

Monomoy Regional Middle School
School Council Minutes
May 21, 2018

Present:

Mark Wilson, principal
Michael Schaffer, teacher
Michael Newby, teacher
Sarah Cortese, teacher
Joy Jordan, parent
Doreen Escher, parent
Jesse Malloy, teacher

Unable to attend:

Emily Milan, parent
Kim Robbins, parent

The meeting opened with School Council members reviewing and unanimously approving the minutes from its meeting on April 30th.

The meeting continued with a public comment from Jannell Brown, MRMS parent, who addressed the school council with her concerns relative to the cost of the Washington D.C. travel opportunity and sharing her perspective that the trip is financially prohibitive for many households. Ms. Brown also expressed a concern about whether families who need financial assistance would make themselves known to the trip company, the trip organizers, or to school admin, as cultural traditions and/or a sense of pride may hinder families from making their needs known and/or requesting financial assistance. Ms. Brown also inquired as to the school council's stance toward fundraising.

The meeting continued with school council members receiving a briefing on the Washington D.C. travel opportunity being proposed for November 17th – November 20th 2018, the two days directly preceding the Thanksgiving Break on the 2018-19 school calendar. The briefing highlighted the following changes for 2018-19 trip:

- A shift in the travel company from World Strides to Explorica, which resulted in a reduced rate of travel for students (quote of \$969 from World Strides versus a quote of \$692 from Explorica for requested dates)
- A shift in the travel dates from spring to fall, which opens up the possibility to visit “hard-to-get” Smithsonian museums on the Washington Mall, like the African-American Smithsonian AND to limit the impact of the trip on instructional continuity, as the dates are days that traditionally see lower attendance rates at MRMS
- The opportunity for MRMS students to lay a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Arlington, to participate in an evening “Ghost Tour” in Alexandria, and to visit George Washington’s home in Mount Vernon
- The opportunity to take advantage to embedded fundraising pages available to participants through their Explorica personalized “go fund me” webpage

After the briefing, the school council engaged in an open discussion on the matters voiced by Ms. Brown, and allowed Ms. Brown to ask questions and respond to points raised in the open discussion. School Council member Jesse Malloy reminded everyone that, even if there were

unlimited funds available for scholarship, households would still have to identify themselves in some manner to receive assistance. School Council member Joy Jordan reminded everyone that, while the school council certainly supports students and households in their efforts to conduct individual fundraising, the absence of a 501-c-3 organization at MRMS prohibits the school from officially participating in any fundraising efforts. Principal Wilson shared that the percentage of seventh grade students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch status at MRMS is 39% and that 28.5% of this year's participants on the Washington D.C. travel opportunity were students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. Ms. Brown was invited to attend the next MRMS Parents Group meeting and propose expanding the function of that group to include fundraising as a 501-c-3 organization, which the group has considered in the past but rejected due to the lack of interest in parents and community members going through the legal process to set up the 501-c-3 and/or to serve on the executive board. Ms. Brown shared with School Council that she would be willing to explore the idea of a 501-c-3 that operates independently of MRMS, in the same way that Friends of the Performing Arts (FOPA) currently does.

The meeting continued with School Council members receiving a briefing on the FY19 staff retirements / hiring process. To date the school has hired: Jaclyn Buckley to replace Shana Grogan (shift in roles to MRHS to serve as the 18-22 transition coordinator); Jeremiah Nickerson to replace Joan Roberts (retiring art teacher); and Todd Schumacher to replace Darlene Coy (retiring Math teacher). There is an active search to replace Cara Gallagher, grade 7 ELA teacher, who is returning to her native Vermont roots.

The meeting continued with School Council members sharing their thoughts and perspectives on the School Improvement Plan. The school council emphasized the importance of keeping the need for additional counselling on the forefront of the budgetary needs for the building as MRMS has 1.0 counselors (there are 4 at the high school) and a 0.5 psychologist (there are 1.6 at the high school).

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM with School Council setting its next meeting for Monday, June 18th from 3:30 to 4:40 in the MRMS conference room.