



# GPA Newsletter

Jan/Feb 2015

## Leadership Update

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We hope you all had a fabulous holiday season. It is hard to believe it is already 2015. The fall has been full of lots of exciting developments for the GPA community. Our student leadership team and Governing Board have been working on improvement plans for our GPA facilities. Last spring we received \$500,000 from the Harvard Community Benefits to create a science and technology space in our basement as well as to add bathrooms on each floor for the students. This work is anticipated to occur at GPA over the summer of 2015. We also have been in conversations with Boston to improve our outside facilities on our playground to build a turf field and basketball area. Our student leadership team presented to the head of facilities their proposal for this space and they provided an estimate to complete the work. We are now in the process of a fundraising campaign to raise \$300,00 to develop our back playground area. All of these facility improvements will help us to expand our enrichment opportunities and programming for students across all grade K-8.

This fall we have also been busy preparing for the new state test replacing MCAS that will take place in March and May. All students in grades 3-8 will take PARCC this year in English Language Arts and Math both in March and May in both subjects. Students in grades 5 and 7 will also take the Science MCAS. All parents should have taken part in a parent conference with your child's teacher and learned the progress your child is making on school

assessments. If you have any questions about your child's academic performance please be sure to contact the school to schedule a conference with your child's teacher. For more information on PARCC visit: <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/parcc>.

In addition to PARCC, all English Language Learners (ELL students) will take the ACCESS test in January through February. Every student who is designated an ELL student takes the ACCESS to determine their English Language Development Level (ELD). Every parent will be notified of their child's ELD level this spring.

This fall we also launched a new Home Visit initiative to partner with families. We thank all of the families who have participated and welcomed our faculty into your homes. This initiative has been amazing so far and we look forward to partnering with more families this spring. If you are interested in having your parent conference in your home instead of at the school please reach out to your child's teacher.

We want to thank all of our families who attended our December Celebration of Arts. We also thank all the families who volunteered to support this awesome event. Please be sure to follow us on Facebook to read updates on the daily happenings at GPA.

Happy 2015!

Sincerely,  
Erica Herman  
Principal

**Staff Announcements**

- \* Congratulations to Kara Kelly, one of our 5th grade teachers, who was married in October 2014
- \* Congratulation to Lauren Lafferty who is pregnant. She is due this April 2015.
- \* Congratulations to Tracy Coutts who is pregnant. She is due this June 2015.

## Nurses Corner

Our Health and Wellness Team has several exciting events planned for this year. These include:

- Zumbathon: Friday, February 13 (last day before February break)
- Health Week: April 13-17
- Health/Science Night on Wednesday, April 15
- Walkathon on Friday, April 17

GPA Wellness Champions this year are 5th grade teacher Ellen Pogson and Middle School Engagement Coordinator Jimmy King. We will be working together with classroom teachers to integrate more movement breaks into the school day, giving students the opportunity to move their bodies and become more invigorated to learn. The GPA Griffin has already visited a number of classrooms to model the movement minute!

We are continuing to encourage students to participate in the 100 Mile Club at GPA, which supports students in tracking how many miles they run or walk over the course of the school year. Students track miles completed by walking to school, at recess, before school in the BOKS program, and during movement breaks. The goal is to complete 100 Miles by the end of the school year, and prizes are given throughout the year for students' accomplishments. The most active classroom will be awarded a ribbon to go toward the end of the year Canobie Lake Park field trip!

For more information, or if you are interested in volunteering at any of these events, please contact Sarah Khoury, school nurse, at 617-635-9562.

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## GPA/YMCA Afterschool

The GPA/YMCA Program has open seats in all grades and is looking for more GPA students to join our high-quality, and top ranked by the state after school program. We offer reduced weekly fees for families in need of financial assistance. Please call Maridel Perdomo at the school for more information.



## Adult Education

Greetings from the adult level 2 English class. We are very happy in this class because we learn English at GPA. We feel good about our class. We are excited because everyday we learn more vocabulary to communicate in English. We read a lot of stories in our class and are learning to ask better questions in English. Our hope is that everyone will learn to speak English very well and our dreams will come true.

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## Governing Board Meeting Notes (Sept–Dec 2014)

### September 11th:

MCAS: Data from last year is very strong and worth celebrating as a school community (overall, scores increased in all subjects!). While there are still areas of needed development, our overall growth last year is very promising.

December Art Celebration: Celebration will take place on Dec 17<sup>th</sup> looking for volunteers.

Election Process: Reviewed election process (who are the current members, who are up for re-election etc).

Board Goals: Last year's board goals were reviewed and discussed at the GB meeting.

### October 23rd:

Election: New members welcomed to the board.

Bylaws: Reviewed and suggested changes will be made.

West End House: A bus has been assigned

Middle School Family Event: Event went very well

Budget and Staffing:

- Goals: Enhance our existing facility to offer programming for our K-8 population (science and tech classroom in the basement, bathrooms on the 3rd floor, turf field (back playground))
- Create a policy for teachers/staff who wish to request an innovative schedule
- Revise our Election to Work Agreement for faculty to offer extended hours of work
- Develop a comprehensive offering of middle school opportunities that occur both during the day and after school to address the needs of adolescents (enrichment/athletics, advisory/high school application support)

### November 13th:

*Parent Update:* Open house on Saturday Nov 15th from 9-1pm. Parents from Parent Council have volunteered to help with the tours.

*Principal Update:* Instructional rounds visit on Dec 10th hosted by Harvard. They will be looking at student work.

*Parent University* is on Dec 6, 2014. GPA School Quality Review: GPA had this done in 2011 to assess the quality of the school. They are done every 5 years. They looked at vision, mission, school leadership, governance, curriculum instruction, student support, family and community engagement. We are on the lower end of a Level 3 school. This is now a district wide review not just for pilot schools. They are focusing on not having any level 5 schools in the district. *Faculty Report:* Looking at student work and what students are doing in class (reading, writing and math groups). Not sure if children are doing enough and teachers are doing too much. Will keep the GB up to date on this. Are there additional strategies? *Middle School cross county:* 15 students on the team went to the championship meet put on by the BAA at Franklin Park.

*Enrichment for Middle School:* Eric Meuse starting robotics on Fridays, poetry slam on Mondays with Ms. Wilkerson, Mr. D is doing fundraising club on Tues/Thurs, Ms. Krista is doing engineering club on Tues/Thurs, study hall with Mr. King, debate/Mate, Coach Caroline doing basketball with 4th and 5th grade students now. Next cycle with middle school students.

### December 11th:

*Principal's Update:* The student leadership team presented to the head of facilities their proposal (they measured the outside area) for a turf field and basketball area. Facilities was really impressed, this is the first time students have presented to them. We have 100% support from facilities. We need to fundraise to raise 300,00 for the turf field/back playground area. They suggested that we reach out to the Mayor and apply for grants. *500K from Harvard Community Benefits:* They have given us this money to create a science and technology space in the basement as well as to add bathrooms on each floor for the students. Not sure how to access this money. Basement work is suppose to happen this summer. More information to come. *Student Leadership:* student's are working on a Community Ugly Sweater fundraiser. They are asking the community host it and the proceeds to come back to the school.

*Faculty Update:* Met last night (12/10/14) to talk about the Election to Work Agreement re Pilot Pay. If teachers agree to a new election to work they can receive pilot pay. They need to work an additional 90 hours for free and then are paid the BTU hourly rate for hours 90-145. These hours need to be in the building and be able to be accounted for in some form of collaboration or direct work with students. Middle School supports it. Some elementary are interested in it while others are not. They are meeting again next Wednesday. Have to vote by Jan 15th. *Parent Update:* Celebration of Art: Taking place Wednesday, Dec 17th from 5:30-7pm. Voting has to take place regarding the new parents that are interested in the alternate seats for the GB. November Parent Council Movie Night was a huge success. Would like to offer this at least twice a year. Would like have speakers come to Parent Council to talk about Academic challenge (staff person from GPA), exam schools and AWC. A Governing Board orientation was held at Rita's house for all new GB members. Reviewed bylaws and noticed that we need to choose a parent and faculty rep for Executive meeting. Meeting towards end of the year to eval 80% principal work schedule. PA System for announcement: We need a new system. Erica has reached out to the district and has been and has gotten nowhere. Erica suggested that the parents write requesting a new system due to safety concerns.

## Letter from Governing Board Parent Representatives

December 2, 2014

Hello GPA Families,

We thank you for electing us to the Governing Board, the decision-making body of the school community. As parent members, we aim to represent the voices of the families of our students across the school, even though our children may not be in the same class or grade level as your own. As such, we want to hear from you about ideas or concerns that you'd like us to raise for discussion at our meetings.

We encourage you to attend the Governing Board and Parent Council meetings when possible, and if not, we welcome you to reach out to us in any of these following ways:

- Elba Mendez is the Director of Parent and Family Engagement, and can be reached at the school at [617-635-8365](tel:617-635-8365).
- You may send an email to the entire team of Governing Board Parents at [GPAGBParents@googlegroups.com](mailto:GPAGBParents@googlegroups.com).
- You may send an email to the Parent Council elected officials at [parentcouncil.GPA@gmail.com](mailto:parentcouncil.GPA@gmail.com)
- You may contact us individually using the emails and/or phone numbers provided below (we have also noted if we speak languages other than English as well as the grades our children are in):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Language(s)</u>	<u>Parent of...</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone #</u>
Acacia Aguirre	Spanish/Español	2nd Grader	<a href="mailto:acacia.aguirre@gmail.com">acacia.aguirre@gmail.com</a>	617-680-6611
Priscilla Anderson	Some Spanish and Portuguese Algun Español y un pouco Português	3rd Grader	<a href="mailto:prilla32@gmail.com">prilla32@gmail.com</a>	617-312-8040
Jose Mari Jonathan Antonio	Filipino	6th Graders	<a href="mailto:jojoantonio@su.edu.ph">jojoantonio@su.edu.ph</a>  <a href="mailto:Josemari.antonio@gmail.com">Josemari.antonio@gmail.com</a>	201-621-1743
Xiomara Gomez	Spanish/Español	4th Grader	<a href="mailto:xiomygo-mez1988@gmail.com">xiomygo-mez1988@gmail.com</a>	617-895-7803
Victoria Hom	Some Cantonese 點點廣東話	3rd Grader and K1	<a href="mailto:victoriahom@gmail.com">victoriahom@gmail.com</a>	617-894-5920
Shaheen Quader		1st Grader	<a href="mailto:shaheenqua@yahoo.com">shaheenqua@yahoo.com</a>	617-538-5458
Rita Vaidya	Hindi	4th Grader	<a href="mailto:rita.vaidya@gmail.com">rita.vaidya@gmail.com</a>	617-562-8693
Ana Marleny Zaldivar	Spanish/Español	5th and 2nd Grader	<a href="mailto:marlenyza@gmail.com">marlenyza@gmail.com</a>	857-919-1796

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
GPA Governing Board

# January 2015

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	1 <i>No school</i>	2 <i>No school</i>	3
4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 <i>No school</i>	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31		

## Schedule of Events

- \* Jan 1st New Years Day (No School)
- \* Jan 2nd No School
- \* Jan 5th student return from vacation
- \* Jan 5th K-8 Harvard Basketball Field Trip
- \* Jan 6th @ 9:30am FCOC (Family & Community Outreach Committee) (Rm 11)
- \* Jan 7th @3pm Wellness Team
- \* Jan 7th @ 6pm Steppingstone Parent Info Session
- \* Jan 19th M L King Jr Day—no School
- \* Jan 19th Middle School Field Trip
- \* Jan 21st @ 5:30pm Hispanic Coffee Hour for Spanish speaking families (Rm 11)
- \* Jan 21st @ 6pm Parent Council (room 11)
- \* Jan 22nd @ 7:30am Governing Board
- \* Jan 23rd K1/K2 Children’s Museum Field Trip
- \* Jan 23rd 7th/8th Arts Showcase
- \* Adult Ed Tuesday’s and Thursday from 6-8:30pm

## Schedule of Events

- \* Feb 4th @ 3pm Wellness Team
- \* Feb 5th @ 7:30am Governing Board
- \* Feb 6th— 7th grade to Harvard (Project Teach)
- \* Feb 10th FCOC
- \* Feb 13th 9:45 am Zumbathon
- \* Feb 13th 8th graders to Northeastern
- \* Feb 16th President's Day (No School)
- \* Feb 17-20 February Vacation
- \* Feb 25th @ 5:30pm Hispanic Coffee Hour for Spanish speaking families (Rm 11)
- \* Feb 25th @ 6pm Parent Council (Rm 11)
- \* Feb 26th @ 8:30am Hispanic Coffee Hour for Spanish speaking families (Parent Center)

# February 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	S c h o o l v a c a t i o n					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28