, October 22 – EARLY RELEASE DAY – Dismissal at 12:25**
- Friday, October 24, 8:40 AM: Friends of Graham & Parks Meeting in the front lobby
- Thursday, October 30, 8:30 AM - 9:15 AM: "Getting the most out of your Parent Teacher Communications", in the library.

Looking Ahead...

NOVEMBER

- Sunday, November 2nd – Daylight savings time ends. Clocks are turned back one hour at 2 AM (early Sunday morning)
- Tuesday, November 4 – Election Day Bake Sale
- Wednesday, November 5: School Picture make-up photos Wednesday, November 5
- **Thursday, November 6 – EARLY RELEASE DAY – Dismissal at 12:25 PM**
- Friday, November 7, 5:30 – 7:30: Family Folk Dance, Graham & Parks cafeteria and gym – Families and staff are invited!
- Thursday, November 13, 5:30 – 7:30 PM: Steering Committee Meeting in the first floor conference room
- Wednesday, November 19, 6 – 7:30 PM: World Foods Potluck & Family Cultural Exchange Kick-off , G&P cafeteria. More info via flyer and in the November newsletter.
- **Wednesday, November 26 EARLY RELEASE – Dismissal at 12:25 PM**
- **Thursday, November 27 - NO SCHOOL – Thanksgiving Day**
- **Friday, November 28 – NO SCHOOL – Thanksgiving Break**

G&P Happenings

Welcome to new staff members

We'll be introducing new staff members across the next several newsletters. Join us in welcoming -

Mildrid Gédéon, Sheltered Immersion Family Liaison

My name is Mildrid Gedeon, I am the new SEI Family Liaison for G&P, K-Lo and VLUS. I have worked at VLUS and RAUS as a tutor for the Bilingual Department for the past 2 years. Thank you for such a wonderful welcome.

You can reach me at mgedeon@cpsd.us or 617-349-6577 x120

Our two school nurses:

Bridget Nelligan, School Nurse—Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. You can reach Bridget at bnelligan@cpsd.us or 617-349-6577 x114

Sharon Jones, School Nurse—Monday, Wednesday. You can reach Sharon at sjones@cpsd.us or 617-349-6577 x114

Parent Coffee: "Getting the most out of your Parent/Teacher Communications"

Thursday, October 30, 8:30-9:15 AM, in the library.

We are continuing a series of morning coffees, each with a particular theme or focus. Judy Lazrus will be doing our first presentation this year on Parent/Teacher Communications. If you are new to the school or missed her presentation last year, please join us! If you came last year and want a review, come back for a "repeat performance"!

For more information contact Family Liaison Judy Amendola at jamendola@cpsd.us, or Sheltered English Immersion Family Liaison Mildrid Gédéon at mgedeon@cpsd.us

Don't miss out on the chance to volunteer as a chaperone on your child's classroom field trips – fill out a CORI form today!

CORI forms allow adults to accompany or work with students on field trips, volunteer in classrooms, etc. These policies are in place to protect the safety and wellbeing of our students. CORI Forms are available in the main office. Please bring a picture ID when you return the form.

Call for coordinators and helpers!

The Family Cultural Exchange Program (FCEP) is looking for coordinators and helpers to assist with the administration of the program. If you are interested in volunteering your time for this committee, please contact Stephanie Reiss at sreiss321@gmail.com.

Family Cultural Exchange Program (FCEP) First Friday Coffee

Friday, October 3 at 8:45 AM at Bourbon Café, on Massachusetts Avenue at the Porter Exchange Building, in Porter Square, next to Citibank.

Please join our community for the first of our First Friday Coffees at Bourbon Street Café on October 3 at 8:45AM. For those who prefer, we will also take a group to the café from the school. Please meet us in the school lobby at 8:30 AM and we can walk over together. We will meet on the first Friday of each month to meet new people and old friends, chat, and have fun!

Family Cultural Exchange Program 2014-15

We encourage you to take part in the Family Cultural Exchange Program (FCEP). FCEP pairs international families who have children in the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program with host families from the general education classrooms. Any family with a child at G&P for at least one year can participate.

The program has two components. First, we encourage you to contact your partner family. This can range from a simple phone call now and then to touch bases, to play dates, or more organized activities. We'd like you to engage at whatever level is comfortable for you.

G&P will also host FCEP events throughout the year. Scheduled events so far include monthly coffees the last Friday of each month and the "World Foods Potluck" on November 19th.

Although you can join at any time, we encourage you to fill out an enrollment form by October 10th so that the FCEP committee will have all forms when it meets to pair host and international families. All students should have received forms from their classroom teacher; they can also be picked up at the FCEP table in the lobby. Completed forms can be given to your classroom teacher, dropped off at the FCEP table, or emailed to Stephanie Reiss at sreiss321@gmail.com. We will announce partners and make introductions at the "World Foods Potluck" on November 19th. You will also receive an email with your partners' contact information.

This is the fifth year for the program and we continue to grow in numbers! Please join us in building community, establishing friendships—and having a lot of fun!

Bringing in your child late or picking up early? Check in at the Main Office

Please be sure to come by the main office to check in with school secretary Cheryl Depasquale. (Please do not go directly to your classroom). Thank you!

Best ways to contact teachers

Your child's teacher will appreciate it if you email or leave a note in the classroom or main office to set a time to meet in person. All staff can be reached by using their first initial and last name as one word followed by the suffix www.cpsd.us. For example: sjohnson@cpsd.us

About Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences take place twice per year. The purpose of these required conferences is for your child's teacher to share your child's academic and social development. It is also your opportunity to share your observations so you and your child's teacher can work as partners in your child's education. Your classroom teacher will let you know when Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled.

About our School Handbook & Handy Reference Guide

Updated G&P Family Handbooks will be sent home in the beginning of October. This is your guide for all things Graham & Parks. Please read it carefully. Chances are you will be able to find the answers to many of your questions!

About dropping-off children, safety issues, and parking

Please park on the streets surrounding the school and walk your child in, or have them walk on their own. We have a wonderful crossing guard to safely guide children across the street. Two important points:

- The front of the building on Linnaean Street is reserved for BUS PARKING ONLY.
- Please do not park on the sidewalks around the school.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping students and staff safe.

Our Youth Resource Officer

Youth Resource Officers, in addition to keeping us safe, build positive relationships and support activities in their schools. If you are new to the school, please meet Christine Levesque, our Youth Resource Officer from the Cambridge Police Department. Officer Levesque has been working in our school for several years as well as at the Haggerty School, Tobin Montessori, and the Upper Vassal Lane School.

Family Contact Book

Build family connections that support student learning. Sign up to be included in the Graham & Parks Family Contact Book. The online signup system for the Family Contact Books is up and running. You can access it by going to www.grahamandparks.cpsd.us or www.cpsd.us or https://secure2.cpsd.us/contact_books/

If you can, please sign up online rather than using the printed forms. *Printed forms will be distributed via back-pack express later in the month for those who prefer them.*

Lost & Found Clothing

Lost & Found clothing is located in the Avon Street foyer in a labeled cabinet to the right of the gym doors. Periodically, we will ask all items to be collected by their owners, via the newsletter. All items remaining at the end of the pickup date will be donated to charity.

Attention Families! Do you have a child who will be 3 years old by August 31, 2015?

If so, you must register that child during the month of October in order for you to get sibling preference. Applications are available in the main lobby in the Lucite literature stands (on the right). Also available in our family liaisons' offices: Judy Amendola Room 115, and Mildrid Gédéon, Sheltered Immersion Family Liaison, Room 120.

You can bring your completed applications to the FRC or return them to either Family Liaison between October 1st and October 15th. Questions? jamendola@cpsd.us or call 617-349-6577 x115, OR mgedeon@cpsd.us or call 617-349-6577 x120

School Email Lists and Yahoo! Groups

The school has two email lists. ParentLink, gp21 and Vassal Lane Middle School. If your child is enrolled, you provided your email at registration or on your emergency card, you are automatically on the ParentLink list, which posts official school announcements.

Sign up instructions for our parent-run interactive gp21 and Vassal Lane Yahoo! Groups list servs are on the school website <http://grahamandparks.cpsd.us>. Go to www.cpsd.us for district news, resources and information.

Are you interested in creating a school event but aren't familiar with the logistics?

We've got a helpful Task Template! Please see Judy Amendola, Family Liaison, Mildrid Gédéon, Sheltered English Immersion Family Liaison or Liza Tague, RoomParent Coordinator. This template is a Microsoft Excel document that models a hypothetical event, shows you who you need to contact for permits, gives a sample timeline, and the like. Contact Judy at 617-349-6577 x115 or jamendola@cpsd.us and Liza Tague at ltague@gmail.com

Friends of Graham & Parks News

We welcome new and old members of the G&P community.

- Please join us in raising money and helping teachers with funding for special projects. **Any and all levels of participation are needed.**
- Out meetings are on the last Friday of each month, 8:30 – 9:30 AM, in the front lobby.

Questions? Contact co-chairs Ena Valenzuela enafval@gmail.com or Nora Grodzins noragrodzins@gmail.com

G&P Annual Rummage Sale – October 18th, 9 AM – 1 PM

Wondering why you're keeping all those too-small clothes? Haven't used those skis, racquets, balls, skates...umm...in a while? Need precious storage space on shelves, in closets, attics, garages and basements? Please consider donating your - gently used and in good working order - clothing, toys, kitchenware, sporting equipment, furniture, books, DVDs, etc. to our G&P Annual Rummage Sale.

This is one of our largest fundraisers and we need your help to make it successful.

We are also looking for volunteers the night before, October 17th, for sorting/pricing and the day of for selling and then clean-up.

All proceeds go back into the classrooms for special projects, field trips and so much more. Please contact friendsofgandp@gmail.com

Steering Committee News

Welcome to the SY 2014-2015 parent members of the Steering Committee

Many thanks also to all the parents and staff sitting on the SY2014 – 15 Steering Committee. Your engagement in our school nourishes our learning environment. Many thanks also to all of you who voted for your parent representatives and took the time to support our community.

This academic year's parent members of the Steering Committee are:

Parents (in alphabetical order with child's current class)

Aboma Dirbaba, K and Grade 1 parent , 617-869-7364

abomad@gmail.com,

Mary-Ann Matyas, 3rd Grade Parent, 617-945-5462

ma.matyas98@gmail.com,

Deb Morse, 2nd Grade Parent, 617-650-7390

morsedj2002@yahoo.com

Vinod Parmeshwar, K and 3rd grade Parent, 617-259-7558

vparmeshwar@gmail.com

David Weinstein, 2nd Grade Parent, 508-769-6325

davidjweinsteinedm@gmail.com

Teacher, staff, community (in alphabetical order with title)

Claudie Jean-Baptiste, Kindergarten teacher

cbaptiste@cpsd.us

Claire Dahill, Math Coach

cdahill@cpsd.us

Deb Sullivan, Music teacher

debsullivan@cpsd.us

Christina Astrove, Grade 2 (looping) Teacher

castrove@cpsd.us

Judy Amendola, G&P Family Liaison

jamendola@cpsd.us

Mildrid Gédéon , SEI Liaison for G&P, Vassal Lane and Kennedy Longfellow

mgedeon@cpsd.us

Mary Ellen Breen, Community Member

mbreen@cambridgema.gov

Jodie Darnell, School Administrative Manager

jdarnell@cpsd.us

Anthony Byers, Principal

abyers@cpsd.us

The Steering Committee is the governing body of Graham and Parks and functions much like the Board of a corporate or non-profit organization. It is empowered to make decisions on policy issues that pertain or affect the school directly. The Steering Committee's goal is to promote the continuous development of G&P as a progressive, child-centered school, to ensure that all students excel academically and socially, and to provide both parents and staff a voice in the governance of the school.

The Steering Committee meets monthly, typically on the third Thursday of the month, from 5:30 – 7:30 PM, in the first floor conference room. All G&P families and community members are welcome and encouraged to attend!

If you are not able to arrange childcare, childcare can be made available at the school by advance reservations received by mid-night two days prior to the meeting. (Typically the Tuesday prior by mid-night for a Thursday meeting). Contact family liaison Judy at 617-349-6577 x115 or jamendola@cpsd.us

Many Thanks!

To Everyone at the Back to School Potluck!

We celebrated the start of school with a warm welcome to our new principal Tony Byers! It couldn't have been more festive and fun. And special thanks to all the behind the scenes folks - the organizers, advertizers, set-up and clean-up crews.

To Our Wonderful Welcoming Committee and Summer JK/K Get-together organizers

Volunteers on the Welcoming Committee invited our new incoming JK/K families to get together over the summer at several events and topped it all off with the *Popsicles in the Park* event for *all* new families just before school started. What a wonderful way to bring new families into the school community. Thank you all!

To Room Parents!

What would we do without you! Thank you for your service throughout this past school year and the year ahead!

To Volunteer Tour Guides!

Thank you for being such superb ambassadors for both G&P and the Cambridge Public School District!

Of Interest Outside of G&P

Cambridge Community Engagement Team

The Community Engagement Team is a multi-agency collaborative that reaches out to underserved Cambridge families and connects them to community events and resources, develops community leaders, and supports agencies in working with a diverse community.

To reach any of the CET Outreach Workers, contact Carole Sousa at 617-349-6078 or csousa@cambridgema.gov



What is your NEWLETTER Delivery Preference?

Please fill out this survey, cut it, and put in the YELLOW DROP BOX in the main lobby.

Email Paper Copy Both email and Paper Copy

Last & First Name of child(ren) _____ Home Room _____

Thank you for helping us save a few more trees!