

**Menlo-Atherton High School
Shared Decision-Making Site Council**

10/9/25

Unapproved Minutes

Approved on:

Members in attendance:

Pablo Beramendi, Valeria Lorenzo, Angelica Rodriguez, Erin Walsh , Randy West, Tomiko Fronk, Mitzi Ulloa, Rob Bentley, Irene Gil, Stephanie Cuff-Alvarado, Karl Losekoot, Monica Corona , Amy McGaraghan, Shionda Nickerson

15 total attendees today - 15 voting members.

Opening: The regular meeting of the SDMSC was called to order at 3:36 pm.

Minutes by: Pablo Beramendi

- **Reviewed minutes from previous meeting, 9/11/25**

Motion made by: Randy West

Seconded by: Stephanie Cuff-Alvarado.

Approved #: 13

Opposed #: 0

Abstention #: 0

MOTION 3:40 pm

- **Open Forum:**

- Pablo brought up issues with the bus, particularly on short days - Karl will discuss with the office so that we can share schedule with the City Transportation Office.
- Stephanie proposed a shout out for the Taco Bar.
- Amy McGaraghan Shout out to 2 of the teacher/ coaches (Eric Walmer) who both took a ton of new kids into sports this year. JP Nelson did a great job on the waterpolo side.
- Karl proposed to shout out about the event that happened last night and all the collaboration.

- **Final Review and Approval of Summer Collab - Fall Collab Announcement**

- Still issues with access.
- Will need to vote next time.

- **New Name: M-AAC , Menlo-Atherton Advisory Council**

- Need 75% of voters to cover this item, as it changes the language of the bylaws. That number is 18 and we only have 14.
- So we won't be able to cover today.
- 15 attending members feel positive about the name.
- **New Member Language for Students:**
 - Need 75% of voters to cover this item, as it changes the language of the bylaws. That number is 18 and we only have 14.
 - So we won't be able to cover today.
 - Stephanie mentioned that several parents have asked whether students can get any benefit from participating, either payment, recommendation letters, etc.
 - That'd be roughly \$30/ hour.
 - We'd also need to pay students at the Site Counsel to make it equitable.
 - Paige is concerned that paying may open all kinds of issues. Invitation to think about other ways of compensating students.
 - Angelica Rodriguez proposes to do a better job at positioning the SDMSC, which could be significantly beneficial for students.
 - Another challenge brought up is to consider that many students need to leave early to take care of their siblings.
- **Challenge Day Survey**
 - Not voting on it.
 - Amy: There's a big difference in terms of when the survey occurs.
 - Sapna mentioned that we had discussed that Challenge Day is a lot of work and resources, and yet there's mixed reviews. So not sure this is the best use of our time and resources.
 - Karl: we'll want specific questions to understand value, e.g., "did Challenge Day expose you to new experiences that you'd not have had otherwise?", "how did this inform your behavior going forward?", "would you recommend Challenge Day to a Freshman?".
 - Randy: could the students choose a specific activity? E.g., if you don't feel comfortable about something, could you choose something else? Survey could ask about activities that students would want to participate in.
 - Karl: we have tried asking these questions in the past and having different events. Challenge is that the logistics become incredibly difficult, particularly as you need parent volunteers.
 - Paige: wonder if there's differences by grade/ age.

- Karl: Challenge Day was born in a time when we were more separated in terms of student and teacher body. We are more integrated and connected now. Purposes:
 - Bring people together to understand that there are families/ students that have different experiences (i.e., empathy). Understand diversity. “We can be humans together”, and this is a valuable thing.
 - Struggle from kids coming from the “bubble” of some middle schools when they join M-A. This is a different way to bring down those barriers.
 - Stop for a minute on a busy day, acknowledge what folks are going on as a stress relief - social-emotional individual piece.
- Amy: these may be two different things that may be difficult to achieve in 1 activity/ day.
- Stephanie: concern is that this experience could be traumatizing to some students, and worry that we are overexposing kids’ difficult experiences. It’s a fine line related to vulnerability. If rushed and done in a singular day we may get into “exploitation land”.
- Karl: may have the opportunity to frame the survey to capture if the experience had a positive “residue”.
- Paige: this is a \$56k expense staffed 100% with volunteers, so this is worth considering.
 - Sapna: what could the PTA do with these resources?
- Erin: as an adult navigating the challenges of kids is difficult. So wonder if kids learn from each other and open to each other.
- Stephanie: we can ask whether students felt supported during the day, and there could be a question about emotional preparedness and support before and during the day, as well as value of experience afterwards.
- Survey could be exploring either how to improve Challenge Day or whether we’d not want to continue with it. Do we want to gather insights from folks who’ve experienced Challenge Day in the past?
- Karl: prefer to focus on the students, as the info from the teachers would not necessarily inform whether we continue with CD or not.
- Sapna: we could ask folks what is it that they liked about it vs. not liked.
- Challenge Day is a company that has a product and is pretty scripted. Not sure how much adaptation they’d be able to execute with the results of the survey.
 - Sapna: Need to understand if we’re mostly generating positive impact or mostly trauma. Some kids report a level of “exploitation” that generates trauma (e.g., parents who have been in jail).

- Stephanie: many kids have come to her saying that they'd rather forget about that day, they feel embarrassment. Seniors are many times telling their younger siblings not to attend.
- Karl: it'll be important to get feedback, and come up with the right questions to ask.
- Angelica: may need to be ready for some follow up instead of this being a single event.
- Karl: need to think about the resource/ capacity implications of any additional activity.
- Sapna: worried about this year. We are short staffed.
- We are the only school in the district that does Challenge Day. Stephanie: wonder if we can read the data from other surveys.
- We have to be prepared for the next event, particularly considering the climate that we are in. There may even be legal implications of what kids share.
- Karl: company organizing event may need to disclose questions that they'd not ask.
- May be we need to guide the conversation towards on campus topics. How to facilitate this conversation?
- Amy: her kids appreciate the possibility of interacting with kids from very different backgrounds. This mostly happens through projects. This is what makes it happen.

Adjourning meeting at 5:00 pm:

Motion made by: Pablo

Seconded by: Amy

Approved #: 14

Opposed #: 0

Abstention #: 1

MOTION PASSES: 5:00 pm