

School Council Minutes
February 25, 2019

In attendance:

Mark Wilson, principal
Michael Schaffer, teacher
Wyatt Sullivan, teacher
Michael Schaffer, teacher
Nicole Moniz, parent
Michael Newby, teacher
Sarah Cortese, teacher
Diane Nash, parent
Joy Jordan, parent
Kim Robbins, parent
Doreen Escher, parent

Unavailable:

Emily Milan, parent
Cheri Armstrong, teacher

The meeting opened with school council members reviewing and unanimously approving, with two abstentions, the minutes from its meeting on January 28, 2019.

The school council meeting continued with a discussion revolving around how our school might make use of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) standards for Marine Science and Aquaculture to create a “themed pathway” that would shape our school’s identity and provide a potential source of recurring revenue through Chapter 74 funding and/or substantial grant funding for an either an extended day or an extended school year program.

Mark Wilson provided school council members with an overview of the curricular standards associated with the CTE program. These include an in-depth study of: Oceanographic Concepts; Invertebrates; Mammals; Aquariums; Fish; Aquaculture; and Birds and Reptiles. The topics are consistent with the school’s established focus on instructional units that take advantage of local history and the environment.

At present, MRMS Science, STEM, and other interested teachers are developing seminar courses around these topics, and some of these courses will be offered during fourth quarter of this year. The courses will be heterogeneous in nature, designed to serve students from a wide range of abilities based on their personal interest. To preserve the strength of our intervention program, course sizes will be kept relatively low (12-15) so students who struggle with literacy can receive additional coaching and support while they work through the material and produce cogent expository and/or opinion pieces.

In addition, five MRMS staff members – Mark Wilson, Michael Schaffer, Matt Barnes, Michael Newby, and Gordon Napier – are currently pursuing certification as aquaculture farmers through Barnstable County’s “Fundamentals of Shellfish Farming” course, and eight-week program offered by the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension Marine Program in partnership with the Woods Hole Sea Grant. Upon completion, the team will be able to apply for a shellfish grant so the school can provide practical,

hands-on, authentic experiences for students and staff as we collectively shepherd shellfish from spat to harvest, and develop and market our own shellfish brand. (Monomoysters?)

The program seeks to:

- extend the school day / school year for struggling learners by providing practical career experience in shellfish farming
- raise student performance by linking struggling learners with strong peer models, using their shared interest in aquaculture and local marine life as a springboard for learning and friendship
- improve the quality of the marine environment through sustainable farming practices that result in a commercially-viable harvest of farmed shellfish and an increase in wild-set shellfish
- Expand sources of revenue for MRMS / MRSD by aligning practices with CTE frameworks and/or grant-funding criteria

The meeting continued with an update on the fourth annual school-wide field trip to view a musical production at a regional theater. The school sought and received strong financial support from the Chatham Cultural Council, the Harwich Cultural Council, the Friends of the Performing Arts, and the Art of Charity, and was subsequently able to send nearly 500 students, chaperones, and honored guests to the Broadway musical “Phantom of the Opera” at the Providence Center for the Performing Arts on March 21st. It was a very successful venture, with students expressing both excitement and awe at the performance.

The meeting concluded with school council member Joy Jordan reminding the council of the importance of implementing the district’s new strategic plan. The MRMS school council set its next meeting for March 25th at 3:30 PM in the MRMS administrative conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Wilson