



HARWICH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL
MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2020
2:45-3:45 pm

MINUTES

- [Representative](#) Introduction (Share your name, connection to HES, favorite memory from elementary school)
 - Present: Mary Oldach, Sharon Hughes, Joy Jordan, Jessica Muldoon, Justin Tavano, Angie Porter, John Larivee, Kathie Smith, Ann Carpenter, Karen Booth, Meg Shaffer, Pat Smith, Julia Blois. Absent: Katie Cloney, Sheila House
 - Mary welcomed new and returning members of the School Council; members introduced themselves and shared elementary school memories of their own
 - Mary noted that there was one more parent opening on the council and that she had been talking with Kara Boule about taking that spot
- Mary opened by reviewing the role of the School Council:
 - Advisory role to principal
 - Adopting educational goals
 - Identifying educational needs
 - Reviewing the annual budget
 - Formulating the school improvement plan
- School Update
 - COVID Reopening
 - HES currently has 506 students PK-4th; 135 distance learners, 371 in-person learners (that number is shifting as a few families opt to shift to in-person. 24 ELL students who speak 9 different languages
 - 152 students ride the bus with 219 caregivers driving students, new arrival and dismissal procedures and locations have been added to streamline the process
 - HES instructional design is focusing on identifying gaps in learning, increasing student engagement, and using ‘just in time’ learning. Identifying gaps and bringing students up to speed as needed.
 - Teachers use landing pages to organize class information and be able to pivot to remote if needed
 - HES to date has no positive COVID cases. Many students and staff have been tested for various reasons but none have been positive so far.
 - HES is now fully 1:1 for Chromebooks for grades 1-4
 - Project-based learning - started in the spring in Distance Learning 2.0. Goal is to engage students and reduce screen time. PBL is

now integrated into all grade levels for both in-person and distance learners. Students engage with voice and choice -pick a topic, research it, share what they've learned. Strengthens academics and "soft" skills.

- PCL themes this year are:
 - Preschool: autumn
 - Kindersagen: fairy tales
 - Grade 1: patterns in the sky
 - Grade 2: Author Tomie DePaola
 - Grades 3 and 4: Disney/the history of chocolate
- All PBL units are fully integrated across the academic disciplines
- Mary showed photos of the learning environments for both in-person and distance learners
- Safety protocols for in-person learners - focus on the cohort model where each group/class of students stays together and doesn't intermingle. Each class has a designated outdoor space for class/break, which is separate from other recess areas. Specialists come to the classroom and the students remain in their classrooms
- Meals are eaten in the classroom or outdoors. All meals are free for all students this year. Breakfast is grab and go on their way in, lunches are delivered to the classroom. Hot lunches are slowly being introduced when possible.
- No visitors or volunteers are allowed in the school buildings right now
- Mary shared photos of how the specialists are visiting classrooms and that students are not sharing art supplies, etc. Librarian Sarah Idman is working to create a system for students to visit the library and check out books.
- Mary shared more photos of socially distanced classrooms, outdoor classes, and recess fun
- Playground update: Harwich Town Meeting voted last month to approve \$500,000 in Community Preservation Commission grant funding for the playground. It is now a town of Harwich project as the town owns the property. Town officials are working on planning and procurement now. HES has \$82,000 to contribute to the project from PTO fundraisers and other funds. The hope is to be in construction by April or May if things move along well. Ideally all will be ready for the first day of school in fall 2021.
- Budget update: The FY21 budget was obviously greatly affected by COVID, with expenses including extra teachers for distance learning classes, extra protective materials, student supplies, etc. Looking toward FY22, it will be a level funded budget - same number, which due to inflation translates to a small reduction. Looking at a new ELL curriculum that would be about \$8-9,000.
- Questions: Jessica asked about the playground funding - what happens if the funds fall short of what's needed? Mary noted that Justin had identified some areas that local tradespeople may be able to offer in-kind work for, also some things will be handled by the town departments now. Some additional fundraising will be needed by a community group (such as a Friends of the Harwich Community Playground).
- [MRSD Strategic Plan](#) - developed in 2018 after a focus group of 100+ parents, students, teachers, staff, community members, etc., shared input, and then each

school (supported by the school council) creates its own School Improvement Plan that supports the Strategic Plan while focusing on the individual needs of each school

- 2020-2021 School Improvement Plan - brainstorm priority areas - Strategic Plan main objectives include: expand community engagement and partnerships; strengthen social and emotional wellbeing; close the achievement gap; and improve curriculum, assessment, and instruction for all learners.
 - Current HES SIP was written in 2018 by the School Council at that time; latest version was delayed by COVID.
 - Asked current school council to brainstorm new priorities for next SIP:
 - Karen - look to the experience of distance learning to get insight into families and how to connect and what's working and incorporate that into the plan. Mary, Sharon, Pat, and Julia expanded on how the school engaged with families in the spring and now. Parents shared thoughts on spring DL and the need for parent involvement
 - Mary will start a draft SIP taking into account the last one as well as COVID issues and items discussed by school council
- Co-Chair opening - Mary is co-chair and another is needed in case she is unavailable; request for volunteers? Kathie Smith, who was co-chair last year, volunteered for the role again this year.
- Open comments: Kathie asked about Make Way for Kids and whether it may return post-COVID. Mary shared that the YMCA is now an official Head Start partner and will have Head Start programs at HES to support underserved and low-income/working families. Mary expressed thanks for the Make Way program and those who launched it many years ago. Mary also noted that Lucy Gilmore is available to support early childhood families.
- Mary thanked the attendees and noted the upcoming meeting schedule listed below.

Meeting Schedule:

December 7

January 18

March 1

April 12

May 17