Minutes of the 2024-2025 Menlo Park City School District Council Meeting

March 7, 2025
MPCSD TERC, 181 Encinal Avenue, Atherton, CA

Attendees: Erin Reuther, Laura Wiggs, Teresa Kwon, Kristen Gracia, Sarah Sobel, Krista Rosa, Allison Jagtiani, Melitta Stevens, Jammie Behrendt, Sharon Burns, Danielle O'Brien, Linda Creighton, Alicia Payton-Miyazaki, Carrie Chen, Sally Lovero, Eleanor deJong, Lindsey Sikes, Julie Hartstein, Michelle Fong, Jackie Chen, Sherwin Chen, Jed Scolnick, Laura Low Ah Kee, Francie Maletis

District Council Business

- Laura Wiggs called the meeting to order at 8:48 am and took notes as Recording Secretary.
- Erin Reuther and Kristen Gracia greeted all members. Erin noted a few changes to the agenda: there is no School Board Update and Kristen Gracia will save her update to the end, if time, so the group can have a robust discussion of MPCSD musicals.

Approval of January Meeting Minutes

- Laura Wiggs asked for motions to approve the January 10 meeting minutes: Melitta Stevens made a first motion to approve; Danielle O'Brien seconded the motion. The minutes were voted upon and approved.

Nominating Committee Update and Approval of Nominees

- Laura Wiggs gave an update on behalf of the Nominating Committee (NC). The NC presented Sarah Sobel as a nominee for OCC Co-Chair for SY 2025-2026. Melitta Stevens made a motion to approve; Alicia Payton-Miyazaki seconded. The Council voted and unanimously approved Sarah Sobel for OCC Co-Chair.
- The NC presented Eleanor deJong as the nominee for OCC Communications Chair for SY 2025-2026. Sally Lovero made a motion to approve; Julie Hartstein seconded the motion. The Council voted and unanimously approved Eleanor deJong as OCC Communications Chair.
- Laura Wiggs updated the Council on remaining open positions and requested the Nominating Committee to send nominations her way.

District Council Committee Updates

- Melitta Stevens updated the Council on **Community News** and mentioned that we are looking for someone to run this next year. Kristen Gracia applauded Melitta's efforts in streamlining how we receive and disburse CN and requested that this feature continue next year.
- Erin Reuther gave an update on behalf of Anand Gupta, our **Auditor.** All transactions were cleared and the audit was clean. Anand will return next year as Auditor.

- Teresa Kwon gave a **Treasurer's Report and Budget Recap** — there was one Speaker Series expense for $1000. The budget is on track. Tax filing fees and insurance fees for next year are upcoming. PTO dues will remain the same for next year.
- Kristen Gracia provided an update on the **Speaker Series** on behalf of Parke Treadway**.** We've had lots of community engagement around our theme of anxiety and independence. Over 100 members attended the Zoom event. On April 2, Lenore Skenazy will be our speaker for an in-person event at HV. She helped author the parenting chapters of The Anxious Generation book. We expect a large audience.

OCC Update

- Krista Rosa noted that the OCC met its goals as a District. Sarah Sobel noted that a draft MOU is in process and much of it will look the same as last year. The financial ask will remain the same along with the proportions allocated to the schools vs. to the MPAEF.
- Kristen Gracia noted that the District will kick off a new community education campaign in the fall around our budget. The District will partner with the OCC on messaging. Further discussion ensued.

MPAEF Update

- Sally Lovero noted that the MPAEF Auction is next weekend at HV. 275 tickets have been sold, which is a comfortable number. The online auction will follow. She thanked the principals for encouraging staff to include grade-level parties.
- Kristen Gracia discussed the upcoming Fund-A-Need for next year: Students as Mathematicians. This coincides nicely with an upcoming adoption of a new math curriculum in 2 years. Further discussion ensued around this robust process of selecting a curriculum. She noted that we will always have multiple math pathways at Hillview.
- Carrie Chen thanked principals and staff for promoting the online auction at their sites; Kristen thanked Julie Hartstein for her hard work on the MPAEF Instagram page.
- Sally Lovero noted that the SchoolHouse Rocks Run is May 18th and they are looking for family sponsorships to help offset the costs.
- Carrie Chen also asked school sites/PTOs to host a new thank you event for OCC donors - all of them; not just large donors. She asked the PTO and principals to coordinate in whatever way works best for them.

Principals & PTO President Reports: "*Musicals Today*" Edition

- Kristen started off this discussion by providing a history of musicals in MPCSD. 4/5th grade musicals used to be funded by parents/PTOs. The District got together this year (after Prop 28 funding was passed by the voters) and decided to build a District program for all 3rd graders to participate in a musical; and have a 4/5 grade musical be optional.

- She then acknowledged what an incredible opportunity that this year all 3rd graders in the District (around 300 kids) got to participate. This happened thanks to Prop 28 funding which is public money to be spent on new arts programming. Kristen thanked the Board for approving this money to be used on musical programming for our District.
- Kristen further discussed Prop 28 funding and the restrictions we have to follow since this money is public funds that are audited. Jackie Chen, the District's CBO, further discussed these restrictions and requirements.
- Jammie Behrendt gave an update on her weekly meetings with Bill Hairston, Rachel Knight and Rachel Bergeron to learn about how we have historically produced musicals, and to bring to the table challenges, problems and feedback. The goal is to streamline the process for future years. She thanked everyone for their patience as they work through a new process.
- Kristen then invited the PTOs to speak about their challenges, questions, highlights, etc.
- In general, the PTOs all had questions about what exactly the Prop 28 funds can be spent on vs. what their PTOs should spend, if anything. It was clear that not all PTOs have allocated money toward musicals because of the Prop 28 funding. They would all like more clarity and parity across the schools for musical funding, from whatever source (Prop 28 vs. PTO) as there is confusion about who pays for what.
- Kristen noted that ticket sales have historically gone to Hillview for upkeep of the PAC; PTO leaders asked if this money could instead go back to each schools' directors' donation accounts and use Prop 28 funds to maintain the PAC. Jammie added this to her list for further discussion and asked PTO leadership to send her questions. Her email is jbehrendt@mpcsd.org
- PTO leadership would like to have a voice at the table with Jammie and Bill Hairston, etc. Kristen asked PTOs to identify someone on their Executive Boards to be a part of weekly meetings with Jammie and team. Jammie was open to this and further discussion ensued.
- Alicia Payton-Miyazaki noted a highlight for the musicals: the Fund-a-Need a few years ago was for lighting, props, etc. The 3rd grade musical is a great example of all kids in the District benefitting from this Fund-a-Need. She appreciated the collaboration between all of the schools this year in sharing ideas, props, costumes, etc.
- Sharon Burns acknowledged how wonderful it was to see the third graders bring their whole families to see them perform in the Lion King.

Allison Jagtiani closed out the meeting by asking schools to nominate people for District Awards.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 am. Our next meeting is May 2, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Wiggs
March 13, 2025