
Parent Forum 3

— April 2, 2018 —

Arrival and Welcome

Welcome Future Gibbs' Families,

We are excited to be with you at this third Gibbs' information forum ! Tonight our Assistant Principal Wendy Salvatore joins us. Last time we met, we left lots of time for questions. While we will have some time for questions this evening, we are looking forward to sharing lots of information with you tonight about:

- Building a Social Emotional Responsible School (Including our Vision and Mission)
- Academics and Courses (including Responsive Classroom)
- Schedule (including a sample)
- Technology
- Busing (With some possible routes)
- PTO Plan
- Library
- Announcement of Portal opening for course selection on April 3.

As we begin I would like you to think about one thing that you are really excited about for your sixth grader as he or she enters the Gibbs. We will share at our tables and then move around the room to share a bit more. This will help you see one example of how a teacher may run a Responsive Classroom Advisory. Thank you for coming tonight! Get ready for a great evening!

Kathleen Bodie, Kristin DeFrancisco, and Wendy Salvatore

Acknowledgment

Please talk at your table about what you are excited about for your child as he or she begins at the Gibbs school. You have about 5 minutes. Be mindful of time. You should use accountable talk. This means you are supportive of others as they share what they are excited about it, even if it is not what you would have chosen.

Listen for the chime. This table will help us model what that will look like.

Activity

For this activity our “Go” word will be Gibbs Sixth Grade School! This activity is called four corners. It groups people that have things in common. It is a great way to meet new friends as well as make a connection with someone you might not have otherwise made. On the next slide you will see the four corner locations and choices. When I say the “Go” word, you will make your corner selection and move to that corner to bond with your new friends over what you all have in common.

Then you will listen for the chime and I will give directions. We will model how to respond to a chime before we head off to this activity.

Although several rounds of this activity are usually used, we will only be doing one round tonight.

Four Corners Round

To the left of the cafeteria entrance: I can't wait to see that movie

To the right of the cafeteria entrance: I can't wait to read that book

To the left of the stage: I can't wait to dig into the DIY project

To the right of the stage: I can't wait to take a nap

Social Emotional Learning

- Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (CASEL)
- Our emotions and relationships affect how and what we learn and how we use what we learn in work, family, and community contexts. On the one hand, emotions can enable us to generate an active interest in learning and sustain our engagement in it. On the other hand, unmanaged stress and poor regulation of impulses interfere with attention and memory and contribute to behaviors disruptive to learning.
- Moreover, learning is an intrinsically social and interactive process. It takes place in collaboration with one's teachers, in the company of one's peers, and with the support of one's family. Relationships are the engine of learning.

Socially and emotionally competent children and youth are skilled in five core areas:

- **They are self-aware.**
- **They are able to regulate their emotions.**
- **They are socially aware.**
- **They have good relationship skills.**
- **They demonstrate responsible decision-making at school, at home, and in the community.**

Steps to develop a school that prioritizes academic, social and emotional learning.

- Develop a [vision](#) that prioritizes academic, social, and emotional learning.
- Conduct an SEL-related [resources and needs assessment](#) to inform goals for schoolwide SEL.
- Design and implement [effective professional learning programs](#) to build internal capacity for academic, social, and emotional learning.
- Adopt and implement [evidence-based programs](#) for academic, social, and emotional learning across all grades.
- [Integrate SEL](#) at all three levels of school functioning (curriculum and instruction, schoolwide practices and policies, family and community partnerships).
- Establish processes to [continuously improve](#) academic, social, and emotional learning through inquiry and data collection.

Develop A Vision

Vision:

The Gibbs Sixth Grade School Community is an environment where students and adults work cooperatively to strive for academic achievement and social-emotional growth. Our community encourages being **Understanding** of each other and what makes us unique, being **Unified** in our efforts to support one another's abilities to grow and learn and being **Unstoppable** when reaching for our personal and community goals.

And in our case..... Ensure the Vision with a Mission

Mission Statement:

In order to inspire and empower students to excel academically while emphasizing their social and emotional growth we will value the following elements in our daily work:

- Academic Rigor: Students experience a challenging, standards-based curriculum.
- Social-Emotional Learning: Students demonstrate resilience and persistence while developing skills related to self-management, social awareness, decision making and relationship building.

- Project Based Learning: Students gain knowledge and and practice skills, including executive functioning, through the completion of projects that are taught and coached through a release of responsibility.
- Resourcefulness: Students become self-directed and independent learners with a growth mindset by identifying and pursuing goals that are important to them.
- Community: Students feel supported and safe emotionally, intellectually, and physically. Staff and students collaborate to create a cohesive sense of significance, belonging and fun using the philosophies and common vocabulary of Responsive Classroom.

- Creativity: Students are encouraged to take creative risks in all areas and are provided with academic choice that allows them to explore their own interests.

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STEPS TWO, THREE and FOUR

- For Arlington as a whole, we have been assessing the need for an integrated social emotional and academic environment for all our students.
- We have decided to use Responsive Classroom and are increasing the amount of teachers that are “RC” certified. This summer there will be two more elementary trainings and an additional Gibbs training.
- For Gibbs specifically, all staff members will be trained when we open our doors in September.

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

The Four Key Domains of Responsive Classroom

Engaging Academics: Adults create learning tasks that are active, interactive, appropriately challenging, purposeful, and connected to students' interests.

Positive Community: Adults nurture a sense of belonging, significance, and emotional safety so that students feel comfortable taking risks and working with a variety of peers.

Effective Management: Adults create a calm, orderly environment that promotes autonomy and allows students to focus on learning.

Developmental Awareness: Adults use knowledge of child development, along with observations of students, to create a developmentally appropriate learning environment.

Guiding Principles for RC Work

1. Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.
2. How we teach is as important as what we teach.
3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. What we know and believe about our students—individually, culturally, developmentally—informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students.
5. How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.
6. Partnering with families—knowing them and valuing their contributions—is as important as knowing the children we teach.

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Step Five Integration of SEL at Three Levels

Social Emotional Competencies	Academic Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Cooperation● Assertiveness● Responsibility● Empathy● Self-Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Academic mindset● Perseverance● Learning Strategies● Academic Behaviors

Classroom Practices and Strategies

The following consists of a set of practices and strategies that build academic and social-emotional competencies. They will be at the heart of our teaching practice. They will also be school wide policies.

- **Interactive Modeling**
- **Teacher Language**
- **Logical Consequences**
- **Interactive Learning Structures**
- **Responsive Advisory Meeting**
- **Investing Students in the Rules**
- **Brain Breaks**
- **Active Teaching**
- **Student Practice**

Advisory Meeting

- Responsive Advisory Meeting serves as an anchor for adolescents, a predictable routine that students need more than ever as they undergo rapid physical, emotional, and intellectual changes. Advisory provides a space and structure for teachers to support middle school students, both individually and as a group, as they develop their sense of self and identity in connection to their relationships with peers.
- For new middle schoolers, consistency is key. While navigating a new building, adjusting to a different schedule, and mastering that right of the passage that is the locker, students find comfort and consistency in Advisory.

Key Purposes Responsive Advisory

- Build student to student affiliation
- energize and re-engage
- reflect & recalibrate
- extend learning through themes
- support academic readiness
- strengthen advisor-advisee relationships
- develop communication and social skills development

Key Components of Responsive Advisory

- **Arrival welcome** – The teacher welcomes each student by name as they enter.
- **Announcements** – In advance, the teacher writes an interactive message and displays it where it can be easily seen and read by all students.
- **Acknowledgments** – In pairs or small groups, students share their responses to a prompt in the announcements message, a piece of news about themselves, or ideas about a topic related to their studies or interests.
- **Activity** – The whole group does a fun, lively activity that's focused on the specific purpose of the meeting

Community Layer

- It is our plan to publish a “Just The Way We Do Things Around Here” resource for parents that explains in detail the work we are doing that you have heard about tonight.
- From that work, we plan to design a family workshop series that will help parents to understand what we do, why we do it that way, where students are developmentally in sixth grade, and how to create the foundation students will need to succeed in their middle school years.
- In your most recent email from me, I included links to the Casel website and the Responsive Classroom website. These are great places to find more details about this work.

Courses

Courses: The course of studies for Gibbs will be included in a 6th, 7th and 8th grade course guideline. We are in the process of making sure the guideline reflects curriculum changes as well as adds in explanations of advisory, project block and elements of Responsive Classroom. As soon as this is available, you will receive both a hard copy and digital access.

Core Courses	Exploratory Courses
Math English Language Arts Science Social Studies	Digital Media Literacy Art Technology Music World Language Project Block (possible content specific options) Advisory Band, Chorus, Orchestra ACE (criterion based) Math 7 (by assessment)

Project Block Philosophy

Project Block:

- During project block children will be in band, chorus, orchestra, or project.
- No matter which of these classes, there will be a set number of skills that children will practice with a release of responsibility philosophy.
- A release of responsibility to the sixth graders means classes will have opportunities for teachers to model and students to practice these skills.
- This means we are combining the skills that we feel like kids need to know and be able to do with a project based experience so that children can practice these skills with authenticity.
- We will release responsibility to the children through direct instruction, guided discovery and interactive modelling. These are RC components.
- It is important that we introduce this experience with a go slow to go fast philosophy.
- This is the idea behind the release of responsibility.
- This is a new kind of learning for students and it is important that they are supported in that.

SCHEDULE

- We have decided to go with a 6 day schedule
- This will allow us to schedule 5 clusters the most efficiently
- There will be 6 periods in four out of the 6 days
- There will be 7 periods in two out of the 6 days
- Students will have ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies each day
- Students will have two other electives a day that will rotate through World Language, Physical Education, Family and Consumer Science, Technology , Art, Music, Digital Media Literacy, ACE.
- On the two 7 period days, the students will have either project block, band, chorus or orchestra added into their day.
- The year will be divided into trimesters.

SCHEDULE CONTINUED

- Students will have an every other day rhythm for specialty classes.
- Students will have a morning advisory that mirrors the advisory experience that you had at the beginning of our forum.
- Students will have a longer last block that will allow for a time at the end of the day for students to reflect, check in with teachers and make plans for at home work.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Advisory	A		A		A	A
Block 1	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
Block 2	World L	T/A/DML	World L	T/A/DML	World L	T/A/DML
Block 3	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
Block 4	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science
Block 5	PE	FACS	Intervention Reading BCO Project	PE	Intervention Reading BCO project	Music
Block 6	S. Studies	S. Studies	S. Studies	S. Studies	S. Studies	S. Studies
Block 7		BCO and Project		BCO and Project		

Technology

- We will have one to one Chromebooks that will have touchscreens.
- We are going to be working on what we specifically teach students to do with technology.
- Technology use will be part of project block and the goal is to teach them to use a certain set of tools that all students will go to 7th and 8th grade prepared to use.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

We have met with the DPW, Arlington Police Department, Shawmut, and Finegold Alexander Architects. In this meeting we:

- Planned drop off spaces for buses and cars.
- Designed bump outs on the Foster street side for parents to pull in and drop off students.
- Decided busses will be using the parking lot to drop off and pick up.
- More specific procedures will be made available as we have them.

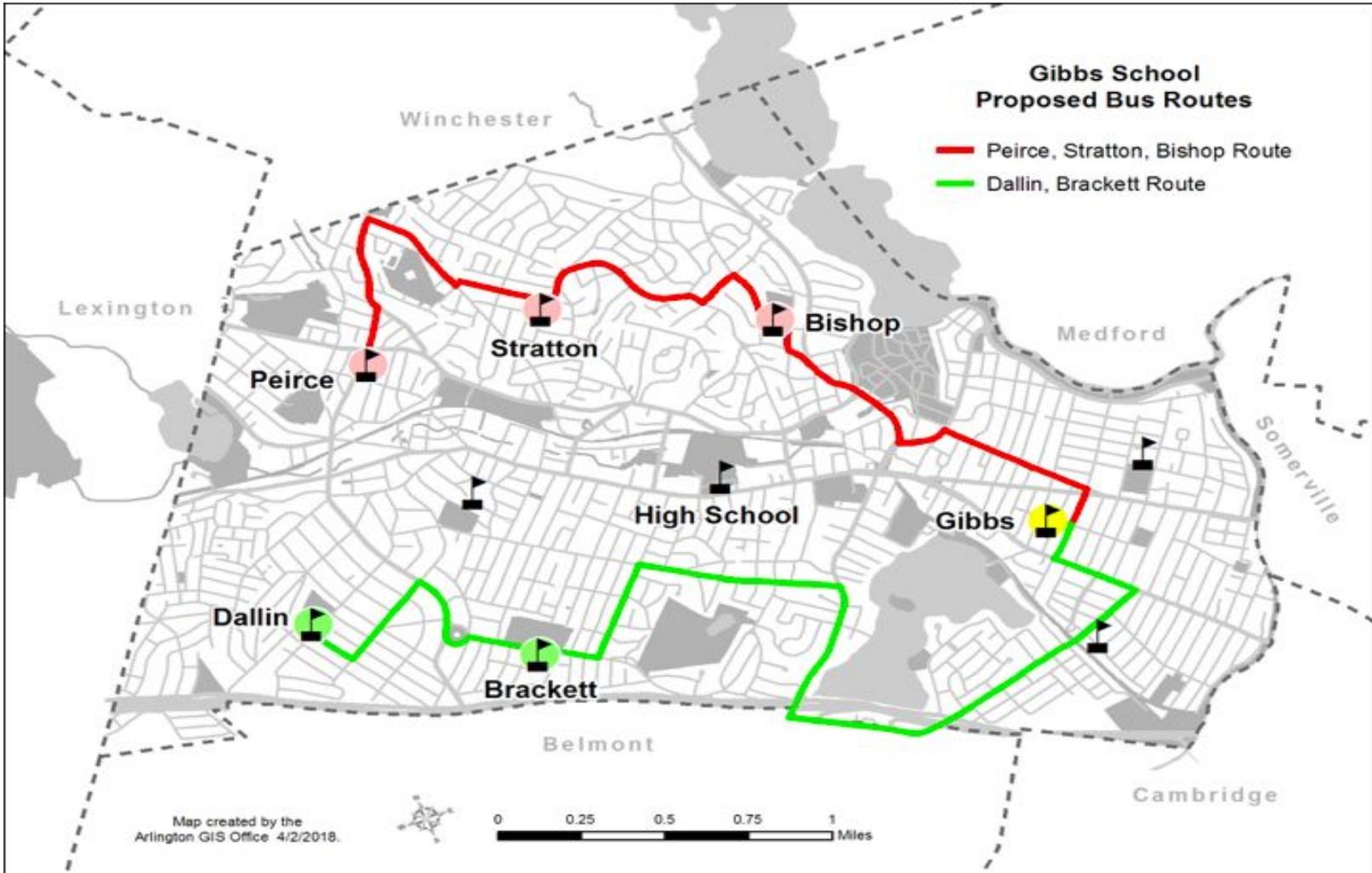
Bus Routes

There will be two buses and each will make two runs, repeating the same route. We will outline these areas on the map.

There will be some room for families that want to pay for bus transportation. (\$270)

Gibbs School Proposed Bus Routes

- Peirce, Stratton, Bishop Route
- Dallin, Brackett Route



Map created by the
Arlington GIS Office 4/2/2018.



PTO PLAN

- I met with the current OPAC
- We have collected ideas from those active in PTO at the elementary level
- We all felt that it would be best to have a parent organization that would be responsible for 6,7 and 8th grade. That said, there will be an effort for us to identify parents of fifth graders that are wanting to serve in this role as parents of sixth graders. We worked to identify some ways that we could have identified seats at the table as a board of members with community members joining the larger body. There were some great ideas that will continued to be explored.
- If you might be interested in serving on this group, please do reach out to Wendy and myself by email.

Library

Donation from the Fenn School

District Funds will be used with our typical vendors and Stacy Kitsis, Library/Media Director, has already reached out to those vendors to help focus our book list

Wendy Salvatore and parent Mariann Hanley will be working on this project and will also be putting together a way for us to accept donations from families based on a wish list.

Finally, on Wednesday, April 11th, The Arlington Community Education organization will be holding a fundraiser and has selected the Gibbs' Library as the recipient of the monies raised. Donations will also be accepted via website.

The PowerSchool Portal

- At this point all fifth grade families should have received a portal letter. That letter contains instructions on how to log on to the PowerSchool portal and enter/update all of your information.
- On April 3rd the portal will open for parents. At this time, parents will help incoming sixth graders decide on a world language choice (Spanish, French, Mandarin or Latin) as well as select band, chorus or orchestra, if so desired.
- The portal will close on April 13th.
- You should have recently received an email with several links to help with this process.

Q&A Questions
Answers