

GRAHAM & PARKS



GRAHAM & PARKS ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL • EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

44 Linnaean St
Cambridge, MA 02138
617.349.6577

www.cpsd.us/gap

SCHOOL HOURS:

8:25am–2:25pm

Sarah Fiarman

sfiarman@cpsd.us
PRINCIPAL

Barry McNulty

bmcnulty@cpsd.us
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Judy Amendola

jamendola@cpsd.us
FAMILY COORDINATOR

Front cover: "Education is Liberation/The Rosa Parks Mural," located in the former Graham & Parks building at 44 Upton Street. Mural and photo by David Fichter.

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GRAHAM & PARKS

WELCOME TO THE GRAHAM & PARKS ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

The mission of Graham & Parks is to educate the whole child: to help every child in our school fully develop his or her unique intellectual, social, and emotional capabilities.

At our school, parents, teachers, students, and administrators work together to ensure that all children have the skills they need to be successful, contributing citizens of our city and world. At G&P, children become strong and passionate readers and writers. They learn to approach mathematics, science, and history with curiosity and confidence. In their frequent collaborative work, they learn to approach differences with openness rather than apprehension and practice solving problems through diplomacy, empathy, and persistence.

We strive to model this same work as an adult community, seeking out and valuing differences of opinion and perspective so that our school serves all its families. The school-family partnership at G&P is something we live every day—teachers treat parents as respected colleagues and families learn to see the school as a trusted partner in parenting.

At Graham & Parks, we seek to practice what we preach to our students. We tell children they have something valuable to learn from each and every child in their class. We believe the same is true for everyone in our community. We hope you'll join us—we have something to learn from you!

SINCERELY,

The Graham & Parks Community

(l. to r.) Principal Sarah Fiarman, Assistant Principal Barry McNulty, and Steering Committee co-chairs Sarah Manz (teacher) and Lace Campbell (parent)





“WE ARE A SCHOOL
FOR ALL KIDS
FROM ALL FAMILIES.”





OUR HISTORY & TRADITIONS

The Graham & Parks Alternative Public School was founded in the early 1970s by parents and teachers who sought a child-centered alternative to the traditional schools then prevalent in Cambridge. Our belief in education as a partnership between parents and teachers remains central to our community.

Our school is named for two strong women (pictured top left) who inspire our commitment to diversity, equality, and respect for all: Rosa Parks, an inspiration for the modern civil rights movement, and Sandra Graham, a former Cambridge city councilor and Massachusetts legislator who championed economic justice for all.





THE GRAHAM & PARKS TRADITION OF “ALTERNATIVE” EDUCATION INCLUDES:

- engaging children’s natural curiosity about the world around them;
- helping children to achieve high standards in ways that fit their individual learning styles;
- honoring the unique experiences and perspectives of children from diverse homes and families;
- shared decisionmaking by parents, teachers, and administrators about important school issues.





“I love the field trips and projects.” – G&P student

TEACHING & LEARNING AT GRAHAM & PARKS

The educational program at Graham & Parks is highly individualized, with an emphasis on teaching the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in creative ways. Our teachers consider the individual learning styles of each and every child in designing the curriculum and working with students to adapt it to each child's needs, in pursuit of academic success for all students.

“Project-based learning” is an example of the kind of teaching and learning G & P teachers and students pursue. In project-based learning, students apply academic skills to real-world problems, see the connections between different subjects, and learn to work with others. Project-based learning at G&P is both engaging and rigorous.

As part of our alternative philosophy, we supplement standardized tests with other forms of assessment including portfolios, performances, and presentations. We use all of these assessments to ensure intellectual rigor and high standards for all.





THE K-8 EXPERIENCE

The K-8 experience for Graham & Parks students is carefully structured to provide classroom settings that are appropriate for different ages and grade levels and to create a schoolwide community. We have traditional single-grade classrooms, multi-grade classrooms, and “looping” classrooms (students remain with the same teacher and the same classmates for two years), depending on grade level.

To support the development of community identity, G&P offers many opportunities for older and younger students to work together; for example, our middle school students pair with kindergartners as Reading Buddies, and the Beyond the Fourth Wall musical theater program brings together students in grades 3 thru 8—acting, building sets, working on tech crew.

Our distinctive middle-school program is the capstone to a G&P education. It combines single- and multi-grade classes to facilitate grade-appropriate instruction, cooperative learning, and a strong sense of community.





FROM KINDERGARTEN THRU 8TH GRADE, A G&P EDUCATION EMPHASIZES:

- Genuine curiosity
- Ownership of knowledge
- High-quality work
- Critical thinking
- Being a compassionate and active member of your community and society

“At Graham & Parks, you put your hardest into whatever you’re doing. You know it’s your *top* work.” – G&P student



WE VALUE OUR RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIVERSITY BECAUSE
WE BELIEVE IT PROVIDES THE RICHEST
ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.

OUR COMMUNITY

At Graham & Parks we build a strong school community around the key values of respect, trust, honesty, and caring. These principles inform our interactions with one another—students, teachers, administrators, staff, and parents—both inside and outside the classroom. We value our racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity because we believe it provides the richest academic and social learning environment for all students.

Our teachers, administrators, parents, and staff respect one another's knowledge, competencies, and particular areas of responsibility. Parents, teachers, and administrators serve together on our Steering Committee to make important decisions about our school.

Together, adults and children at G&P seek to build a school community to which all of us contribute what we can and in which everyone's contributions are valued.



SOME SPECIAL EVENTS:

- World Foods Potluck
- G&P October Fest
- Spring Musical
- Spring Book Fair & Ice Cream Social
- Teacher & Parent Talent Show





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