

School Council Minutes

April 30, 2018

Present:

Mark Wilson, principal
Michael Newby, teacher
Jesse Malloy, teacher
Sarah Cortese, teacher
Joy Jordan, parent
Kim Robbins, parent
Doreen Escher, parent
Emily Milan, parent

Unable to attend:

Michael Schaffer, teacher

The meeting opened with school council members reviewing, discussing, and approving the minutes from its meeting on March 26, 2018; all-in-favor with two abstentions.

The meeting continued with school council members receiving a briefing on the procedures and practices that govern the Washington D.C. travel opportunity offered to MRMS seventh grade students.

The 2017-18 trip occurred from Thursday, April 5th thru Sunday April 8th, with 70 students participating out of an entire grade seven enrollment of 130 (therefore, 54% of the student body participated in the travel opportunity). The trip enjoys the formal support of the school committee, which votes each year as a means to extend district insurance policies and protections over the group while it is off campus participating in overnight and weekend activities.

After receiving this background info, school council members considered two community-generated proposals relative to the Washington D.C. travel opportunity.

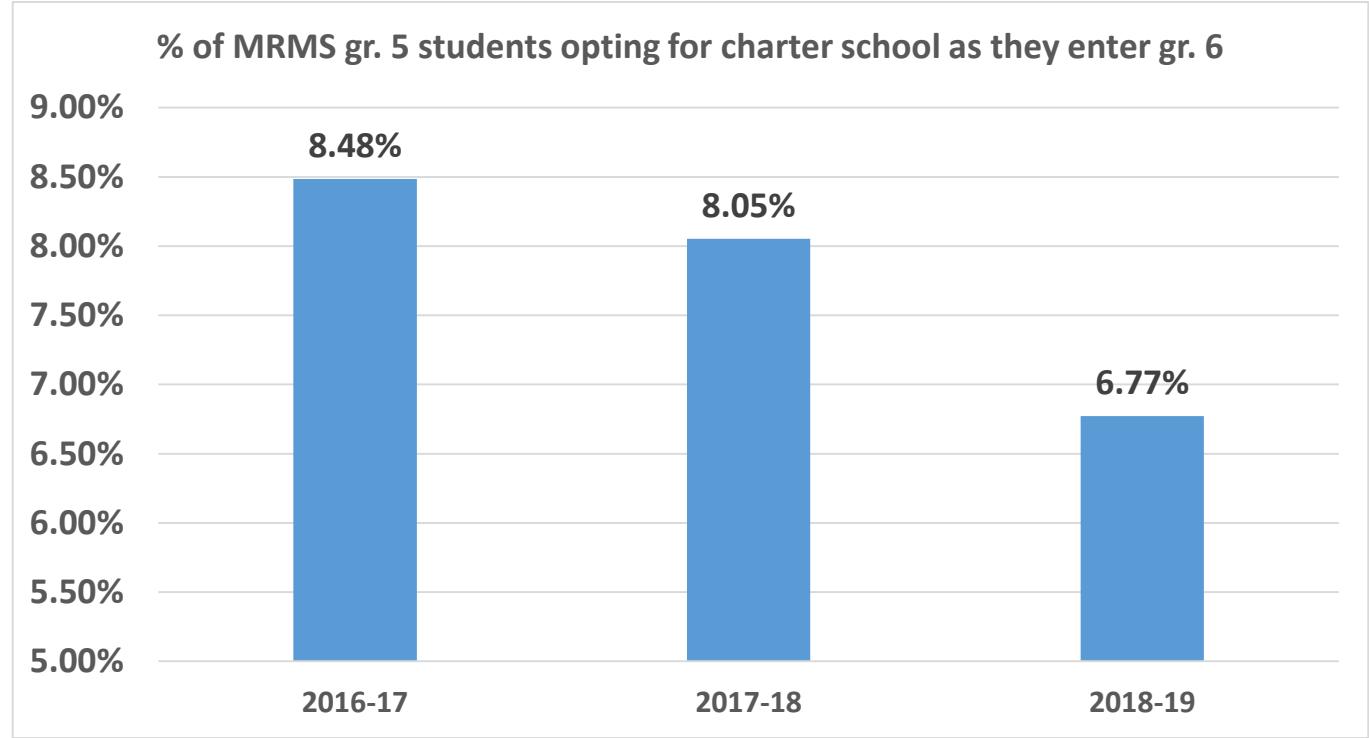
1. [First proposal – redefine the travel opportunity as a field trip so that it becomes a required part of the educational experiences for all seventh grade students.](#) The MRMS school council strongly opposed this shift, as doing so would financially obligate the school to fund the trip, at least partially, and the projected cost to send the current fifth grade in two years would be approximately \$145,000. In addition, it would require the school to mandate chaperones and this is contractually problematic as overnight and weekend demands fall outside of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA). Finally, it would force students to attend involuntarily and, potentially, against the wishes of their families, as a number of households travel to Washington D.C. for family vacations and they saw no need to go twice within a short period of time.
2. [Keep the travel opportunity as optional, but seek funding through either the school operating budget or through fundraising activities so economically disadvantaged households can apply for financial support to offset trip costs.](#) The school council opposed this shift as well, since inequitable fundraising efforts (some households put more time and energy into fundraising than others) has, in the past, generated hard feelings as some households seek a “free ride” on the fundraising efforts of others. School council felt the current approach – giving students time to raise funds for their own participation – was quite satisfactory and allowed all interested students to attend.

There was general agreement that any student who wants to attend should be able to attend, and the school will continue to provide scholarships for students facing extenuating circumstances / in severe hardship, with the understanding that participation is not an educational right, but rather an above-and-beyond opportunity.

The meeting continued with school council hearing plans for the third annual “Shark Field Day”, to be held on Wednesday, June 20th. The rain date for field day will be Thursday, June 21st. Seventh graders will enjoy a special opportunity to participate in “bubble soccer” as a culminating event. School is seeking assistance to run a barbeque for students on that date – the school will reach out to CPD and CFD for the grill team. Donations needed are popsicles and water.

The meeting continued with school council receiving detailed plans in regards to the seventh grade “end-of-middle-school” field trip to the Elizabethan Islands on June 4th and 5th. The all-day field trip will begin in Falmouth, where students will meet with Audubon naturalists for a narrated tour along the Elizabeth Islands. MRMS students will then join the Cuttyhunk school teacher (and her two students, a brother and sister) for a walking tour of Cuttyhunk, a Q&A session about island life, and stories about the residents of Penikese Island when it was a leper colony. The field trip is the capstone experience for the students’ in-depth reading of Lauren Wolk’s new novel, *Beyond the Bright Sea*. The trip enjoys strong support from the community, having been made possible by generous donations from the Art of Charity, the Harwich Cultural Council, the Friends of the Performing Arts, and the Chatham Friends of Trees.

The meeting continued with school council members reviewing and discussing the pre-enrollment numbers for charter school and examining historical trends on school choice. Charts are attached below. School council members commented favorably about the reduced number of students seeking education elsewhere. The school council also recognized that the enrollment bubble currently in grade 5 will impact grade 6 class sizes next, with numbers jumping from current class size of 17 to projected class size of 22.5.



Private School	4-C	4-H	5-C	5-H	6-C	6-H	7-C	7-H	8-C	8-H
Bridgeview Mont										
Trinity Christian			2				1			
Cape Cod Academy	2			1				1	1	
Waldorf School						1				
Laurel School		1								
Partnership School Orleans										
St.Francis Xavier				3	1	1	1	1	1	1
St Pius X		2		1		1				
Veritas				1				1		
Pope J P II										
Eagle Hill School Hardwick										
Home School		3		1		1				1
Total Private	2	6	2	7	1	4	2	3	2	2
Cape Cod Tech										
Charter										
Lighthouse Charter					4	8	1	16	2	5
Sturgis Charter										
Total Charter	0	0	0	0	4	8	1	16	2	5
School Choice										
Barnstable										
Bourne										
D-Y	1	1				3		4		
Falmouth										
Mass Virtual Academy										1
Nauset					3	3	2	18	7	12
Provincetown	1									
Placements				1						
Total Choice Out	2	1	0	1	3	6	2	22	7	13

To conclude the meeting, school council members received an update on FY19 budget and staffing. The school is currently interviewing art teachers to replace the retiring Ms. Roberts, and will interview math teachers during the week of May 7th to replace the retiring Ms. Coy. At present, grade 5 will drop from 9 sections to either 8 or 7 sections, depending on summer enrollment shifts.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM, with school council setting its next meeting for Monday, May 18th from 3:30 – 4:30 PM in the MRMS conference room.