

Pembroke Community Middle School School Council Meeting MINUTES

November 1, 2023

10:45-11:40 a.m.

PCMS Library

Members:

Helen McElroy, Parent	G8 student (TBD), PCMS Student
Andrea Doton, Parent	G8 student (TBD), PCMS Student
Caryn Drake, Community Representative	G7 student (TBD), PCMS Student
Lyn Fitzgerald, Faculty	G7 student (TBD), PCMS Student
Dan Sandberg, Faculty	Donna McGarrigle, Chair/Principal

❖ Introductions

- o The meeting began at 10:50 a.m. Helen McElroy, Andrea Doton, Caryn Drake, Dan Sandberg, and Dr. Donna McGarrigle were present.
- o This is Helen McElroy's second year on the School Council. Helen is the parent of an eighth grade student at PCMS. Caryn Drake is the community representative and she does not currently have a student at PCMS. Caryn works at the Pembroke Public Library. Dan Sandberg is a teacher in the World Language Department at PCMS. Dan currently teaches Spanish. Andrea Doton is the parent of a seventh grade student at PCMS.

❖ Building update

- Dr. McGarrigle is meeting with the Student Council on Friday, 11/2.
- The Student Council is currently leading a sock fundraiser. Proceeds will be donated to the Pembroke Police Department.
- Dr. McGarrigle recently emailed the Ted Kennedy Institute to discuss a leadership field trip option for the student council students. She is also researching "fun" field trip options, such as Star Land.
- Ms. Erica Swift is the new Assistant Principal at PCMS. She is also the Team Chair for Special Education. Ms. Swift was formerly the principal at North Pembroke Elementary School and before that, she was a middle school assistant principal in Abington. Ms. Swift is currently on maternity leave, but will be returning after the holiday recess. A retired middle school principal is working at PCMS several days a week while Ms. Swift is out.

❖ Review of April 2023 minutes

- The April 2023 minutes were reviewed. Helen McElroy made a motion for approval of the minutes. Caryn Drake seconded the motion. All members voted to approve the minutes.

❖ Discuss purpose of school councils

- Document: Massachusetts School Council Handbook

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- Dr. McGarrigle distributed the Massachusetts School Council Handbook to all members.
 - The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 requires all public schools in Massachusetts to establish a School Council. School councils are comprised of community members, parents, teachers, and the school principal. The purpose of the School Council is to involve parents and teachers in school decision making. School Councils also serve as an advisory body for the school principal.
 - Public meeting: agenda, minutes and meeting dates.
 - School council meetings are public meetings with meeting minutes publicly posted. Meeting dates are set in advance and held at PCMS.
 - Housekeeping: volunteer for note taking notes & minutes
 - Andrea Doton will take notes at the meetings and prepare a draft of the minutes.
 - ❖ PCMS Title One status
 - PCMS is a Title One school. Title One is a federal education program where schools receive additional federal funds based on the percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Because PCMS is a Title One school, PCMS offer certain programming such as a Back to School Night and a School Council.
 - Within the district, Bryantville Elementary School is also a Title One school. Pembroke High School is not a Title One school.
 - Student support
 - There are two courses offered, Math Foundations and Literacy, that provide additional support to students. Students take one or both of these courses in place of a second language. Eligible students are identified by their sixth grade teacher.
 - School-Parent Compact
 - Dr. McGarrigle distributed the Title One School-Parent Compact for School Year 2023-2024.
 - This Compact outlines how the parents, the school staff, and the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the ways in which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the state's high standards.
 - PCMS will provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the students to meet the State's student academic achievement standards. PCMS will also hold parent-teacher conferences on 11/9, 12/6, and 3/13 where the School-Parent Compact will be

discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement. Parents will also be provided frequent reports, in the form of progress reports and report cards, on their children's progress. Progress reports and report cards will be emailed home within a week of the grade closing dates. In addition, staff will be available for consultation with parents at fall open house, at fall and spring parent-teacher conferences, via the school website and Facebook pages, and via teacher websites, X (formerly Twitter), and school email.

- Parents will support their child's learning by monitoring attendance, ensuring homework is completed, monitoring television and social media accounts, promoting positive use of their children's extracurricular time, staying informed about their child's education and communicating with the school, and serving on policy advisory groups to the extent possible.
- Students will attend school everyday and arrive on time, complete homework everyday and ask for help when needed, read at least 30 minutes everyday outside of school time, check the PowerSchool portal regularly, and give parents/caregivers all notices and information received from the school everyday.

➤ Parental Involvement Plan

- Dr. McGarrigle distributed the Title One Parental Involvement Plan for School Year 2023-2024. She reviewed the different ways that parents can be involved at PCMS, including parent-teacher conferences, family nights, the PTO, summer reading programs, the School Council, and home/school compacts wherein parents, the school, and students create agreements to define goals, expectations, and shared responsibilities.
- Parents communicate via parent-teacher conferences, back to school nights, the school's web page that contains news and links to newsletters and educational articles, e-news, email, telephone, and Titan Talk!
- The staff at PCMS recognize the importance of parental support in the education of their students. PCMS actively encourages parents to be an integral part of their child's education.

❖ School Improvement focus areas & School Improvement Plan/Draft

- Dr. McGarrigle shared the PCMS School Improvement Plan for the 2023-2024 School Year. Specific details regarding PCMS's focus areas and goals (achievement, social emotional/health and wellness, technology, communications, and facilities) are included in the document entitled "PCMS School Improvement Plan for the 2023-2024 School Year" available on the school and district website.
- Achievement

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- PPS will increase and expand their repertoire of academic tools and support structures to best bolster the learning of their students and educators.
 - My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) is a college/career initiative to support middle school students in understanding the connection between the content and the skills taught in middle school and their application to future goals. Last year, a team of PCMS faculty and staff participated in a year-long training in MyCAP. As a result, this year PCMS students will receive a college/career lesson in every class on an at least monthly basis.
 - The Social Studies Department will explore artificial intelligence (i.e., ChatGPT) technology and the impact on lesson and unit planning. Another state grant was received for the eighth grade social studies teachers to continue their participation in the Democratic Knowledge Project through Project Zero and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
 - Social Emotional/Health and Wellness
 - The Compass Room has work areas as well as soft seating that provides a safe space for students to catch up on work.
 - A new weekly unified sports club is offered every Monday afternoon. For the fall, a unified bocce team is offered and students compete against other schools. For the early spring, unified basketball will be offered. For the late spring, unified cornhole will be offered. PCMS received \$500 from PTAD to support the cornhole team. The day custodian, Mr. Flynn, was the unified basketball coach last year. Ms. Fitzwilliam was the assistant coach for the staff Bocce Team.
 - Technology
 - The E-hall pass program has been implemented. This is connected to Google classroom and students can use this electronic pass to sign out for the bathroom or nurse visits without disturbing the teacher.
 - Communication
 - Celebrating Community/Celebrating Differences is a focus in the communications from school to home.
 - PCMS students lead the school in morning announcements.
 - Facilities
 - The hard surface walkway leading from the bus drop off area to the gymnasium has been installed. This is a great improvement from the muddy walkway.
 - A hydration station will be installed in the eighth grade area and should arrive within two to three weeks. There is currently one hydration station upstairs.

❖ PCMS Student Representatives

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- There was a discussion concerning how to choose the PCMS student representatives for the School Council. Typically there are two seventh representatives and two eighth grader representatives. The School Council will ideally have two parent representatives, two faculty members, one community member, and four students (two seventh graders and two eighth graders).
 - Last year, 4 eighth graders and 16-17 seventh graders volunteered to serve as student representatives. The teachers voted for the seventh graders by rank choice. For the eighth graders, names were picked from a hat, since there were less students than the seventh grade. Dr. McGarrigle is interested in using rank choice voting again for the seventh grade representatives. For the eighth graders, Helen suggests keeping the same representatives as last year (former seventh graders), and Dan agrees. Both Helen and Dan stated that these students will have grown as student representatives and this growth and experience will help them be strong contributors. Caryn is unsure whether we should keep the same former seventh graders or whether we should open it up to other interested eighth graders. Dr. McGarrigle suggested bringing the issue up with the larger student council. All members agreed that this is a good idea.
 - Dr. McGarrigle will use the same model for choosing the seventh grade representatives. Dr. McGarrigle will pose the question of how to choose the eighth grade representatives with the larger Student Council. Dr. McGarrigle will report the results at the next School Council meeting.
- ❖ The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.
 - ❖ Meeting schedule for remainder of year:
 - January 17
 - March 27
 - April 12
 - May 29