

# 11/14/2018 Parent Advisory Council Meeting

## Compliments, Comments, and Concerns

### Special Education - Mrs. Bridget Schiraldo

No compliments, comments, or concerns.

### Kindergarten - Mrs. Sarah Heller

1. The Go-Math book contents and exercises are good. But if you notice, every question number has a description of what needs to be done at the footer. I think this is a little difficult for the children to comprehend at this age especially because -

a. Each question has multiple parts to it and the children need to go back & forth to fully finish solving them.

b. At an age where the children are just beginning to read, the framing of sentences could definitely be simplified (in my opinion). I can give you examples from the book, if you need.

Description of what needs to be done to solve the question right next to the question number would be easy for the kids to understand.

I know this is a broader issue relating to the publisher. I am not sure if this is the right forum to bring it to notice. If you think this doesn't fit inside your agenda, kindly ignore and pass it along any other forum that you think it would be most appropriate for.

**I am going to pass this to the math supervisor so they can take the opinion into account for the next program evaluation. I will also make the teachers aware of the comment/concern. Written directions encourage parents to complete homework with their kindergarten child.**

**Can the parents view the book online? Yes, parent needs student ID and password. Ask your teacher.**

**Search GoMath to find Think Central K-6: (<https://www-k6.thinkcentral.com/ePC/start.do>)**

**Username = student's ID**

**Password = gomath**

2. Like how the daily activity sheets are sent home, it would be good if the Go-Math sheets are sent home too. This gives an idea of what they are doing in class so that parents don't go too far or too slow with the practice book at home. It gives us a way to talk to our child on "how" they did something (before they forget!) in class and helps us speak the same language if they are stuck with similar issues in the practice book.

I kept asking my daughter if a particular topic was covered in class (showing her the pages from the practice book), she kept saying no!! She was wrong. I mailed the teacher and got to know that they were almost done with the chapter. It was too late for me to make her recollect how a particular thing was taught. I got a cue from the teacher on the approach and tried asking those things to help her recollect ...

**I will share this with the Kindergarten teachers. They are going to discuss and communicate with parents about the practice book. Daily activity sheets are sent home and the homework book is optional. Teachers sometimes complete centers in lieu of a GoMath lesson if they feel it would be more beneficial.**

**1st Grade - Mrs. Nikki Richter.**

No compliments, comments, or concerns.

**2nd Grade - Mrs. Catherine Gilbert**

No compliments, comments, or concerns.

**3rd Grade - Mrs. Barbara Geary**

I am very concerned about the large third-grade class sizes this year. With so many students in each class, it makes it extremely difficult for the students to receive the personalized attention from the teacher that they each need. How is this problem being addressed this year?

**The classes are all within BOE guidelines for size during ELA and math which comprises half the day in school (three hours) and content is one hour. I am working with the grade 3 teachers to look for ways we can enhance the experience of the grade 3 students this year. Mrs. Uhler and I met with the teachers after the October PAC meeting, brought this parental concern to their attention as well, and asked them to think about things we could do to assist them in assisting the students. We are looking at getting individual subscriptions for third-grade students for Reading AtoZ. I have asked the teachers to remove as much extra materials from their rooms. We have math support and ELA support in two different classes which are general education supports for anyone at As we devise more ideas, I will share them.**

Can you please bring up the 5th section of 4th grade for next year? Rumor has it, there will be a 5th section, but if that's the case, then why not add a section now. If you could ask, why this wasn't anticipated originally for the grade.

**I am planning that we will have five grade 4 classes and five grade 5 classes next year. I keep track each month starting in the spring. The classes did not go over the BOE guidelines and so they would not have warranted a fifth section.**

I am writing this email to show my concern about number of kids in few third grade classrooms. Like Ms Nollkamper's class has 27 number of kids which is a lot. I believe school should do something for adding another section for 3rd grade students or distributing them evenly in all the sections.

**Mrs. Nollkamper has 27 in her overall homeroom. In math and ELA she has 19, in content, she has 24. Three other students join her class for lunch, recess, specials, and cultural activities. I am not adding another section in the middle of a school year.**

It is mentioned in the PAC notes that Mr. Ciempola is working with the 3rd grade teachers to enhance the experience. What are some of the specifics and are there any talks of the district providing additional support staff to the classes this year? It is great that there will be 5 sessions for 4th grade, what can be done for the students while they are in 3rd.

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Why have there been so many substitutes for 3rd grade? There were at least 4 days that the teachers were out for meetings or training. This seems to happen every year in every grade thus far. Why are the teachers continuing to get pulled so much? It was my assumption that the many of the 1/2 days were used for training. Is this not an accurate assumption?

**Our third-grade teachers were pulled out a total of three-and-a-half days this year. These pull-out sessions were for TCI training, district writing sample scoring, dyslexia training, and Scootpad training. This is similar to the other grade levels. Generally, the abbreviated inservice days are used for trainings that apply to the entire district.**

**4th Grade - Mrs. Nicole Henderson**

**No compliments, comments, or concerns.**

**5th Grade - Mrs. Danielle Kahm**

1. Is there a teacher monitoring the door on the side when students are entering early? Student council, Band, Choir, .....

**Not at this point. We haven't had a problem all these years. I will speak with the music teachers about their thoughts on it and if they perceive it as a problem, what might be possible solutions. Many students use the front entrance. Lock side door at 7:40 am.**

2. Happy with the Platooning and the way the teachers are handling things. They have made great improvements. Not sure about the new library color...

**Thanks for the compliment about platooning. The fifth-grade team is working very hard.**

**I have no idea what this person means about the library color.**

3. Personnel concern

**Please, direct parent to the teacher to resolve concern.**

4. The Philly trip seemed to be enjoyed by all students. The only improvement we can make moving on would be to have a schedule the chaperones should follow. There was a significant amount of free time that the chaperones had to use to occupy the students. If this is going to be the format moving forward then the chaperones should be notified of the "free time" Schedule so they can do some advanced prep for the group.

**I will give this feedback to the 5th grade teachers.**

**We spoke with Mrs. Perdek who was one of the main organizers of the trip. As far as the free time goes, the teachers supply parents with a map of the museum and a list of all of possible exhibits to visit. Parents were encouraged to visit the Liberty Bell. There is a structured video that all students attend, as well as a trolley tour. The teachers will look at the parent feedback here to plan a scavenger hunt type activity for those who are looking for a more formalized plan.**

Also, Some of the trolly's that were used were not able to be seen out of. This made the 1 ½ hour ride through philly difficult when you couldn't refer to what the guide was talking about. A large advertisement was covering the windows from the inside.

**I will relay this to the teachers planning the trip.**

**Mrs. Perdek requested a partial refund for that particular trolley and is working with the trolley company and have lodged a formal complaint! During the trip, the trolley company was called from the site and asked to send out the different trolley, but unfortunately there were none available.**

Sorry for delay. I have a growing concern for "grade anxiety" this year. We had not noticed this in previous years with our son however this year it is truly growing and at times creating additional challenges. It also initiates new conversations that part appeals to us.

So once upon a time you sent your child to school prepared with tools pencil, paper, positive attitude, and constant reminders to be a good listener and do their very best. WE have tried to not set "grade" expectations beyond "doing your best" if you have done the reading done the assigned work then you have likely done your best. I have never seen our son so interested in finding out the results of test he took ten minutes ago or filling himself with angst over "how it went". I am not sure if it is just a new sense of self age appropriately being discovered and then up to us to help him manage or if it is being cultivated by him and his peers or by his peers and his teachers? Is he confusing the messages? Write the assignment down, complete the assignment,(follow rubric do not short cut) hand in the assignment, earn the grade you deserve?

WE believe that while expecting their very best it does not mean losing sleep over an assignment and there has been more than one occasion that falling asleep is an issue over a test or an assignment. I just want to feel secure knowing that while we can expect more from our district and we know that our students can handle "more" that we are also filling them with confidence and not just more and more expecting the very best results. IF we want more lets be sure they have the tools if they have the tools lets be sure they have the confidence to produce the results.

Long winded is just one of my specialties: It would be helpful to know that while our 5th grade students are learning to multitask and manage a task calendar with future assignments and they are being more accountable that we are providing them with positive words to help them get their best results: I know we have a lot to do this week verses "I know this week is overwhelming".

Is there a group exercise that they can do for ten minutes talk about what makes them "overwhelmed" in 5th grade maybe in written form as you just never know what they might share. Then the teaching team knows the spectrum of emotions? Perhaps if they know they do not feel alone they can feel like a team who is looking to do their best? I just think it feeds into the positivity we want them to feel as academic achievers as positive peer role models, that while we ask for more we support them so they know we believe they can do it. That it is not some crazy experiment to see how much they can handle for they break or tip over into tears. If they can share how they relieve their stress or teachers can share ideas of how to reduce home work of assignment angst

they look up to their teachers. They adore them all. They like peeking inside their lives current or younger. Way more so than when we say "when we were young".

Hoping this makes sense and that it is felt in more than one household.

Please do not reduce this to us not feeling like high expectations are unreasonable and having a sense of a degree of anxiety is not "normal" or "expected" as time goes on. I am trying to get a sense of how "normal" it is that our student is feeling a new sense of "pressure" and I want to be able to positively soothe this and take him to the "next level" to achieve even more all in healthy ways.

**I will forward this concern to the 5th grade for their input. I don't believe the 5th grade team's expectations are any different than in the in past. I don't know if this is a side effect of platooning, but we will explore this and see if we can work with students to reduce the anxiety. The teachers do morning meetings where they discuss these types of topics. Parents with concerns should always contact their child's teacher.**

**Mrs. Kahm - During health, teachers discussed HW concerns with students that were brought up as last month's PAC meetings. Students reflected on their classroom and HW habits and were encouraged to alert their teachers if they had HW concerns. Extra credit options have been made available to students.**

**We try to achieve a healthy balance in terms of managing stress and healthy struggles. This dates back to The Gift of Failure PTO book talk last year.**