

School Council Minutes
February 27, 2017

Present:

Unable to attend:

Mark Wilson, Principal
Cheri Armstrong, Teacher
Kathy Andrews, Teacher
Janet Our, Parent
Joy Jordan, Parent
Cheryl Mador, Parent

None

The meeting opened with School Council members reviewing and unanimously approving, with 2 abstentions, the minutes from its meeting on January 30, 2017.

The meeting continued with members receiving data from the MRMS parent survey on the one-to-one Chromebook initiative and the later start time for next fall.

Later start time – School Council members noted that approximately one-third of MRMS households would benefit from before-school programming next year, with the majority of those households looking to have the school open approximately an hour earlier than the school day is scheduled to start. School Council members prompted the administration to offer the survey to current fourth grade parents (which school administration did the next day and which generated results consistent with the grades 5 and 6 data). Based on the survey data, the administration will plan structured activities for students beginning at 7:30 AM, with a start to the school day currently planned for 8:55 AM.

One-to-One Chromebook Initiative – School Council members reviewed the survey data and noted that 90% of MRMS students have ready access to a computer, laptop, Chromebook, or tablet at home, and that 97% also have Wi-Fi access at home. Based on this data, the MRMS administration is moving forward with securing a Chromebook for every student, through previous purchase or a future lease, with the Chromebooks remaining on site to limit wear-and-tear and/or breakage. Given that 10% of students DO NOT have ready access at home, the school will provide a loaner Chromebook that students can take home for the year. In addition, given that 3% of households DO NOT have Wi-Fi, the school will provide a loaner “hot-spot”. The combination ensures universal internet access for MRMS families at home and enables the school to switch to a web-based instructional platform without disadvantaging any student.

The meeting continued with School Council members discussing the MAP presentation that was given by school administration on February 16th and clarifying any questions about the MAP reports/information that was sent home over the February break. The School Council members praised the school for sharing the information and recommended that a summary be provided as a press release. Working collaboratively with School Council member Joy Jordan, the administration developed a press release which was published by Cape Cod Today on February 14th. Here is a link. [Cape Cod Today Article](#)

The meeting continued with School Council members reviewing the school’s “stars and bars” data, which recognizes students for growth (measured by MAP) and achievement (honor roll).

The meeting continued with School Council members reviewing the MRMS school improvement plan and discussing progress-to-date on the school's priorities:

Construct and teach interdisciplinary units that leverage the unique history and environment of Cape Cod. A number of units are presently being taught, with sixth grade leading the way because of the natural link between this goal and sixth grade Geography / ELA. Units include "The Finest Hours" and "Protecting Cape Resources". At fifth grade, the science unit on "Earth and Human Activity" advances this initiative, while seventh grade staff is building a capstone unit on "The Future of Cape Cod". In addition, 28 staff members have been trained in service-learning and are developing a scope-and-sequence of knowledge and skills that will be acquired through this instructional approach.

Promote 21st century learning skills: collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking; information, media, and technology. In preparation for the One-to-One Chromebook implementation next fall, staff has been attending professional development seminars and workshops on how to design and deliver effective web-based instruction. Tools and strategies associated with Google Classroom have been a focus for this work.

Improve student ability to analyze complex texts, construct viable and valid arguments using evidence, critique the reasoning of others, and engage in argument using evidence. This goal is being addressed through writing-across-the-disciplines, using a common "Claim-Evidence-Reasoning" rubric that was collaboratively developed by the Social Studies and ELA departments.

Establish and sustain a school culture that celebrates growth, achievement, and citizenship. The school is continuing its SHARK citizen initiative, which launched on February 6th, as well as its end-of-year "Evening of Excellence". In addition, the school will reinstate the end-of-year field trip for seventh graders to celebrate the end of their middle school years. The school also celebrates student growth and achievement quarterly with its "Stars and Bars" cafeteria recognition, and will publish in local press stories related to student growth and achievement, like the MAP story referenced earlier in these minutes.

Use data to identify students in need of intervention or enrichment; provide appropriate academic support. School Council members reviewed the reports available to parents, students, teachers, and administrators through Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), noting how the data can be used by teachers to create in-class instructional groupings and to set learning targets, and by administrators to inform the design and content of seminar offerings.

Provide effective school-to-home communication about school programs and student progress. The shift to a quarterly schedule, combined with stronger administrative expectations for timely entry of assignments and scores into ASPEN, has resulted in far fewer concerns and complaints from parents with regard to receiving delayed or surprising information relative to student performance.

The meeting adjourned with School Council setting its next meeting date for 3:30 – 4:30 PM on Monday, April 10, 2017.