Menlo Park District Council Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2016

The meeting was called to order by District Council President, Kate Kennedy, at 8:51am.

Opening Remarks
Kate Kennedy began by introducing this year's District Council members.

Approval of June 2016 minutes – Jody Buckley motioned to approve the minutes. Janelle McCombs seconded motion. All in favor. Motion was passed.

Treasurer's Report - Gina Skinner

Gina Skinner presented a summary of the District Council Budget for 2016-17.
· District Council dues will be assessed soon. Dues include two parts: Joint Campaign and District Council. This year, dues will be collected at one time again, rather than in two separate assessments. Joint campaign dues will be $1 per student/family, and after analysis of the District Council's financial position, Gina Skinner confirmed that assessing dues of only $100 per school and the Foundation (instead of $1 per student/family) would be adequate to cover expected expenses for 2016-17.
· The 2016-17 budget did not change from last school year, except the addition of $1,000 from each school (Oak Knoll, Encinal, Laurel and Hillview) which will be used to help sponsor the speaker series during 2016-17.
· Joint Campaign expenses of approximately $3,500 that were not spent during 2015-16 for the district mailer (which was instead sent via email) resulted in a higher carryover to the 2016-17 school year. Following discussion, the Board agreed to wait until next month to invoice the schools and Foundation for dues until the Joint Campaign has a better idea of what their expenses will be.

Kate Kennedy motioned to approve the revised Menlo Park District Council 2016-17 Budget. Stacy Dekshenieks seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Hot Lunch – Desiree Voigt, District Lunch Programs Coordinator

Lunch Master, the new hot lunch vendor, was launched yesterday on the first day of school. Feedback was that the food was enjoyed and the launch was overwhelmingly successful, although there are a few issues that the vendor will work through. Everyone is encouraged to try the new hot lunch food.
· We switched vendors to get better food for our kids, not to take money for the district.
· They are also a catering company and available for school and community events, as long as profit is made.
· Over 35 kids and parent volunteers showed up at the hot lunch kitchen tour on Tuesday to try the food and tour the kitchen.
· Lunch Master embraces a farm to table ethos and their vegetables are organic (grown in Gilroy).
· 2nd graders can take a field trip to the farm, with Lunch Masters even paying for the buses.

· Question about how to address running out of fruit and vegetables: will educate kids to not take more than they can eat.

The Board thanked Desiree Voight for all her hard work, and she in turn thanked Isabel Okere and everyone who helped out to make this transition possible.

District Directory – Ken Wang

Progress has been made to make the District Directory electronic. Ken presented a proposed new look for the directory, and options for implementing an online version of the directory were discussed.

· It's possible a PDF version could be printed from the online directory.
· The online directory (including a mobile version) would be accessed via a link on the District website.
· The first iteration of the online directory would not include the ability to sort by group, e.g. room parent listings, but it could be possible to create a pdf of this type of information.
· The directory team is asking for feedback – each school has a directory lead/representative.

Superintendent Update and Q&A – Maurice Ghysels

Superintendent Maurice Ghysels discussed the meaning and purpose of District Council, which includes many groups, including the Superintendent, School Board, School Principals, Foundation and PTO leadership. The Council meets monthly to share news and exchange ideas. His presentation included the following slides:

Slide: Mission and Vision
· Every year, start with a mission and a vision
Slide: Goals for 2016-17 - Teaching and Learning
· Utilizing teachers teaching teachers, a mastery approach to learning from K-8
· Continue to focus on instruction and technology
Slide: Goals for 2016-17 - Talent
Slide: Goals for 2016-17 - Wellness
· Menlo Park School District focuses on growth mindset and provides an incredibly positive climate
Slide: Goals for 2016-17 - Technology
· Apple Distinguished Award – K-8
Slide: Goals for 2016-17 - Facilities, Transportation and OPS
· Upper Laurel Campus - Grand opening date soon
Slide: Goals for 2016-17 - Achieve Long Term Financial Stability
· School Board meeting on September 13 to look at the Parcel Tax this year
Slide: Goals for 2016-17 –K-12 Vertical Experience
· Look at Early Learning Education (ELE) facilities
· Work with M-A to grow ongoing initiatives
· Partnership with Stanford, Sequoia UHSD and its leaders for the K-12 experience

Mr. Ghysels stated that it is time for him to pass on the reigns of leadership. He expressed his excitement and joy, and said he's ready to move to the next phase of his career.

Assistant Superintendent Update - Erik Burmeister

Mr. Burmeister thanked Kate Kennedy, Gina Skinner, Principals and PTO presidents, as well as Calla Griffith, for their support of the initiative to re-tool the logistics and funding of the Speaker Series. He stated that all school sites are on board to host one Speaker Series event this year.

The fall speaker series will begin in October. Everyone District family will be mailed a postcard containing details on each of the Speaker Series events for the first half of the year. The first two events will be held at Hillview, and Encinal will host the third event. The fall events will be about digital citizenship and digital health. My Digital TAT2 is an annual event, and is part of strategic directions about digital health. TAT2 is geared toward an adult audience, but kids can attend (suggest 5th grade and up).

The Speaker Series is coordinated by District Council Programming Chair Singari Seshadri, in partnership with Erik Burmeister.

School Board Update – Stacey Jones

Stacey Jones, School Board Vice-President, expressed gratitude to Mr. Ghysels for all that he's achieved during his tenure as Superintendent. She said there are plans to meet on the process to find his replacement.

She announced that the terms of Trustees Jeff Child and Maria Hilton are ending this year, and a number of qualified and passionate candidates are running for their seats on the School Board.

Jeff Child, School Board President, encouraged everyone to attend the School Board candidates forum on September 29th in the Hillview PAC, from 7-8:30 pm. It will be a moderated format, giving community members the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates.

MPAEF Update - Jennifer Dalmas, MPAEF Co-President

· Jennifer introduced herself as the new co-President of the Foundation. She discussed the $3.7 million goal, which reflects the increase in enrollment in the district this year. She and co-president Alka Gupta are excited about the higher target and the Foundation's plans to achieve this.
· Near term, the goals are to support the Joint Campaign and work with the PTO at various Back-to-School coffees and information nights to support the Joint Campaign. November 4th is the end of the MPAEF fundraising campaign.
· Looking ahead to October: Foundation representatives will be present curbside at schools. There is a Dineout event scheduled for October 24-25th and an event on October 18th.

· The MPAEF auction is scheduled for March 25, 2017, and the MPAEF Run is scheduled for May 21, 2017. The Foundation is excited to work with Willy Haug to change the run route, as well as the length to possibly involve more of the community.
· Currently no date for the holiday boutique this year. There was a venue change and although many in our district look forward to this event, there is discussion about alternate events and possibly bringing it back in the future and finding resources to support the event.
· Remember to support MPAEF when you shop: https://mpaef.org/shop-mpaef-home.

School Updates

Hillview – Willy Haug, Principal
· Mr. Haug began discussing the successful check-in luau and thanked Jody and Julie and everyone who came out to make it a great day. The luau is logistically challenging, and despite staggering arrival windows, there are always busy periods.
· Wednesday, August, 31, before school started, the new parent orientation for incoming 6th-grade parents took place. The WEB leaders helped with Camp Hillview that day as well.
· 971 students per Powerschool is above projection and 50 students are new to the district this year. There was some attrition from 5th to 6th grade, but with 50 new students, not sure how many actual families are new.
· Mr. Haug discussed the school theme to make staff trainings fun – Mission Possible – Inspire and Empower.
· He then discussed LCAP. Hillview's site council will be looking at wellness and parent engagement, which is different at each site, before presenting to the Board.
· Hillview is working on analyzing grading practices, increasing feedback to students, mastery mindset, and trying to empower students. 24 different teachers attended a sound grading conference in Portland. The effort is grass roots and teachers are given tools, but implementation is not mandatory. There is also a Mastery Center that students can go to. There are teachers who would like to promote a mastery mindset and make themselves available to help students.
· Another goal in LCAP is addressed with the Personalized Learning Academy (PLA). The new 6th grade PLA implements the Summit-based personalized learning platform. We will see what the results are to assess whether it is a successful pilot. The PLA does not focus on tools, but more directed about promoting self-directed learners and increasing student engagement to proceed at their own pace. Project-based learning is a large part of the academy. The one concern is to ensure that academic outcomes are the same as other academies and if so, to see if the PLA is successful and scalable.

Hillview PTO – Jody Buckley and Julie Nelson, Co-Presidents
Nothing additional to note.

Encinal – Sharon Burns, Principal
· Ms. Burns discussed Encinal's amazing first day of school. The PTO planned a great opening day with vendors and steel drums.
· Encinal had a traffic and safety launch.

· This year the theme is belonging and community. The goal is to have students and parents feel connected. An email was sent to parents to solicit emails back about their first day experience.
· Most staff are trying Seesaw. Students provide feedback directly to parents. This free app was piloted by many teachers last year and trying to scale that with the rest of the staff.
· Team Time is being implemented by a new PE teacher from Hillview. Entire grade levels go to the multi and participate in different activities for 15 minutes. All elementary schools are piloted to launch Team Time this year.

Encinal PTO – May Matsui, Encinal PTO Co-President
Encinal had a busy back to school coffee, and she discussed having lots of new volunteers.

Laurel – Ellen Kraska, Assistant Principal
· Ellen discussed how exciting and transformational it will be to have Kindergarten through 5th grade at Laurel. The expectation is to have the 3, 4, 5 grades move to the Upper Campus on October 17th.
· There are over 20 new staff members this year. Ellen gave a huge shout out to the maintenance and facilities, parents, teachers, and PTO for working together to embrace the mantra that we are patient and positive. She also thanked the PTO and Joe for the luncheon and Back to School coffee.
· Everyone is adjusted to the staggered start times. K-2 has an alternate bell schedule from the 3-5 grades.
· Project-based learning (PBL) work has been ongoing. Teachers piloted educational models and over 96% of the teachers want to implement some form of PBL. There was training in San Mateo in PBL design. The various components of PBL were discussed (e.g., Challenging Opportunity, Authenticity, Inquiry). Two teams at each grade level with topics like composting (1st grade) and citizenship (Kindergarten).
· Huge thank you to Desiree Voight for her help with the new lunch program.
· Looking ahead: September 19th is Outdoor Education and looking for any high schools to be cabin leaders. The earlier date and finding high schoolers was discussed.
· Questions about the October 17th opening were discussed.

Laural PTO - Joe LeCava, Laurel PTO President
The first day of school was a little chaotic with lots of people in a small place, but it began smoothly. Joe thanked everyone for being patient and positive.

Oak Knoll – Leah Kessler, Vice Principal
· Oak Knoll welcomed 730 families, with over 20 new families.
· The parents were very excited to attend the PTO Coffee on the first day of school with many sign-ups.
· With lots of changes in staffing at Oak Knoll, there was much discussion about a shared vision among the Oak Knoll staff. Everyone is really excited about this vision. An example is the new homework policy, and having the teachers come up with a collective agreement about what the policy should be. This was a powerful experience with feedback from the entire staff.
· Staff development day was spent working on restorative practices. Everyone is working hard to increase the sense of community.

· Leah discussed that in the last four years, there has been an annual theme. However, this year, Oak Knoll will have a Motivated Me challenge each trimester. These challenges will focus on our mission and each grade level will have different ways to who that they have done something toward this.
· Leah discussed how Oak Knoll has moved away from looping 4th and 5th grades, and has held discussions about what they wanted Oak Knoll 5th graders to be when they went to Hillview.
· Executive functioning and growth mindset at Oak Knoll was discussed, as was the possibilities for the stretch period at the end of the day.
· Leah ended by discussing the change in the schedule at Oak Knoll with fewer pullouts from class and more time to meaningfully build programs. The 5th graders also will be going through a little boot camp to increase community building.

Oak Knoll PTO - Janelle McCombs, Oak Knoll PTO President

The PTO hosted a great Kinder Welcome with treasure maps of the campus, a New Family Ice Cream Social and held the annual PTO Back to School coffee on the first day of school.

Joint Campaign Update – Calla Griffith and Jody Buckley

· Jody thanked the PTO Presidents, the Foundation and all principals for their help with the Joint Campaign, particularly the school principals for allowing the team to be on campuses curbside to raise awareness and remind parents to donate.
· Jody discussed the new logo and the new stickers being distributed at the campuses. The Joint Campaign messaging is being circulated in PTO newsletters, in the superintendent update, included in letters to teachers about wearing their Joint Campaign stickers on Back to School night, and in letters to room parent leads.
· There were huge cost savings this year. This year school teams saved money as the community report was sent digitally. There is a great Back to School video that helps to describe who we are and what we do – this was produced at a very low cost.
· Questions and discussion about publicizing class participation and displaying participation thermometers. This year, nothing was given to students for contributing; the message is to give in order to support what the funds do for our schools.
· The new video will be given to the teachers on Monday.

Closing Remarks

Kate Kennedy, District Council President, adjourned the meeting at 10:22 am.