

School Council Minutes
November 25, 2019

In Attendance:

Mark Wilson, principal
Sarah Cortese, teacher
Sally Davol, teacher
Mike Schaffer, teacher
Wyatt Sullivan, teacher
Maegan Storey, parent
Joy Jordan, parent

Unavailable:

Doreen Escher, parent
Michael Newby, teacher
Emily Milan, parent
Diane Nash, parent
Kim Robbins, parent

The meeting opened with school council members reviewing and unanimously approving, with one abstention, the minutes from its meeting on October 28th.

The meeting continued with school council members receiving an introductory briefing on Student Judiciary Board / Youth Court, a potential alternative to traditional disciplinary procedures where students, once trained, serve as jurors for minor disciplinary offenses committed by their peers. The judicial process is intended to build student leadership skills and empower students to take on a more active role in upholding a positive school climate. A key role of youth court is to determine appropriate consequences for the offender so that justice is restored / amends are made. In his role as School Resource Officer, Sgt. Massey will be researching schools and districts where this model has been put into practice, with the goal of providing our MRMS school council with a sample “youth court” handbook, along with language for the student-parent handbook that we can consider for adoption or amending. School council members are encouraged to conduct research as well and to bring their research to the next school council meeting on December 16th.

The meeting shifted to a review of the winter clubs brochure, highlighted by new offerings such as:

- **PRIDE** to help create a sense of community and a safe space for LGBT students and straight allies by building a social support network where all identities are respected and accepted
- **Monomoy Reads Out Loud** to create audio files for teachers and students at MRMS by voice recording and uploading a reading to Google Drive, complete with sound effects if needed
- **MasterKinds** to spread kindness at Monomoy with students carrying out random acts of kindness all over the school

In addition to these inclusive, service-oriented offerings, school council members were also briefed on the pair of competitive Lego Robotics teams at MRMS, which will be headed off-cape to UMASS-Dartmouth this upcoming weekend (Sunday, December 8th) to compete with approximately 450 other Lego Robotics teams statewide. Our two teams are the only representatives from the Cape and the Islands, as this region has focused more on the VEX platform than the LEGO platform.

The meeting continued with a summary of concerns and questions generated by the superintendent’s “Listening Tour” on November 18th that are relevant to middle-school:

- School council members commented favorably about the “platooning” currently in place at grade 4 in CES, with students having one teacher for science and math and another for English and history. School council members appreciated the instructional effectiveness of the model AND posited that it will lead to a smoother transition between grade 4 and grade 5.
- School council members agreed in principle that cellphones – and other parent-student communication devices for younger students at elementary and middle school – are generally ill-advised as they frequently contribute to student discipline. They were also interested to hear about the “Wait until Eighth” national campaign that recommends delaying the purchase of a cellphone until the child enters 8th grade. More info here: <https://www.waituntil8th.org/>

- School council members recognized and acknowledged the challenges associated with sponsoring, coordinating, and financing grade-level, out-of-state, or overseas field trips, outings, or travel opportunities, and expressed appreciation for staff members who take on these voluntary tasks.

The meeting continued with school council members receiving a briefing on Spring 2019 MCAS results, along with an explanation of where MRMS stands relative to other Cape and Island middle schools AND “like schools” from across Massachusetts as reflected in DART (DESE’s District Analysis Review Tool). Presentation can be found here: [School Council - Analyzing School Practices - 11.25.19](#). Based on this data, the school has determined student writing should remain as a focal point for instruction in all content area, and will be making use of BrainFrames areas to promote stronger organization and explanation in student narratives, expositions, and arguments.

The meeting concluded with school council members receiving an update on the 2020-21 budget, which includes the following strategic requests:

- Funds in the district budget to run a “reverse express bus” in the AM that would enable students to catch “community-bus-stops” to school for AM clubs and help sessions
- \$15,000 to purchase textbooks and ancillary resources for grade 6 and 7 Geography and History
- \$10,000 to purchase new computers/laptops for both STEM classrooms
- Removed from the budget was a request to add a third counselor at MRMS so that each could “loop” with a grade level and provide support over each student’s time in middle school

The school council set its next meeting date for Monday, December 16th at 3:30 PM and then adjourned at 4:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Wilson